as far west as the easterly bounds of the original county, but there paused and retraced its steps. The original plan contemplated the invasion of Genesee county and an attack upon Fort Niagara.

While the Western New York frontier had very little immediate connection with the events of the war, the post of Fort Niagara was an important one from a military standpoint for either of the contesting powers. During the entire war it remained in the undisputed possession of the British.

As during the French and Indian war, the fealty of the powerful Iroquois Confederacy became an object of considerable importance to two nations of white men. The great influence of the noted Johnson family, now led by Sir John Johnson and Colonel Guy Johnson, the latter having succeeded Sir William as superintendent of Indian affairs, was strongly exercised in the interests of the British cause. The result was that all the Iroquois nations except the Oneidas and Tuscaroras allied themselves with the British as against the colonists. The Seneca nation hesitated for some time before coming out openly for an alliance, but the pay promised them by the Johnsons and their natural disposition to go upon the warpath finally converted them. After 1777 they were active partisans of the British crown. It is a matter of record, though not official, that at a council held at Oswego the agents of the British government gave numerous presents to the Senecas and promised them "a bounty on every scalp that should be brought in."[1] But the Americans were equally as active as the British in seeking an alliance with the New York Indians, though not successful in their efforts.

Col. John Butler, the notorious Tory; Joseph Brant, the celebrated Mohawk chief; the Johnsons and other enemies of the colonies made Fort Niagara their headquarters during the period of the war, and frequent expeditions against exposed portions of the country were planned and put into execution at that point. Butler organized the notorious Butler's Rangers, whose very name inspired the hearts of the colonists of New York with terror, and their commander became one of the most conspicuous figures in the border wars.

The massacre of Wyoming, in July, 1778, and the attack upon Cherry Valley in November of the same year thoroughly alarmed the

[1] This is according to the narrative of Mary Jemison, the white woman whose history appears in a succeeding chapter. The truth of her statement has been gravely questioned, and never definitely settled.

colonists. On the former occasion a motley band of Tories and Indians under command of Butler entered the Wyoming valley about four hundred strong, on July 3. This locality, unfortunately, already had sent two companies into the Continental army, leaving only old men, women and children, with a small body of soldiers for its defense. The unsuspecting inhabitants were attacked by the invading party, who soon killed and scalped more than two hundred of them. Many of the prisoners were either tortured or slaughtered in the most savage fashion. On the night of July 4, after a number of fugitives who had taken refuge in the fort had been offered humane terms of surrender, the Indians overran the beautiful valley and completed their work of desolation and murder. Nearly every house in the valley was burned and the remaining inhabitants obliged to flee to the mountains for their lives. In this massacre the Indians consisted principally of Senecas.

November 11 of the same year a band of Indians and Tories under command respectively of Joseph Brant and Walter N. Butler, a son of Col. John Butler, descended upon Cherry valley, killed thirty-two of the inhabitants and sixten soldiers garrisoned there, and carried nearly forty men, women and children into captivity.

Two expeditions against the Indians were now planned. The first of these was made against the Onondagas in the spring of 1779, under Colonels Van Schaick and Willet, but it accomplished little. During the summer a more extensive expedition with the same end in view—the chastisement of the Senecas—was organized. Congress authorized General Washington to send an expedition into the country of the Iroquois, lay waste their villages and retaliate for the wrongs they had inflicted upon the colonists. The expedition was to be primarily for punitive purposes, but the design also embraced an attack upon Fort Niagara, the headquarters of the British and their Indian allies in this region of the country.

The Senecas, being located at a remote point from the headquarters of the American forces, for a long time had been comparatively free from fear of retributive justice; and they were in a position, by reason of their location, to do the patriot cause incalculable injury.

Washington gave General John Sullivan command of three thousand Continental troops, gathered in the Wyoming valley and the surrounding country, and directed him to proceed against the Senecas. The capture of Fort Niagara, which was being held by the notorious Colonel John Butler, was a possibility consequent upon the routing of the

Indians. Reaching Tioga Point August 22, Sullivan was joined by General James Clinton in command of the eastern division, composed of one thousand six hundred men. About a mile below Newtown, now Elmira, the Indians, though strongly fortified, were routed.

The force opposing Sullivan consisted of Butler and his notorious Rangers and a large body of Indians under the famous Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant. The latter consisted of Senecas, with a few Delawares.

August 29, after having laid waste all the Indian country he had traversed, General Sullivan prepared to attack the British and Indians in the position they had chosen to defend. After two hours of desperate fighting, during which Sullivan had so disposed his forces as nearly to surround the position of the enemy, the latter, becoming fearful that they would be hemmed in and annihilated, suddenly abandoned the post and fled. For two miles Sullivan followed in pursuit. The enemy lost heavily, while the American loss was but six killed and about forty wounded.

This victory convinced the Indians that further resistance would be useless, and Sullivan found no further bar to his progress into the Genesee country. As the Americans proceeded, however, they found that the principal villages of the Senecas had been abandoned. Only once again did the enemy make the slightest preparations to impede the progress of the patriot army. Near the head of Conesus lake they selected a position and began arrangements for an ambuscade, but when Sullivan's forces came up the flight was continued as expeditiously as before. Sullivan continued his march, devastating everything that could be of use to the Indians. While Sullivan was constructing a bridge over a creek which led to Little Beard's Town, Lieutenant Boyd and a scouting party had a severe battle with a superior force of Indians in the vicinity of what is now the town of Leicester, Livingston county, originally within the confines of Genesee county. Boyd and a man named Parker were made prisoners, and the former was tortured to death in the most horrible manner. The following account of the incident is taken from Wilkinson's Annals of Binghamton:

> From Canandaigua the army proceeded to Honeoye, which they destroyed; and passing by Hemlock lake, they came to the head of Connissius lake, where the army encamped for the night, on the ground which is now called Henderson's Flats.
>
> Soon after the army had encamped, at the dusk of evening, a party of twenty-one men, under the command of Lieut. William Boyd, was detached from the rifle corps,

which was commanded by the celebrated Morgan, and sent out for the purpose of reconnoitering the ground near the Genesee river, at a place now called Williamsburgh, at a distance from the place of encampment of about seven miles, and under the guidance of a faithful Indian pilot. The place was then the site of an Indian village; and it was apprehended that the Indians and rangers, as their allies were called, might be there, or in its vicinity.

When the party arrived at Williamsburgh, they found that the Indians had very recently left the place, as the fires in their huts were still burning. The night was so far spent when they got to the place of their destination, that the gallant Boyd, considering the fatigue of his men, concluded to remain quietly where he was, near the village, sleeping upon their arms, till the next morning, and then to dispatch two messengers with a report to the camp. Accordingly, a little before daybreak, he sent two men to the main body of the army, with information that the enemy had not been discovered, but were supposed to be not far distant, from the fires they found burning the evening before.

After daylight, Lieutenant Boyd and his men cautiously crept from the place of their concealment, and upon getting a view of the village, discovered two Indians lurking about the settlement, one of whom was immediately shot and scalped by one of the riflemen by the name of Murphy. Lieutenant Boyd—supposing now that if there were any Indians near they would be aroused by the report of the rifle, and possibly by a perception of what had just taken place, the scalping of the Indian—thought it most prudent to retire and make his best way back to the main army. They accordingly set out and retraced the steps they had taken the evening before.

On their arriving within about one mile and a half of the main army, they were surprised by the sudden appearance of a body of Indians, to the amount of five hundred, under the command of Brant, and the same number of rangers, commanded by the infamous Butler, who had secreted themselves in a ravine of considerable extent, which lay across the track that Lieutenant Boyd had pursued. These two leaders of the enemy had not lost sight of the American army since their appalling defeat at the narrows above Newtown, though they had not shown themselves till now. With what dismay they must have witnessed the destruction of their towns and the fruit of their fields, that marked the progress of our army! They dare not, however, any more come in contact with the main army, whatever should be the consequence of their forbearance.

Lieutenant Boyd and his little heroic party, upon discovering the enemy, knowing that the only chance for their escape would be by breaking through their lines, an enterprise of most desperate undertaking, made the bold attempt. As extraordinary as it may seem, the first onset, though unsuccessful, was made without the loss of a man on the part of the heroic band, though several of the enemy were killed. Two attempts more were made, which were equally unsuccessful, and in which the whole party fell, excepting Lieutenant Boyd and eight others. Boyd and a soldier by the name of Parker, were taken prisoners on the spot; a part of the remainder fled, and a part fell on the ground apparently dead, and were overloooked by the Indians, who were too much engaged in pursuing the fugitives to notice those who fell.

When Lieutenant Boyd found himself a prisoner, he solicited an interview with Brant, preferring, it seems, to throw himself upon the clemency and fidelity of the

savage leader of the enemy, rather than trust to his civilized colleague. The chief, who was at that moment near, immediately presented himself, when Lieutenant Boyd, by one of these appeals and tokens which are known only by those who have been initiated and instructed in certain mysteries, and which never fail to bring succor to a distressed brother, addressed him as the only source from which he could expect respite from cruel punishment or death. The appeal was recognized, and Brant immediately and in the strongest language, assured him that his life should be spared.

Boyd and his fellow-prisoners were conducted immediately by a party of Indians to the Indian village called Beardstown, after a distinguished chief of that name, on the west side of the Genesee river, and in what is now called Leicester. After their arrival at Beardstown, Brant, being called on service which required a few hours' absence, left them in care of Colonel Butler. The latter, as soon as Brant had left them, commenced an interrogation, to obtain from the prisoners a statement of the number, situation, and intentions of the army under Sullivan; and threatened them, in case they hesitated or prevaricated in their answers, to deliver them up immediately to be massacred by the Indians; who, in Brant's absence, and with the encouragement of their more savage commander, Butler, were ready to commit the greatest cruelties. Relying probably upon the promises which Brant had made them, and which he most likely intended to fulfill, they refused to give Butler the desired information. Upon this refusal, burning with revenge, Butler hastened to put his threat into execution. He delivered them to some of their most ferocious enemies, among which the Indian chief Little Beard was distinguished for his inventive ferocity. In this, that was about to take place, as well as in all the other scenes of cruelty that were perpetrated in his town, Little Beard was master of ceremonies. The stoutest heart quails under the apprehension of immediate and certain torture and death; where too, there is not an eye that pities, nor a heart that feels. The suffering lieutenant was first stripped of his clothing, and then tied to a sapling, when the Indians menaced his life by throwing their tomahawks at a tree directly over his head, brandishing their scalping-knives around him in the most frightful manner, and accompanying their ceremonies with the most terrific shouts of joy. Having punished him sufficiently in this way, they made a small opening in his abdomen, took out an intestine, which they tied to a sapling, and then unbound him from the tree, and by scourges, drove him around it till he had drawn out the whole of his intestines. He was then beheaded, and his head was stuck upon a pole, with a dog's head just above it, and his body left unburied upon the ground. Throughout the whole of his sufferings, the brave Boyd neither asked for mercy, or uttered a word of complaint.

Thus perished William Boyd, a young officer of heroic virtue and of rising talents; and in a manner that will touch the sympathies of all who read the story of his death. His fellow soldier, and fellow sufferer, Parker, was obliged to witness this moving and tragical scene, and in full expectation of passing the same ordeal. According, however, to our information, in relation to the death of these two men, which has been obtained incidentally from the Indian account of it, corroborated by the discovery of the two bodies by the American army, Parker was only beheaded.

The main army, immediately after hearing of the situation of Lieutenant Boyd's detachment, moved towards Genesee river, and finding the bodies of those who were

slain in the heroic attempt to penetrate the enemy's line, buried them in what is now the town of Groveland, near the bank of Beard's creek, under a bunch of wild plum trees, where the graves are to be seen to this day.

General Sullivan for some time continued the work of devastating the country of the Senecas, destroying everything necessary to the maintenance of life. The Senecas were completely humbled and subdued and fled to Niagara for succor; but the patriot forces returned without proceeding to Niagara, whose capture might easily have been effected.

General Sullivan's journal of his campaign against the Senecas shows that the aboriginal inhabitants of Genesee county by this time had made considerable progress in the arts of peace. The majority of them had left the chase and turned to agriculture, but fled upon the approach of the Continental army, seeking sustenance at Niagara. In July, 1780, Colonel Guy Johnson, writing to Lord Germain upon Indian affairs, said:

> The large body that was to be provided for at this post, during the last winter, in consequence of the rebel invasion, and the destruction of many Indian towns, occasioned much expense, and great consumption of provisions, which I have endeavored as far as consistent with the service, and the Commander-in-Chief afforded his assistance for re-establishing them, and enabling them to plant, as early as he could; to promote which, as well as to forward parties, I have lately visited their new settlements; one on the Ohio route is increasing fast, and I have already induced about twelve hundred of their people to settle and plant these places, which will lessen the burden of expenses.

Buffalo Creek was on the Ohio route referred to, and here one of the principal Indian settlements was located, early in the summer of 1780. The Senecas who settled here were under the leadership of Siangarochti, or Sayengaraghta, an aged sachem, known popularly as Old King. The Gilbert family of fifteen persons, who were captured in April, 1780, by eleven Indians, at their home in Northampton county, Pa., were carried by the Senecas to Fort Niagara. Subsequently some members of the family were taken to Buffalo Creek. One member of the family carried to the latter place was Elizabeth Peart, wife of Thomas Peart, son of the elder Mrs. Gilbert by a former husband. A Seneca family had adopted her, but her child, a few months old, was adopted by another family living near Fort Niagara. Early in 1781 the Indians at Buffalo Creek were compelled to go to Fort Niagara for provisions. She accompanied them to see her child, but on arriving at the fort she learned that it had been bought by a white family. Mrs.

Peart contrived to escape to Montreal with her husband and children. Other members of the family were held prisoners for some time, and the last of them were not released until 1782.

Buffalo Creek being deemed an advantageous point for trade, a number of English located there a short time after the establishment of the Indian settlement. This was the first white settlement in that locality.

From this time to the close of the Revolution few events of more than passing interest occurred within the limits of what afterward became the original county of Genesee. During the winter and spring of 1780–1781 Brant made a few unimportant forays from Niagara, but as the territory in the vicinity of the fort was held by the British and their Indian allies, no important results followed. The Niagara frontier was quiet from this period to the close of the general hostilities; but although peace was declared in 1783, the formal surrender of the frontier did not take place until July, 1796. This facts accounts in a large measure for the late development of the resources of this community by the whites.

CHAPTER VI.

From the Close of the Revolution to the Famous Purchase of the Holland Land Company—Cession of the Sovereignty of the "Genesee Country" by Massachusetts to New York—Sale of the Territory to Individuals—The Morris Purchase—The Holland Land Company Enters the Field—Morris Extinguishes the Indian Titles to the Land He Had Purchased.

The war of the Revolution, while disastrous in its effects upon most sections of the country, was not without its benefits. The country west of the Genesee river received a great amount of advertising as a direct result of the war. A large portion of the American army, drawn from other States as well as from New York, was encamped in or marched through this section on frequent occasions. Before the close of the war "the Genesee country" had become widely known as one of the most fertile and productive tracts anywhere in that section of America which had been thoroughly explored. The officers and soldiers of the patriot army, most of whom resided in the New England States, learned of the character of the land, mingled with the pioneers and in several in-

stances married daughters of some of the inhabitants of the new country. The result was that when the war ended and they returned to their homes they gave roseate accounts of the wonderful farm lands in the region which had sheltered them and of the numerous other attractions, with the result that large numbers of the inhabitants of New England began planning to found new homes in that part of New York which afterward became the original county of Genesee.

With the signing of the convention commonly known as the treaty of Fort Stanwix, which event took place October 22, 1784, the Indian titles to all lands west of the line fixed by the treaty were extinguished, and the red men were guaranteed peaceable possession of the territory east of the line. An illustration of the honesty of purpose on the part of the United States in its dealing with the Indians in those days is found in the case which arose in 1790. In that year the great sachems, Cornplanter, Half Town and Great Tree, complained to President Washington that they were being ill-treated in various ways and that the rights guaranteed them by the treaty of 1784 were not being accorded them. Washington promptly assured them that they would be fully protected in their rights and that the whites would be compelled to observe the provisions of the compact into which they, through their representatives, had entered. For some time thereafter, in accordance with instructions issued by the president, the local Indians had no cause of complaint, though they ultimately were compelled to relinquish control of the lands they and their forefathers had held for many generations.

Soon after the peace of 1783 emigration westward began to assume considerable proportions, for the fame of the Genesee country had spread throughout the Union. Many of the newcomers followed Sullivan's old route as far as the Genesee river, proceeding thence to Lewiston, on the Niagara river. About 1790 or 1791 a road was opened as far west as the crossing at Black Rock. From Batavia this road followed the high ground on nearly the same course as the old stage road to Buffalo.

In 1789 Ontario county was erected from Montgomery. The original Ontario county embraced practically all the territory west of Seneca lake.

In the month of April, 1791, the War Department dispatched Colonel Thomas Proctor on a mission to pacify the Indians in the west, against whom General St. Clair was preparing an expedition. The United

States government had been led to believe that the British, who still occupied the posts on the frontier, had been encouraging the Indians to continue their depredations on the frontier. Colonel Proctor visited the village of the chief called Cornplanter, located on the Allegany. Thence he proceeded to the Cattaraugus settlement, in company with Cornplanter and a number of his warriors. Continuing down the beach to Buffalo Creek he made efforts to induce the Senecas to use their influence to put an end to the Indian depredations in the west. At this time the famous chieftain, Red Jacket, had become very influtial, and when he learned Proctor's plans he questioned the latter's authority. Proctor proved to the Indians that he had authority direct from the government, and the next day Red Jacket announced that he would remove the council to Fort Niagara. Proctor objected to this step, and a compromise was effected by the Indians sending to Niagara for Butler. Two or three days afterward Butler arrived, and on May 4 the sachems and leaders met him in council. When the council was ended Proctor prepared for an expedition further west, and Red Jacket announced that the women of his tribe had decided that the sachems and warriors must aid the commission and that a number of them would accompany him on his errand of peace. But the British threw obstacles in Proctor's path, the officer in command opposite Fort Niagara refusing the request of the American officer for transportation up Lake Erie on a British merchant vessel, the chief having refused to make the journey in an open boat. Proctor endeavored to bribe Red Jacket, but the expedition finally was abandoned and May 21, after having spent nearly a month at or near Buffalo, Proctor started for Pittsburg. The expedition had proven a failure.

In 1794 General Anthony Wayne began his famous campaign against the western Indians, completely subduing them. Two years later the British surrendered Fort Niagara and other frontier posts, and the Indians began to understand that their interests would be best conserved by maintaining friendly relations with the victorious Americans. After 1796 their attitude was such as to give the American government little concern. As soon as absolute peace was thus assured, settlers began flocking to the rich and productive region of country of which we are writing, and whose fame had been spread throughout the length and breadth of land.

Much confusion has arisen in the minds of average readers as to the

meaning of the widely-used term, "the Genesee country." During the Revolutionary war, and as late as 1789, that part of New York State west of a line drawn north from about the site of the present city of Elmira was known as "the Genesee country." The lands were claimed by both New York and Massachusetts, and the British forts at Niagara and Oswego menaced both the claimants long after the close of the Revolution. Simcoe, then governor of Upper Canada, protested against the settlement of the country "during the inexecution of the treaty that terminated the Revolutionary war." The British considered the treaty of 1783 a mere truce, to be followed by the speedy failure of the new republic and the restoration of the colonies to the mother country. Beside the constant menace of the British the country abounded in unfriendly Indians. So bad was the reputation of the entire section that when apprentices were bound or slaves sold it was stipulated that they should not be taken into the Genesee country. In 1788, five years after the signing of the treaty of peace, when Oliver Phelps left his home in Connecticut to go to the notorious country for the purpose of looking after his great claim his friends called him a fool; and a number of the more religiously inclined among them accompanied him to the limits of his town with prayers and tears.

Oliver Phelps and Daniel Gorham, the latter also of Connecticut, had purchased from Massachusetts the entire tract west of "the pre-emption line," agreeing to pay $1,000,000 therefor. This was at the rate of fourteen cents per acre for the seven million acres. This line ran northward from the eighty-second milestone on the Pennsylvania border to the shore of Lake Ontario. Massachusetts had ceded to New York all political jurisdiction to the territory west of this line, reserving the right of pre-emption. In 1788 Phelps held a council with the representatives of the Six Nations on the site of the present village of Canandaigua, purchasing their right to two million five hundred thousand acres in this tract, the Massachusetts title to which already had been invested in himself and Gorham. He then opened, at what is now Canandaigua, the first land office in America for the sale of virgin lands to actual settlers. But later on these partners in this gigantic speculation met with financial reverses and were obliged to surrender all of the tract the Indian title to which had not been extinguished, and the major portion of it afterward was purchased by the Holland Land company.

It will thus be seen that the original "Genesee country" was a term which included not only the tract eventually known by that name, but

also the Holland tract and other tracts. What was finally known as "the Genesee country," after the failure of Phelps and Gorham, embraced an area of two million two hundred thousand acres. It was bounded on the east by the pre-emption line, and on the west by a line drawn through the "Big Elm" at the junction of the Canaseraga creek with the Genesee river, near the present village of Mount Morris This line met the Pennsylvania line at the south. Two miles north of Canandaigua now Avon, it turned westward at a right angle, and then followed the course of the Genesee river to Lake Ontario, a distance of twelve miles.

When the war of the Revolution had been brought to a close and the independence of the colonies had been established, a serious dispute arose between the State of New York and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding the territory now comprised in Western New York. Massachusetts claimed the title to this land by virtue of a grant by King James I to the Plymouth Company, made November 3, 1620. New York laid claim to it by virtue of the grant from Charles I to the Duke of York, dated March 12, 1664, and the voluntary submission of the Iroquois nations to the British crown in 1684.[1]

At a convention held at Hartford, Conn., December 16, 1786, at

[1] James I, King of Great Britain, in the year 1620, granted to the Plymouth Company, a tract of country denominated New England; this tract extended several degrees of latitude north and south, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean east and west. A charter for the government of a portion of this territory, granted by Charles I, in 1628, was vacated in 1684, but a second charter was granted by William and Mary in 1691. The territory comprised in this second charter extended on the Atlantic ocean from north latitude 42 degrees 2 minutes to 44 degrees 15 minutes, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. Charles I, in 1663, granted to the Duke of York and Albany, the province of New York, including the present State of New Jersey. The tract thus granted extended from a line twenty miles east of the Hudson river, westward rather indefinitely, and from the Atlantic ocean north to the south line of Canada, then a French province. By this collision of description, each of these colonies (afterwards states), laid claim to the jurisdiction as well as to the pre-emption right of the same land, being a tract sufficiently large to form several states. The State of New York, however, in 1781, and Massachusetts, in 1785 ceded to the United States all their rights, either of jurisdiction or proprietorship, to all the territory lying west of a meridian line run south from the westerly bend of Lake Ontario. Although the nominal amount in controversy, by these acts, was much diminished, it still left some nineteen thousand square miles of territory in dispute, but this controversy was finally settled by a convention of Commissioners appointed by the parties, held at Hartford, Conn., on the 16th day of December, 1786. According to the stipulations entered into by the convention, Massachusetts ceded to the State of New York all her claim to the government, sovereignty and jurisdiction of all the territory lying west of the present east line of the State of New York; and New York ceded to Massachusetts the pre-emption right, or fee of the land subject to the title of the natives, of all that part of the State of New York lying west of a line, beginning at a point in the north line of Pennsylvania, 82 miles north of the northeast corner of said State, and running from thence due north through Seneca lake, to Lake Ontario; excepting and reserving to the State of New York a strip of land east of and adjoining the eastern bank of the Niagara river, one mile wide, and extending its whole length. The land, the pre-emption right of which was thus ceded amounted to about six millions of acres.—Turner's History of the Holland Purchase. Page 325.

which the States of New York and Massachusetts were represented by commissioners, the conflicting claims of the two States to that portion of what is now New York lying west of a line drawn northwardly from the eighty-second milestone on the Pennsylvania line to Lake Ontario, excepting a strip one mile wide the length of the Niagara river on its east side, had been adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties to the contract. Massachusetts had ceded to New York complete jurisdiction over the land, and New York had yielded to Massachusetts the pre-emption or proprietary right. In other words the State of Massachusetts as an individual, held the proprietary title to lands in New York State. The tract in question contained about six million acres.

In April, 1788, Massachusetts contracted to sell to Oliver Phelps of Granville, Hampshire county, Mass., and Nathaniel Gorham of Charlestown, Mass., their pre-emption right to all the lands in Western New York, for the sum of one million dollars, to be paid in three annual installments. This was at the rate of about seventeen cents per acre. The contract required that the payment should be made in a kind of scrip known as "consolidated securities," at that time much below par; but a rise to par prevented them from fulfilling the terms of their agreement.

In July, 1788, Phelps and Gorham purchased of the Indians, at a convention held at Buffalo, the Indian title to about 2,600,000 acres of the eastern part of their purchase from Massachusetts. This purchase was bounded west by a line beginning at a point in the northern boundary of Pennsylvania due south of the point made by the confluence of the Canaseraga creek with the Genesee river, running thence exactly north to the junction of these two streams, thence northwardly along the waters of the Genesee river to a point two miles north of Canawagus village, thence running due west twelve miles, thence running northwardly to a point on the south shore of Lake Ontario twelve miles west of the Genesee river. November 21, 1788, the State of Massachusetts conveyed to Phelps and Gorham all the right and title to this tract, the latter having extinguished the Indian title. These lands included most of the territory comprised within the limits of the present counties of Allegany, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Steuben, Wayne and Yates.

As soon as practicable this tract was surveyed into townships about six miles square, and these townships subdivided into lots, many of which were soon sold to white settlers.

May 11, 1791, the State of Massachusetts sold to Samuel Ogden, as the representative of Robert Morris, all the balance of its land excepting that which Phelps and Gorham had retained. This included about 3,750,000 acres which the latter had been compelled to reconvey to the State, finding themselves unable to pay for the same.

Oliver Phelps was a native of Windsor, Conn. He served through the Revolutionary war, during which he became acquainted with Robert Morris. In 1802 he removed to Canandaigua, remaining there until his death in 1809. He became first judge of Ontario county, and also served as a member of Congress from his district. His son, Leicester Phelps, assumed the name of Oliver Leicester Phelps after his graduation from Yale college. The latter died in 1813. He was the father of the late Judge Oliver Phelps of Canandaigua. Nathaniel Gorham, the partner of Mr. Phelps, was a citizen of Boston, Mass., but never resided upon his purchase. His son, Nathaniel Gorham, became an early resident of Canandaigua, where he died in 1826.

Robert Morris, who lived in Philadelphia, was the great patriot and financier, who had been Superintendent of Finance for the Revolutionary government, and his hand had guided that government in safety through the pecuniary perils which had beset and almost wrecked it. This great tract of land, known in history as the "Morris Purchase," became the original county of Genesee.[1] The east line of the Morris Purchase commenced upon the Pennsylvania line 44.78 miles west of the pre-emption line and ran due north to an elm tree and the forks of the Genesee river and Canaseraga creek, thence northerly along that river to a point two miles north of the Canawagus village, thence due west twelve miles, thence north twenty-four degrees east to Lake Ontario. Soon after his purchase, Morris made a treaty or contract with the Indians residing on the territory he had acquired in which they agreed to relinquish their title to all the land in question excepting a few reservations of moderate area.[2]

[1] The English translation of the Indian name Genesee is "The Beautiful Valley."

[2] The tracts reserved by the Indians were the Canawagus Reservation of two square miles, on the Genesee river west of Avon; Little Beard's and Big Tree Reservations of four square miles, on the Genesee opposite Geneseo; Squakie Hill Reservation of two square miles, on the Genesee north of Mount Morris; Gardeau Reservation of twenty-eight square miles, on both sides of the Genesee, in Castile and Mount Morris; the Caneadea Reservation of six square miles, on both sides of the Genesee in Allegany county; the Oil Spring Reservation of one square mile, on the line between Cattaraugus and Allegany counties; the Allegany Reservation of forty-two square miles, on both sides of the Allegany river, extending north from the Pennsylvania line; the Cattaraugus Reservation of forty-two square miles, on both sides of the mouth of Cattaraugus creek; the Buffalo Reservation of one hundred and thirty square miles, on both sides of Buffalo

The Gardeau Reservation, which lay partly in the town of Castile, in the southeastern corner of Wyoming county, formerly a part of the original Genesee county, was a tract of ten thousand acres which the Indians conferred upon Mary Jemison, the historic "white woman," who resided upon it until her decease, at a very advanced age, in September, 1833.

Mary Jemison was a remarkable woman. She was born at sea, of Irish parents, during their passage to America in 1742 or 1743. Her parents settled upon what at that time was the frontier of Pennsylvania. One of her uncles was a member of Washington's command, and fell at Braddock's defeat. In the spring of 1755 Mary, her parents, two brothers and several other inmates of the house in which she was residing were made prisoners by a party of six Seneca Indians and four Frenchmen. They were taken to the woods, where every member of the captured party except Mary was murdered. She was exposed to all the hardships and privations of a prisoner until her arrival at a Seneca town, where she was adopted as a daughter into an Indian family. She was treated with kindness, but laid plans for escape; these being frustrated she finally resigned herself entirely to the Indian life and customs. Soon she fell in love with a young Delaware Indian, and married him, becoming the mother of children.

Her Delaware husband dying, at about the beginning of the Revolution, she married a chief of the Senecas, residing in the Genesee valley. Her new husband was one of the most bloodthirsty members of that warlike tribe, but was ever kind to his spouse. Through all her career among the savages she retained her family name, Jemison, and generally spoke the English language; but although her parents had given her careful religious instruction, she embraced the religion of the savages and became thoroughly Indianized — adopting and becoming enamored of all their manners, habits and customs.

Her life was full of incident, with many wild adventures. She was always held in the most exalted esteem by the Indians, as was evinced by the grant of the Gardeau tract, a fertile section upon which she resided until a few years before her death, which occurred on the Buffalo Creek Reservation. In obtaining this grant, or reservation, she showed all the cunning of her adopted people. Thomas Morris, who conducted

creek; the Tonawanda Reservation of seventy square miles on both sides of Tonawanda creek, mostly in Genesee county; and the Tuscarora Reservation of one square mile, three miles east of Lewiston, Niagara county. Portions of some of these reservations are still held and occupied by descendants of the original Indian owners.

the treaty for his father, is reported as having said that when a request for a reservation for the "white woman" was made to him, he supposed that the petitioning Indians meant only a farm of two hundred or three acres; but the woman herself, by artfully indicating certain bounds with which he was not familiar, overreached him and obtained a tract of ten thousand acres, including the whole of what was known as the Gardeau flats and the romantic walls of rock and hill within which they are sequestered.

During the Revolution the house of Mary Jemison frequently sheltered Brant and Butler when making their invasions upon the frontier. In 1775 she attended the treaty of Genesee flats, held by General Schuyler. In 1823 the story of her romantic life, as told by her, was taken down in writing, and was full of incident and adventure. Many of her experiences were very thrilling, and some most pathetic. She never would consent to cast off her Indian costume, even after her home had become completely surrounded by the increasing white population, but to the end of her life she adhered with great tenacity to all her Indian customs. She was wealthy and her thousands of acres were worked by tenants. One of her sons became a physician and obtained a surgeon's commission in the United States navy. Though a woman of unusually marked peculiarities Mary Jemison was humane and benevolent, and her influence, particularly in her latter days, was always employed for the accomplishment of good, principally among the members of the fast decaying Indian tribes residing in Western New York.

In the summer of 1789, the year after the purchase of Western New York by Phelps & Gorham, Oliver Phelps left Granville, Mass., with men and means for the purpose of exploring and surveying this extensive territory. The wilderness was penetrated as far as Canandaigua, then considered on the frontier of civilization. By the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Kirkland, the missionary among the Six Nations, and a commissioner on behalf of Massachusetts, Mr. Phelps succeeded in collecting the chiefs and warriors of those tribes whose warlike spirit still rankled, on account of the chastisement inflicted by Sullivan's expedition. This conference with the Indians was held on a beautiful elevation overlooking Canandaigua lake.

Two days had passed away in negotiation with the Indians for a cession of their lands. The contract was supposed to be nearly completed, when Red Jacket arose. With the grace and dignity of a Roman senator he drew his blanket around him,

and with a piercing eye surveyed the multitude. All was hushed. Nothing interposed to break the silence save the rustling of the tree-tops, under whose shade they were gathered. After a long and solemn, but not unmeaning pause, he commenced his speech in a low voice and sententious style. Rising gradually with his subject, he depicted the primitive simplicity and happiness of his nation, and the wrongs they had sustained from the usurpations of the white man, with such a bold but faithful pencil that the Indian auditors were soon roused to vengeance or melted into tears.

The effect was inexpressible. But, ere the emotions of admiration or sympathy had subsided, the white men became alarmed. They were in the heart of an Indian country, surrounded by more than ten times their number, who were inflamed by the remembrance of their injuries, and excited to indignation by the eloquence of a favorite chief. Appalled and terrified, the white men cast a cheerless gaze upon the hordes around them. A nod from the chiefs might be the onset of destruction. At that portentous moment, Farmer's Brother interposed. He replied not to his brother chief; but, with the sagacity truly aboriginal, he caused a cessation of the council, introduced good cheer, commended the eloquence of Red Jacket, and, before the meeting had reassembled, with the aid of other prudent chiefs, he had moderated the fury of his nation to a more salutary review of the question before them.[1]

The Revolution resulted in the financial ruin of Robert Morris, and soon after making his great purchase, a speculation in which he hoped partially to retrieve his fortunes, he was compelled to part with his land. In 1792 and 1793 he disposed of most of his holdings to representatives of men in Holland who afterwards became known as the Holland Land Company. The property was conveyed by four separate deeds. December 24, 1792, he deeded one and one-half million acres to Herman Le Roy and John Linklaen. February 27, 1793, he deeded one million acres to Herman Le Roy, John Linklaen and Gerrit Boon. July 20, 1793, he deeded eight hundred thousand acres to the last named persons; and on the same day deeded three hundred thousand acres to Herman Le Roy, William Bayard and Matthew Clarkson.

These tracts were purchased with money furnished by a number of capitalists residing in Holland and held in trust for their benefit, the laws of the State forbidding aliens to purchase and hold real estate in their own names. The State Legislature finally sanctioned transfers of portions of the land, and the entire tract was conveyed by the trustees by three separate deeds to the individuals composing three separate branches of the Holland Land Company. Although these deeds of conveyance were given to three distinct companies of proprietors, their interests were very closely blended, several of the persons having large interests in each of the three different estates. They appointed one

[1] Barber and Howe's "Historical Collections of the State of New York."

general agent for the whole, who conducted the concerns of the tract generally as though it all belonged to the same proprietors, making no distinction which operated in the least on the settlers and purchasers.

The tracts thus sold by Robert Morris became famous as the "Holland Purchase." This sale was made before the Indian title to the land was extinguished, accompanied by an agreement on the part of Morris to extinguish that title, with the assistance of the company, as soon as practicable.

The Holland Purchase comprised about seven-eighths of the entire Morris Purchase, Robert Morris reserving to himself a strip of an average width of twelve miles, lying between the Phelps and Gorham Purchase and the Holland Purchase, and known as the Morris Reserve. The line forming the division between the Holland Purchase and the Morris Reserve commenced upon the Pennsylvania line twelve miles west of the west line of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase, and from thence ran due north to near the center of the present town of Stafford, Genesee county; thence due west 2.07875 miles thence due north to Lake Ontario. This line is known as the "Transit Line," from its being run by a transit, then used for the first time in making surveys.

The Morris Reserve subsequently was disposed of in several large tracts to different purchasers. A tract containing 87,000 acres, lying immediately west of Phelps & Gorham's "mill yard," was sold to Le Roy, Bayard & McEvers, and is known as the Triangular Tract. The Connecticut Tract lies immediately west of the Triangle, and contains 100,000 acres. It was purchased by the State of Connecticut and Sir William Pultney and was divided between them. The Cragie Tract, containing 50,000 acres, joins the Connecticut Tract on the south, and immediately east is the Forty Thousand Acre Tract. South of these are successively the Ogden Tract of 50,000 acres; the Cottinger Tract of 50,000 acres; the Sterritt Tract of 150,000 acres; and the Church Tract of 100,000 acres. A tract joining the Forty Thousand Acre Tract on the south is known as Morris's Honorary Creditors' Tract and contains 58,570 acres. Of these tracts the Connecticut and Cragie Tracts, with the Holland Purchase, occupied all of what is now Genesee county.

Soon after the purchase made by the Holland company, a colony consisting of about seventy German families was sent over from Hamburg to settle on the land acquired; but having lived in large towns these immigrants were unaccustomed to the hard labor necessary to the clear-

ing up and early development of a new country, and rioting followed the first attempt at settlement. After this the company opened an office for the sale of its lands, which were disposed of in this way for many years.

Immediately after the title had been obtained by the individuals or the associations of individuals referred to in the foregoing, steps were taken to extinguish the Indian titles and to survey the tract.

Though Robert Morris desired a speedy settlement of his transactions with the Hollanders, it was not until 1796 that he requested President Washington to order a treaty and appoint a commissioner to represent the United States. Morris's delay in making this application was due entirely to motives of public consideration. His letter was as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, August 25, 1796.

Sir—In the year 1791 I purchased from the State of Massachusetts a tract of country lying within the boundaries of the State of New York, which had been ceded by the latter to the former State, under the sanction and with the concurrence of the Congress of the United States. This tract of land is bounded to the east by the Genesee river, to the north by Lake Ontario, to the west partly by Lake Erie and partly by the boundary line of the Pennsylvania triangle, and to the south by the north boundary line of the State of Pennsylvania. A printed brief of the title I take the liberty to transmit herewith. To perfect this title it is necessary to purchase of the Seneca nation of Indians their native right, which I should have done soon after the purchase was made of the State of Massachusetts, but that I felt myself restrained from doing so by motives of public consideration. The war between the western Indian nations and the United States did not extend to the Six Nations, of which the Seneca Nation is one; and, as I apprehended that, if this nation should sell its rights during the existence of that war, they might the more readily be induced to join the enemies of our country, I was determined not to make the purchase whilst the war lasted.

When peace was made with the Indian nations I turned my thoughts toward the purchase, which is to me an object very interesting; but upon it being represented that a little longer patience, until the Western posts should be delivered up by the British government, might be public utility, I concluded to wait for that event also, which is now happily accomplished, and there seems no obstacle to restrain me from making the purchase, especially as I have reason to believe the Indians are desirous of making the sale,

The delays which have already taken place and that arose solely from the considerations above mentioned, have been extremely detrimental to my private affairs; but, still being desirous to comply with formalities prescribed by certain laws of the United States, although these laws probably do not reach my case, I now make application to the President of the United States and request that he will nominate and appoint a commissioner to be present and preside at a treaty, which he will be pleased to authorize to be held with the Seneca nation, for the purpose of enabling me to make a purchase in conformity with the formalities required by law, of the

tract of country for which I have already paid a very large sum of money. My right to pre-emption is unequivocal, and the land is become so necessary to the growing population and surrounding settlements that it is with difficulty that the white people can be restrained from squattering or settling down upon these lands, which if they should do, it may probably bring on contentions with the Six Nations. This will be prevented by a timely, fair, and honorable purchase. This proposed treaty ought to be held immediately before the hunting season, or another year will be lost, as the Indians cannot be collected during that season. The loss of another year, under the payments thus made for these lands, would be ruinous to my affairs; and as I have paid so great deference to public considerations whilst they did exist, I expect and hope that my request will be readily granted now, when there can be no cause for delay, especially if the Indians are willing to sell, which will be tested by the offer to buy.

With the most perfect esteem and respect, I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

ROBERT MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esq., President of the United States.

In accordance with Morris's request Washington designated Isaac Smith, a member of Congress from New Jersey, as commissioner. But Mr. Smith subsequently having been appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, he declined the appointment, and Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, who had been a member of Congress from Connecticut, was named in his place. Morris being unable personally to participate in the convention, he appointed his son Thomas and Captain Charles Williamson as his attorneys; but the latter declined to act, on account of pressing private business, and the entire responsibility for conducting the difficult negotiations devolved upon the younger Morris.

It was decided to hold the convention at Big Tree, near the site of the present village of Geneseo. Thomas Morris entertained the principal persons participating in the treaty, and caused a large council house to be erected.[1] Late in the month of August the Indians began to arrive at Big Tree. Of the fifty-two who signed the treaty, many were foremost sachems. The leaders of the Senecas included such noted chieftains as Young King, chief warrior, Red Jacket, Cornplanter, Handsome Lake, the Prophet, Farmer's Brother, Little Billy, Pollard, the Infant, Little Beard, Destroy Town and Blacksnake. There were

[1] In Doty's History of Livingston county it is asserted that the Indian village of Big Tree was west of the Genesee river, but that the historic big tree itself rose from the eastern bank of the river. Some historians claim that the village was east of the river. Both are correct, as the village was moved; but it was west of the Genesee at the time of the treaty. Not only does it appear so on the first map of the region made from actual surveys, but in the treaty as agreed upon it was stated that the reservation of Big Tree should embrace the village. Ellicott's map of 1804 shows the reservation to be west of the river. The village was moved in 1805, and on the map showing the Phelps and Gorham Purchase in 1806, Big Tree village is located on the east of the Genesee. In all probability the council house erected by Thomas Morris stood on the east bank.

two Indians known to the whites as Big Tree. Ga-on-dah-go-waah, sometimes called Great Tree, was a full-blooded Seneca of the Hawk clan and for many years resided at Big Tree village. July 8, 1788, when Phelps and Gorham made their purchase, he attended the Buffalo treaty. In 1790 he went to Philadelphia with Cornplanter and Half Town to protest against what they deemed unjust treatment on the part of Phelps and his associates. In 1792 he went there again in company with Red Jacket and died in that city in April of that year. His daughter had a son whose father was a Niagara trader named Pollard. He became a famous chief, named Ga-on-do-wan-na, and was also known as Big Tree. He was one of the signers of the Big Tree treaty. He was almost the equal of Red Jacket as an orator, but had a finer character, becoming one of the noblest of the Senecas, especially after the death of the famous Cornplanter. He was one of the first Indians at the Buffalo Creek Reservation to become a convert to Christianity, and after his conversion his life was pure and beneficent. He was known by many as Colonel John Pollard. His death occurred on the Buffalo Creek Reservation April 10, 1841, and his body was interred in the old Mission cemetery.

August 22 Thomas Morris reached the Genesee valley. The commissioners arrived four days later, Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth representing the United States and General William Shepherd appearing for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Among the others who were there were Captain Israel Chapin, who had succeeded his father, General Israel Chapin, as superintendent of Indian affairs; James Rees, later of Geneva, who acted as secretary to the commission; William Bayard of New York, the agent of the Holland Land Company; two young Hollanders named Van Staphorst, relatives of the Van Staphorst who was one of the members of the Holland Land Company; Nathaniel W. Howell, Horatio Jones and Jasper Parrish.

At one o'clock on the afternoon of August 28, 1797, the council was formally opened. The first to speak was Cornplanter. The two commissioners then presented their credentials and addressed the council, assuring the Indians that no injustice should be done them, but that their interests would be fully protected. Young Morris then informed the Indians of his father's desire, and concluded by offering the sum of $100,000 for the entire tract, allowing the Senecas to retain such reservations as might be needed for their actual occupation.

In order to give the Indians time for deliberation, the council was

then adjourned. Upon reassembling Farmer's Brother replied to the propositions made by Morris, stating that the Indians had various objections to selling. Morris answered the arguments advanced, and another adjournment was taken. Upon reconvening, the famous Red Jacket arose to announce the determination of his people. At the previous session Morris had thoughtlessly remarked, in referring to the small value of the lands while remaining in the natural and unproductive state, that their only value while in that condition arose from the consciousness of their ownership that the Indians felt. In the famous speech now delivered by Red Jacket he admitted the truth of the remark, but added:

> That knowledge is everything to us. It raises us in our own estimation. It creates in our bosoms a proud feeling which elevates us to a nation. Observe the difference between the estimation in which a Seneca is held and that of an Oneida. We are courted, while the Oneidas are considered a degraded people, fit only to make brooms and baskets. Why this difference? It is because the Senecas are known as the proprietors of a broad domain, while the Oneidas are cooped up in a narrow space.

For two weeks the question was discussed in all its aspects. The Indians not yet agreeing to sell, the commissioners exhibited impatience and urged upon young Morris the wisdom of more vigorous action. The latter protested, insisting that he knew the Indian characteristics better than his advisers; but so strongly did the commissioners insist that at the next session Morris pronounced an emphatic negative to the proposition of the chiefs, declaring that if they had nothing better to offer the council might as well end. Springing to his feet Red Jacket exclaimed:

> You now have arrived at the point to which I wished to bring you. You told us in your first address that, even in the event of our not agreeing, we would part as friends, Here, then, is my hand. I now cover up the council fire.

This decision was received with great applause, and to all appearances the council was ended. The commissioners, realizing how unfortunate had been the results of their interference, now begged Morris to endeavor to rekindle the council fire. The latter acted promptly and with great sagacity. Approaching Farmer's Brother he declared that, according to the Indian custom, the council fire could be put out by none other than by him who had kindled it; that Red Jacket had exceeded his authority, and that the council fire was still burning. The force of Morris's argument was admitted. The latter then called the Seneca women together, distributed handsome presents among them and argued with them in favor of the proposed transfer of the lands.

According to the Indian laws the lands belonged to the warriors who fought for them and the women who cultivated them. While the treaties generally were negotiated by the sachems, the warriors and the women held the right to interfere when the question involved was the sale of land. Morris knew this, hence his diplomatic dealings with the women of the nation present. As the result of his efforts, the women here exercised their inherent right and the council reassembled. Cornplanter, the principal war chief, superseded Red Jacket and conducted the negotiations for the Indians. After a comparatively brief conference the Indians decided to accept the offer made by Morris, and September 15, 1797, the treaty was signed. By its provisions all the land now embraced within the counties of Allegany, Wyoming, Genesee, Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua was sold to Robert Morris,[1] amount paid therefor to be invested in the stock of the bank of the United States and held in the name of the president for the benefit of the Indians.

CHAPTER VII.

The Holland Land Company and Its Representatives in America—Joseph Ellicott, the First Agent on the Purchase, and His Operations—Old Indian Trails—Taxpayers in Genesee County in 1800—Sketch of Joseph Ellicott.

The main office of the Holland Land Company was located at Philadelphia, and the members of the company were Wilhelm Willink, Jan Willink, Nicholas Van Staphorst, Jacob Van Staphorst, Nicholas Hubbard, Pieter Van Eeghen, Christian Van Eeghen, Isaac Ten Cote, Hendrick Vallenhoven, Christina Coster, Jan Stadmitski and Rutger J. Schimmelpennick. Theophilus Cazenove, the first general agent of the company, took charge of all the business relating to the company from the time of the first purchase of the lands until 1799. Upon his retire-

[1] Certain modern writers who have investigated the subject have produced what appears to be documentary evidence that Morris and the representatives of the Holland Land Company were compelled secretly to bribe the Seneca warriors to induce them to consent to the sale of their lands. It is said that Cornplanter received an annuity of two hundred and fifty dollars as long as he lived as his share of the bribe, while Red Jacket, Young King and Little Billy received one hundred dollars per annum. Robert Morris himself evidently expected that the Indians would have to be bribed, for in his letter of instructions he said: "Annuities of $20 to $60 may be given to influential chiefs, and to the highest chiefs $250 to $300. Some dollars may be promised before the treaty and paid when finished, to the amount of $500 or $600, or, if necessary $1,000."

ment Paul Busti succeeded to the management, remaining in charge until 1824, a period of a quarter of a century. He in turn was succeeded by John J. Vander Kemp, who remained in control until the final settlement of the affairs of the company.

Joseph Ellicott, an eminent surveyor, was employed by the famous Holland Company to survey their lands and manage the sale of them, his engagement with them dating from July, 1797. He at once took charge of the surveys of these lands, completing them in a little less than a dozen years. Surveying began on a big scale in 1798, after elaborate and extensive preparatious. Besides Mr. Ellicott there were eleven surveyors, each of whom was provided with a corps of assistants.[1] A part of this force, under the leadership of John Thompson, proceeded westward over the usual route to Buffalo, where a portion of their outfit was left for use on the western part of the purchase. The remainder was taken to Williamsburg, on Genesee river, where a storehouse for the use of the surveyors had been built. At the start these two points were the principal depots for the surveyors; but before the end of the year Mr. Ellicott, who had personally surveyed the Transit Line, made the principal headquarters at the point on that line known as the Transit storehouse. The Transit Line extended from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario, forming the basis for the future surveys and divisions of the territory. These surveys were continued until the whole territory was divided into ranges and townships. The ranges were numbered from east to west and the townships from south to north.

The first plan of the agent of the company was to divide each township, which was six miles square, into sixteen portions, one and a half miles square, to be called sections, and to subdivide each section into twelve lots, each lot to be three-quarters of a mile long (generally north and south) and one-quarter of a mile wide, containing about one hundred and twenty acres each. It was presumed that many wealthy farmers would purchase one section each, while those possessed of moderate capital would content themselves with the smaller farms. The surveys of twenty-four townships were begun in

[1] The principal surveyors engaged during the active season of 1798, in township, meridian line and reservation surveys, and in lake and river traverses, were as follows: Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott, John Thompson, Richard M. Stoddard, George Burgess, James Dewey, David Ellicott, Aaron Oakford, jr., Augustus Porter, Seth Pease, James Smedley, William Shepherd, George Eggleston. In addition to these were two Frenchmen, Messrs. Haudecaur and Autrechy, who were employed in some surveys of Niagara river and the falls. The last were rather engineers than surveyors.—Turner's History of the Holland Purchase, page 406.

conformity to this plan, although the surveyors departed from the uniformity of the size and shape of the lots where large streams like the Tonawanda creek, running through townships, were made convenient boundaries of lots.

From experience, however, it was ascertained that, in the purchase of land, each individual, whether father, son or son-in-law, would locate himself according to his own choice or fancy. That this formal and regular division of land into farms, seldom was found to be in conformity to the topography of the country, nor to the different requirements as to quantity, likewise that the addition of sections to townships and lots, rendered the descriptions of farms more complex, and increased the liability to err in defining any particular location; for which reasons, the practice of dividing townships into sections was abandoned, and thereafter, the townships were simply divided into lots of about sixty chains or three-fourths of a mile square, which could be divided into farms to suit the topography of the land and quantity required by the purchasers. In those townships in which the surveys had been commenced to divide them into sections, and not completed, the remaining sections were divided into four lots only of three-fourths of a mile square each. These lots consequently contained about three hundred and sixty acres each, but could not be laid off exactly uniform in shape and area.[1]

When the survey of the Holland Purchase began in the spring of 1798, all travel westward to Buffalo was along the ancient Indian trail. During the preceding winter, however, the State Legislature had appointed Charles Williamson a commissioner to lay out and open a State road from the Genesee river to Buffalo Creek and to Lewiston. The Holland Company subscribed $5,000 toward defraying the expense of constructing this road. Mr. Williamson began his task in the summer of 1798, following the Indian trails as closely as possible. Mr. Ellicott, with the aid of a party of Senecas, opened the first wagon road early in the season as a preliminary to the work of the survey, improving the trail from the East Transit to Buffalo Creek to an extent that made it passable for wagons. The construction of this road was undertaken thus early for the purpose of providing a good highway to those who might settle on the lands of the company. That the managers of the company's business appreciated the value of such a road is evident from the following extract of a letter from Paul Busti, who in 1799 succeeded Theophilus Cazenove as agent of the company, to Mr. Ellicott, dated August 15, 1800:

The opening of communication through the country, is a matter deemed of such importance, that it will not escape your attention, and that the application of money for that purpose has been appropriated on a much larger scale than you thought

[1] Turner's History of the Holland Purchase, page 405.

necessary. By extending the amount of expenditures on that head, I mean to evince to you how much I am persuaded of the usefulness of having practicable roads cut out. You will have to take care that the roads to be laid out at present, are to be cut in such a direction as to become of general advantage to the whole country.

The old Indian trail, on which the principal part of this road was built, crossed the Genesee at Avon, passed thence through Batavia and down the north side of Tonawanda creek, entering Erie county at the Tonawanda Indian village; from there it crossed the site of Akron, passed through Clarence Hollow and Williamsville to Cold Spring, and thence followed nearly on the line of Main street, in Buffalo, to the creek. A branch continued to Black Rock, where the river was crossed. Another branch extended from Clarence to Lancaster and ran thence along Cayuga creek to the Seneca Indian village. Another trail extended from Little Beard's Town, on the Genesee, to the boundary of Erie county near the southeast corner of the town of Alden and continued westerly to the Seneca village. There were also trails up Cazenove and Eighteen Mile creeks and between Cattaraugus and Buffalo villages.

As late as the summer of 1799 no house had been built on the road from the East Transit Line to Buffalo. To remedy this situation, June 1, 1799, Paul Busti authorized Mr. Ellicott to induce six persons to locate on the highway about ten miles apart and to open taverns, in consideration of which each was to receive from fifty to one hundred and fifty acres of land at a low price and liberal terms of payment.

In accordance with the offer of Mr. Ellicott three persons immediately grasped the opportunity presented. Frederick Walthers took one hundred and fifty acres, including the East Transit storehouse and the site of the village of Stafford. Soon afterward Asa Ransom of Buffalo located on a one hundred and fifty-acre tract at Clarence Hollow.[1] September 16, Garritt Davis took one hundred and fifty acres east of and adjoining the Tonawanda Reservation. These three persons at once erected houses for the accommodation of the traveling public.

As soon as Mr. Ransom had erected his tavern, at "Pine Grove," as it soon became known, Mr. Ellicott made it his headquarters. His ap-

[1] Harry B. Ransom, who was born in the house built here in November, 1799, was the first white male child born in that part of the original Genesee county, now Erie county. Mr. Ellicott made Ransom's house his headquarters as soon as it had been constructed. Elias Ransom built a frame house on the road from Batavia to Buffalo, seven miles east of the latter place, which was probably the first frame building west of Batavia. The three public houses referred to in the text were constructed of logs.

pointment as local agent of the company took effect October 1, 1800, at which time he began the sales of land. His office was located in one end of Ransom's tavern. James W. Stevens of Philadelphia acted as his clerk, and occasionally Mr. Brisbane assisted in the work of the office, though the latter spent most of his time at the Transit storehouse. January 16, 1801, Mr. Ellicott wrote to Mr. Busti as follows:

I have the satisfaction to inform you (although after a diasgreeable journey) that I arrived here in good health the 1st instant, since which period I have been busily employed in making arrangements for the sale of the land placed under my charge. The season of the year being such as to prevent persons from making their establishments, prevents me at present from effecting any *bona fide* sales. Settlers generally wishing to defer entering into articles before they are able to commence their improvements. I have, however, abundant reason to conclude, that at the opening of Spring I shall effect the sale of considerable land.

May 7 of the same year Mr. Ellicott, writing to Le Roy and Bayard, says:

In respect to sales of land, we have not as yet made rapid progress. The best and most eligible situations are only in demand. However, we dispose of more or less almost every day. Settlements form more rapidly on the east side of the Purchase than on the west, owing to its contiguity to the old settlement in the Genesee, where provisions and necessaries for their beginning is more easily attainable. However, there are some going on the western side, and I continue to live under the expectation of selling a considerable quantity of lands in the course of the summer and fall, and presume after this season the sales will increase, the ice will then be broken, and conveniences will be had for settlers on the Purchase.

The survey of the Holland Purchase into townships was concluded in 1800, by which time several of them had been divided into lots. In the same year Mr. Ellicott, while on a visit to the East, had printed a number of hand bills headed "Holland Company West Genesee Lands," in which he portrayed the attractions of the territory and announced that it was for sale on reasonable terms.[1]

[1] A portion of this handbill reads as follows:

"The Holland Land Company will open a Land Office in the ensuing month of September, for the sale of a portion of their valuable lands in the Genesee country, State of New York, situate in the last purchase made of the Seneca Nation of Indians, on the western side of Genesee river. For the convenience of applicants, the Land Office will be established near the centre of the lands, intended for sale and on the main road, leading from the Eastern and Middle States to Upper Canada, Presque Isle in Pennsylvania, and the Connecticut Reserve. Those lands are situate, adjoining and contiguous, to the lakes Erie, Ontario, and the streights of Niagara, possessing the advantage of the navigation and trade of all the Upper lakes, as well as the river Saint Lawrence, (from which the British settlements derive great advantage) also intersected by the Allegany river, navigable for boats of 30 or 40 tons burthen, to Pittsburgh and New Orleans, and contiguous to the navigable waters of the west branch of the Susquehanna river, and almost surrounded by settlements, where provision of every kind is to be had in great abundance and on

In May, 1801, acting as the special agent of Le Roy and Bayard, he employed Richard M. Stoddard to survey the Triangular Tract, giving explicit directions, particularly as to laying off five hundred acres at "Buttermilk Falls." In a letter to Mr. Munger, at the Transit store house, dated at Ransom's in May, 1801, he states that he has been informed that "the inhabitants of your neighborhood have undertaken to open the road to Ganson's. You will please consider me a subscriber toward the expense of the undertaking."

For a period of more than twenty years Mr. Ellicott had practically exclusive control of the local business of the Holland Company. Under his management an immense tract of wilderness was converted into one of the finest agricultural regions in the world. He was identified with all the enterprises of Western New York, and in the construction of the Erie canal he took a great interest. Paul Busti, who had succeeded Cazenove as general agent at Philadelphia, managed the general affairs of the company with great shrewdness and ability for a period of twenty-four years.

In 1874 David Seaver of New York, in an article contributed to the Batavia Spirit of the Times, gives a synopsis of a work published in 1795 by Rochefoucauld Liancourt, a French adventurer or traveler, who prior to that time had made a journey from Philadelphia through Western New York as far as Niagara Falls. After describing his meeting with Red Jacket, the noted Indian chief, Liancourt says:

The road from Ontario to Canawago (Canawaugus) is a good one for this country,

reasonable terms renders the situation of the Holland Land Company Geneseo Lands more eligible, desirous, and advantageous for settlers than any other unsettled tract of inland country of equal magnitude in the United States. The greater part of this tract is finely watered (few exceptions) with never failing springs and streams, affording sufficiency of water for gristmills and other water works. The subscriber, during the years 1798 and 1799, surveyed and laid off the whole of these lands into townships, a portion of which, to accommodate purchasers and settlers, is now laying off into lots and tracts from 120 acres and upwards, to the quantity contained in a township.

"The lands abound with limestone, and are calculated to suit every description of purchasers and settlers. Those who prefer land timbered with black and white oak, hickory, poplar, chestnut, wild cherry, butternut and dogwood, or the more luxuriant timbered with basswood or lynn, butternut, sugar-tree, white ash, wild cherry, cucumber tree, (a species of the magnolia) and black walnut, may be suited. Those who prefer level land, or gradually ascending, affording extensive plains and valleys, will find the country adapted to their choice. In short, such are the varieties of situations in this part of the Geneseo country, every where almost covered with a rich soil, that it is presumed that all purchasers who may be inclined to participate in the advantages of those lands, may select lots from 120 acres to tracts containing 100,000 acres, that would fully please and satisfy their choice. The Holland Land Company, whose liberality is so well known in this country, now offer to all those who may wish to become partakers of the growing value of those lands, such portions and such parts as they may think proper to purchase. Those who may choose to pay cash will find a liberal discount from the credit price."

but as usual it leads through the midst of the woods, and within a space of 12 miles we saw only one habitation. In this journey we discovered two Indians lying under a tree; though we had seen a considerable number of them, yet this meeting had for us an attraction of novelty, as we found them in a state of intoxication which scarcely manifested the least symptoms of life. One wore around his neck a long and heavy silver chain, from which a large medallion was suspended; on one side whereof was the image of George Washington, and on the other the motto of Louis XIV., *nec pluribus impar*, with the figure of the sun, which was usually displayed with it in the French army. This Indian, no doubt, was his excellency in a ditch, out of which we made repeated efforts to drag him, but in vain. . . .

Canawago is a small town, the inhabitants few, but Mr. Berry keeps there one of the best inns we have seen for some time.

Wednesday, June 17th, 1795. After remaining half a day at Canawago, we at length set out to traverse the *desarts*, as they are called. A journey through uninterrupted forests offers but little matter for speculation or remark; the woods are in general not close, but stand on fruitful soil. The route is a footpath, tolerably good upon the whole, but in some places very miry; winding through the forests over a level ground that rises but seldom into gentle swells. After a ride of 12 hours, in which we have crossed several large creeks (Oatka and Black), we arrived at Big Plains (Oakfield), which is 38 miles distant from Canawago. We breakfasted at Buttermilk Fall (LeRoy), and dined on the bank of the Tonawaugo (Batavia), and for both these meals our appetites were so keen that perhaps we never ate anything with a better relish.

Liancourt then describes his visit to the tribe of Indians which then had a small village at Tonawaugo.

In another contribution to the same paper Mr. Seaver gives extracts from a book written by John Maule, and printed in London, wherein the writer describes his experiences during a journey over practically the same route followed by Liancourt, but made five years afterward. Maule stopped for a while at Canawaugus, whence he proceeded on his journey August 20, 1800, accompanied by an Indian named Hot Bread. He arrived at Ganson's, now Le Roy, at eleven o'clock in the morning, where he made the following entry in his journal:

When my friend L. passed this place last year, Ganson's was a solitary house in the wilderness, but it is now in the midst of a flourishing township, in which 21 families are already settled. A new tavern and a number of dwelling houses are building. Two hundred and ninety-eight miles; recross Allen's creek; the bed a flat limestone rock, 15 or 20 rods wide, with three or four inches of water; a handsome bridge was building. This creek is the western terminus of Capt. Williamson's purchase (Pultney tract). A very handsome road four rods wide has been cut, and the whole distance from Genesee River to Ganson's being 12 miles in nearly a straight line. I now entered into what is called the Wilderness, but at 2 P. M. reached the Holland Company's storehouse and Frederick Walther's tavern (Stafford), 304½ miles.

The Holland Company consists of a number of merchants and others, principally residents in Holland, who purchased a very large tract of Mr. Morris. This territory, for such it may be called, is on the east bounded by Williamson's purchase, and on the west by Lake Erie and Niagara River. No part of the land is, I believe, yet settled, but at present under survey for that purpose. One of the principal surveyors and his gang were at the tavern, and fully occupied the lodging hut; this, with the additional circumstance of there being no hay for my horses, and no other feed than oats, cut green in the straw, induced me to give up the design of sleeping here this night, but rather to push on to the next station. . . . At 4 P. M. we left Walther's, and at 309 miles (Batavia) fell in with the Tonawantee Creek, sluggish, shallow and broad. At 6½ P. M. we reached Garret Davis's tavern, 316 miles (Winan's farm near Dunham's Corners) near a small run of good water. This is one of those three stations which the Holland Company has this year established for the accommodation of travelers, who hitherto have been obliged to sleep in the woods. Davis first began to ply his axe in January last; he has now a good log house, a field of green oats (sowed 18th of June, the only feed I could get for my horses), and a very excellent garden, the most productive of any of its size I have seen since leaving New York. He had also cleared a pretty extensive field for wheat. On this land the logs were now burning, and I passed a greater part of the night in making up the fires. This employment I preferred to harbouring with a number of strangers, one of whom was sick and not expected to live till morning. This, however, was only the fearful conjecture of Davis. I got got some maple sugar for my tea, and Mr. and Mrs. Davis paid me every possible attention, but I cannot praise them for neatness. Perhaps I ought not to expect it when the peculiarity of the situation and a large family of children are taken into account. From Allen's Creek to Walther's was excellent lands, but miserable roads, at times impassable, and the wagoner would take his axe to cut a new passage. From Walther's to Davis's the road is better. At Davis's the woods are composed of small, tall saplings, closely crowded. This morning we experienced a very keen frost with a bright sun, and so late as 11 A. M. I stood in the sun to warm myself, my hands being benumbed with the cold. Very scorching sun in the afternoon after leaving Walther's, and troublesome flies and mosquitoes.

Thursday, August 21, 1800. Start at day light, 318 miles; we leave the thick woods and enter upon the Big Plains. These plains (Oakfield) are open groves of oak, in a light shallow soil on limestone. . . . These plains are many miles in extent, and it struck me I had seen park grounds in England much like them. At 321 miles the oaks are smaller and more compact, and at 322 miles we enter the woods of beech and maple. At 7½ A. M. we reached the Indian town of Tonawautee, 330 miles. This settlement is on the west bank of the creek, which I now crossed for the second time. It bore, however, a different character here than at 319 miles (Batavia), being clear and rapid.

Left Tonawautee and passed through open plains of oaks with less of tamarisk and more grass to 334 miles, where I fell in with the old road. At 10:30 A. M. reached Asa Ransom's station, distance 344 miles (Clarence, Erie county). I was here greatly surprised with an excellent breakfast of tender chicken and good loaf-sugar for my tea. Ransom, like Davis, sat down in the woods in January; he has 150 acres, ten acres cleared and in oats. . . . The Holland Company has laid out a new road from Ganson's to Buffalo Creek, which passes to the south of Davis's

station, but in with the present road at Ransom's, and this new road will make a difference of 10 miles in 42. Ransom informed me that by an account, he had kept, no less than 155 families with their wagons have passed his house this summer, emigrating from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Canada. Sixteen wagons passed in one day.

In the office of the secretary of state at Albany is the original map of the famous Holland Land Company's tract. This map is about eight feet square, the scale being half an inch to the mile. The eastern boundary—the Transit Line run in 1798—starts on the Pennsylvania line, at the southeast corner of the Willink Purchase, and runs directly northward, crossing the Genesee river "at 21 miles going northwest and at 33 miles going northeast," reaching Lake Ontario at a place known as "the Devil's Nose."

The ranges, averaging about six miles in width, have boundaries parallel with the Transit Line. They begin six miles west of that line, and are numbered to the westward from one to fifteen inclusive. The townships run from south to north, beginning at the Pennsylvania line, and average six miles square. No range has more than sixteen townships and when the western end of the State is reached (in what is now Chautauqua county) there are but three townships in the fifteenth range.

Between the seventh and eighth ranges a strip about two miles wide runs from the Pennsylvania line northward to Lake Ontario. It pierces the present counties of Cattaraugus, Erie and Niagara, and on the map is marked as the property of Wilhelm and Jan Willink. The same persons are also credited with ten townships in the eastern and southern parts of the present Allegany county. Between the first range and the Transit Line is a strip about six miles wide running from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario. This is assigned, with the respective number of acres named, to the following persons: J. Sterrett, 5,000 acres; A. Hamilton, 100,000; Cottinger, 39,784; Ogden, 33,784; Cragie, 3,375; Watson Cragie, 100,000. The lands of Sterrett and Hamilton are in the present county of Allegany; those of Cottinger and Ogden in Wyoming; that of Cragie in Genesee, and that of Watson Cragie in Orleans.

East of the Transit Line are two parcels of land. The first of these, located in the present county of Allegany, has one hundred and fifty thousand acres, credited to S. Sterrett. The second is a triangle of seventy six thousand one hundred and seventy-three acres, assigned to Le Roy, Bayard and McEvers. The northern boundary of this triangle

is Lake Ontario, the western the Transit Line, and the third a diagonal beginning at the intersection of the southern line of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase with the Transit Line, near the present village of Le Roy, and running northeasterly until it reaches Lake Ontario. The slanting boundaries of the eastern townships of Genesee county and of the western townships of Monroe county are laid along this diagonal line.

All that part of the State was known to the province of New York as Tryon county, but after 1784 it was called Montgomery county. All to the west of the "pre-emption line" was erected into Ontario county in 1788, and the present western counties have been taken from the original territory of Ontario county since that date.

The extent to which the early settlement of the territory west of the Genesee river had reached, during the closing years of the eighteenth century, is illustrated by reference to the following tax roll, the first one made for this territory (then all included in the great town of Northampton). About fifteen names are missing from the first page of the roll, which bears date of October 6, 1800:

	Value of Real and Personal Estate.	Amount of Tax.
Curtis, William	$ 30	$ .06
Carter, William	94	.19
Chamberlin, Hinds	284	.40
Curtis, Augustus	500	.61
Curtis, Jonathan	387	.54
Campbell, Peter	52	.09
Chapin, Henry	3,000	6.50
Chapman, Asa	112	.23
Cumins, Joseph	20	.04
Conatt, Samuel	38	.06
Chamberlin, Joshua	60	.12
Cary, Joseph	948	1.61
Coats, Timothy	396	.54
Dugan Christopher	1,306	1.63
Douglas, Cyrus	78	.14
Davis, Daniel	572	.72
Davis, Garrett	350	.45
Davis, Bela	105	.22
Davis, Samuel	312	.37
Ellicott, Benjamin	600	.71
Fish, Josiah	1,516	1.86
Farewell, Elisha	288	.37
Fuller, David	80	.12

	Value of Real and Personal Estate.	Amount of Tax.
Forsyth, John	330	.43
Granger, Eli	100	.14
Goodhue, George	176	.20
Ganson, John, jr	1,640	2.10
Ganson, James	12	.02
Griffith, Eli	658	.98
Hencher, William	1,036	1.64
Hicks, Samuel	44	.09
Heth, Reuben	40	.09
Hunt, Elijah	68	.14
Harris, Alpheus	72	.15
Hall, Friend	200	.30
Hunt, Joseph	64	.13
Hopkins, Timothy	42	.09
Hayne, John	50	.11
Hawley, Chapman	112	.18
Hall, Gilbert	370	.52
Hoit, Stephen	153	.34
Jones, H. John	140	.23
Jones, Elizabeth	153	.24
Johnson, Moses	800	1.07
Johnson, William	2,034	3.50
Kith, M. Michael	42	.09
Kimball, John	700	1.03
Kent, Elijah	96	.14
Lane, Ezekiel	114	.24
Laybourn, Christopher	470	.62
Lyon, John	40	.08
Leonard, Jonathan	40	.06
Lewis, Seth	60	.14
Mills, William	714	.94
Mills, Lewis	72	.16
Mills, Alexander	80	.19
Mills, Samuel	250	.30
Morton, Simeon	50	.11
Mading, Timothy	128	.16
McCloning, John	40	.09
McCloning, John, jr	12	.02
Middaugh, Martin	45	.09
Mayle, Lewis	30	.09
——, ——	84	.19
Mulkins, Henry	54	.11
Nettleton, Philemon	592	.80
Morgan, Joseph	870	1.11
McNaughton, John	48	.11

	Value of Real and Personal Estate.	Amount of Tax.
McPherson, Dan	100	.22
Patterson, Lawrence	500	.90
Pebody, Stephen	86	.18
Palmer, John	482	.72
Pangman, William	300	.66
Quivey, Norton	70	.15
Redford, John	130	.19
Rhan, Alexander	85	.12
Stimson, Leonard	52	.11
Stimson & Jones	200	.29
Stoughton, Amaziah	164	.21
Sheffer, Peter	4,260	5.36
Scott, Isaac	1,108	1.45
Shelly, Phiros	150	,18
Scott, Salmon	796	.95
Scoonover, Jacob	731	1.00
Thompson, Adriandner	30	.07
Utley, Asa	901	1.17
Olmstead, Jeremiah	120	.29
Wilber, Charles	60	.31
Walther, Frederick	488	.68
Wemple, Henry	27	.17
———, ———	42	.10
King, Thomas	30	.07
King, Simeon	40	.10
Hender, Stephen	12	.02
Ransom, Asa	410	.61
Erwin, John	428	.96
Woolman, John	162	.36
Philips, William	30	.07
Carver, John	316	.40
Eli, Justin	5,000	9.91
Barnard, Ebenezer	1,950	3.87
Phelps, Enoch	4,437	8.80
Hartford, Charles	2,333	4.62
King, Gideon (heirs)	4,500	8.92
Hinkley, Samuel	----	----
Stone, John	5,000	9.91
Wadsworth, James	34,500	68.38
Williamson, C. and others	34,500	68.28
Gilbert, Warren	2,190	2.60
Colt, Judah	1,320	2.61
Morris, Thomas	4,200	8.32
Hall, Amos	700	1.38
Holland Company	3,300,000	5,231.52

	Value of Real and Personal Estate.	Amount of Tax.
Williamson, Charles	155,150	307.41
Williamson & Phelps	100,000	219.14
Craigie, Andrew	50,000	73.96
Ogden, Samuel	50,000	109.57
Cottinger, Garrit	50,000	109.57
Church, Philip	100,000	219.14
Unknown	27,210	59.41
Le Roy & Bayard	82,000	179.68
Le Roy & Bayard	40,000	87.66
Phelps & Jones, supposed to be owned by Thomas Morris	40,960	89.36
Joseph Fitts Simmons	----	----
Joseph Higby	600,000	1,314.84
Total	$4,785,368	$8,387.11

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

No man was more closely identified with the history of Western New York, and especially of the Holland Purchase than Joseph Ellicott. As the general land agent of the Holland Company, superintendent of their surveys and settlements, his name has become associated with the early history of nearly every town and village. A conflict of authority exists as to the origin of the ancestors of Joseph Ellicott. In sketches of the family prepared for publication by descendants of the family at Ellicott Mills, Md., it is asserted that his grandparents, Andrew Ellicott and Ann Bye Ellicott, came to this country in 1731 from Cullopton, Wales, and settled in New York. Other reminiscences of the family state that they came from Cullompton, Devonshire, England, and settled in Bucks county, Pa., where they were married in 1731, soon after their arrival. Nathaniel, Joseph, Andrew and John Ellicott were the sons of Andrew, and as early as 1770 we find them settled in business as owners of a tract of land and mills on the Patapsco river in Maryland. This settlement has long been known as Ellicott's Mills. Of the sons of Andrew named in the foregoing, Joseph was the father of the Joseph Ellicott of Holland Purchase fame. Another son, Andrew, eldest brother of Joseph, became eminent as a surveyor. He surveyed the Spanish boundary, so called, during Jefferson's administration, and afterwards was made surveyor-general of the United States. At the time of his death, about 1821, he was professor of mathematics in the United States Military Academy at West Point.

At the age of fourteen Joseph Ellicott became, with his father's fam-

ily, a resident of Maryland. Previous to this time he had enjoyed only such advantages as were afforded by the pioneer schools and the instructions of his brother Andrew in surveying. When the site of the city of Washington was selected as the national capital he assisted his brother in its survey. In 1761 Timothy Pickering, secretary of war, designated him to run the boundary line between the State of Georgia and the territory of the Creek Indians. His next engagement was to survey the lands of the Holland Company in Pennsylvania, under Theophilus Cazenove, their general agent. This brought him into the notice of the company and resulted in his appointment in their service soon after, where he continued for upwards of twenty years.

Mr. Ellicott's commission as principal surveyor of the Holland Company's lands in Western New York dated from July, 1797, but his actual service did not commence until after the council of the September following, when the company's titles to these lands were perfected. His first duty was to make a traverse and survey of the north and northwest bounds of the tract for the purpose of estimating the quantity of land it contained. On this expediton he was accompanied by Augustus Porter, as surveyor for Robert Morris. Commencing at the northeast corner of Phelps and Gorham's tract, west of the Genesee river, they traversed the south shore of Lake Ontario to the Niagara river, thence along the Niagara river and the southeast shore of Lake Erie to the western boundary of New York State, that being a meridian line running due south from the western extremity of Lake Ontario, as previously established by United States Surveyer-General Andrew Ellicott. This work was completed in November following and Mr. Ellicott returned to Philadelphia for the winter.

Early in the spring of 1798 he again arrived in the territory with a large force of assistants. The work of this season was to commence the division of the territory into townships in accordance with plans already made, and the establishment of the eastern boundary of the purchase. A number of men were detailed for town work, while Mr. Ellicott, with his brother Benjamin, and several assistants, undertook the difficult task of running a true meridian line from the Pennsylvania boundary to Lake Ontario. A stone monument was erected on the Pennsylvania line, exactly twelve miles west from the eighty-second milestone, as a starting point. Providing himself with a transit instrument, Mr. Ellicott commenced his labors. His progress was very slow and laborious. Trees and underbrush had to be cut away to

a width of three or four rods, that an uninterrupted view might be obtained in advance of the instrument. About the first of December following the work was completed. For nearly twelve years Mr. Ellicott was actually engaged in the work of surveying this large tract, and finally became local agent of the company.

In person, Joseph Ellicott was a man of commanding presence. He was six feet three inches tall, and possessed of a splendid constitution and great powers of endurance. In his business he was methodical, prompt and faithful. He was a most agreeable companion, being possessed of unusual conversational powers. Turner, in his History of the Holland Purchase, says of him: "His education was strictly a practical one. He was a good mathematician, a scientific surveyor, a careful and able financier. The voluminous correspondence he has left behind him, with the general agency at Philadelphia, with the prominent men of this State of his period—in reference to the business of the company, political measures, works of internal improvement, and public policy generally—indicate a good degree of talent as a writer, and enlarged and statesman-like views." During his life Mr. Ellicott accumulated a large estate. He never married, and at his death his estate, by special bequests, was divided among his surviving relatives. During the last years of his life his mind became greatly impaired and he was removed to Bellevue hospital, New York, for treatment. Here, escaping the vigilance of his attendants, he took his own life in August, 1826. His remains were afterward brought to Batavia, where they now rest, marked by a beautiful monument erected to his memory.

CHAPTER VIII.

From 1800 to 1812—Increase of Settlements on the Holland Purchase, Particularly in Genesee County—Early Taverns Between Batavia and Buffalo—The First Town Meeting—First Courts in Genesee County—Division of the Town of Batavia—Life of the Pioneers—The First Church in the County—Other Pioneer Religious Organizations—The First Murder Trial—The First Printing Press and Newspaper—The Arsenal at Batavia.

The beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed the development of order out of chaos throughout the greater portion of the Genesee country. March 30, 1802, the county of Genesee was erected from Ontario, and included all of the State west of the Genesee river. The survey of this immense tract had progressed to a point where the Holland Company was prepared to supply newcomers with good farms as rapidly as they should make application for them. Soon after the erection of the county Joseph Ellicott established his land office on the site of the present village of Batavia, of which he became the founder. This location he chose because it was central; and furthermore it was on the line of the Indian trail from Canada to Southern New York, and directly in the path of the immigration that was then moving westward. Within a few rods of his office the Indians had a council ground. His first office was a wooden structure, but early in the century it was replaced by the stone structure which stands to-day, one of the most historic and interesting edifices in Western New York. The Land Office was in all respects the headquarters of the entire Holland Purchase. It was practically the capital of a rapidly developing colony, and all enterprises of any import were discussed and settled there. Mr. Ellicott, a courtly, dignified, honest and extremely pleasant gentleman, maintained his important position in a manner that has caused his name to be remembered even to this day with feelings of profound respect and admiration.

The fame of the region was extending, and methodical settlement, under the auspices of the Holland Company, began. At first there was some difficulty in disposing of the company's lands on account of the demand for ten per cent. cash. The price set was $2.75 per acre.

Many of those who desired to buy had little if any money; and most of those who were able to pay the advance demanded were reluctant to do so, as the clearing of the land would immediately require a large outlay of time and some money. Referring to this matter Mr. Ellicott wrote to Mr. Busti that "if some mode could be devised to grant land to actual settlers who cannot pay in advance, and at the same time not destroy that part of the plan which requires some advance," he was convinced that "the most salutary results would follow."

There is no doubt that Mr. Ellicott was greatly disappointed at the slow sales of land. While he had believed that the favorable terms offered, coupled with the great natural advantages of the region, would result in a very general migratory movement westward, he evidently had not taken the scarcity of money into consideration. On December 4, 1801, while at his temporary headquarters at "Pine Grove," he wrote to Mr. Busti as follows:

> I have made no actual sales this fall where the stipulated advance has been paid. I begin to be strongly of the opinion you always expressed to me (but which I must confess I rather doubted), that few purchasers will come forward and pay cash for land in a new country.

But the prospects grew brighter with the beginning of another year, and Mr. Ellicott announced that many settlers were preparing to establish homes and begin the clearing and cultivation of their lands as soon as the spring opened. The opening of highways and the establishment of taverns added to the conveniences of the locality and doubtless helped to make it more attractive to newcomers.

"Among the primitive tavern keepers there was a backwoods philosopher. It was the Mr. Walthers who had been sent from Philadelphia to be the landlord at the Transit Store House. Established in his location, he made himself quite officious; his letters came thick and fast upon Mr. Ellicott, whenever he knew where they would reach him. They were an odd mixture of philosophy and advice and suggestions in reference to the best manner of settling a new country. In one letter he would talk of his domestic troubles; in another he would announce that one, or two, or three landlookers had been his guests, not forgetting to assure Mr. Ellicott how hard he had labored to convince them of the splendid prospects of the new country; in another he would inform him of false reports that had been started as to the title of the land, and how he had put a quietus upon them; in another he would express his regrets that his house was full of strangers, who were pass-

ing the Purchase, and going to 'swell the numbers of his Britannic Majesty's subjects in Upper Canada.' In Mr. Ellicott's absence he was wont to consider himself a sub-agent; taking some airs upon himself, from some favors that had been shown him by the general agent at Philadelphia. He did not last long, as will be observed in an extract of a letter from Mr. Ellicott to Mr. Busti. Mr. Ellicott answers a letter received from 'Mrs. Berry and Miss Wemple'—(names familiar to old settlers, as household words). They were applicants for two town lots at the 'Bend of the Tonewanta.' He very courteously informs them that when he lays out a town there the lots will contain forty acres each, and their application will be held in remembrance."[1]

The first town meeting on Holland Purchase was held at the log tavern of Peter Vandeventer on March 1, 1803. The functions of this meeting extended over territory having a radius of a hundred miles, though the most distant settlements were at Buffalo, twenty-two miles west, and at the East Transit, twenty-four miles east. But, despite the long distance many of them were compelled to travel, and in the season of the year when new roads were very apt to be almost impassable, the number of the assembled voters was so large that the polls were opened out of doors by Enos Kellogg, one of the commissioners appointed for the purpose of organizing the town of Batavia.

The meeting was a unique one. Mr. Kellogg, after calling the voters to order, announced that Peter Vandeventer and Jotham Bemis of Batavia village were candidates for supervisor. The vote was then taken, the procedure being novel. Mr. Kellogg placed the two candidates side by side in the road and then directed the voters to fall in line, each beside the man of his choice. Seventy-four men stood by Vandeventer and seventy by Bemis, and the former was declared elected. A little later on, when the men from the east of Vandeventer's (who were considered Batavians) gathered in the one place, and those from the west of there in another, they took note of their absent neighbors and found that there were but four to the eastward and five to the westward who had failed to attend. This makes the whole number of voters on the Holland Purchase in that year one hundred and fifty-three, one hundred and forty-four of whom were present at this primitive election.

The balance of the officers chosen on that occasion were as follows, the election being conducted by uplifted hands:

[1] Turner's History.

Town clerk, David Cully; assessors, Enos Kellogg, Asa Ransom, Alexander Rhea; commissioners of highways, Alexander Rhea, Isaac Sutherland and Suffrenus (?) Maybee; overseers of the poor, David Cully and Benjamin Porter; collector, Abel Rowe; constables, John Mudge, Levi Felton, Rufus Hart, Abel Rowe, Seymour Kellogg and Hugh Howell; overseers of highways, Martin Middaugh, Timothy S. Hopkins, Orlando Hopkins, Benjamin Morgan, Rufus Hart, Lovell Churchill, Jabez Warren, William Blackman, Samuel Clark, Gideon Dunham, Jonathan Willard, Thomas Layton, Hugh Howell, Benjamin Porter and William Walsworth.

The first State election on the Holland Purchase was held at the same place the following month. At the latter meeting one hundred and eighty-nine votes were cast for member of assembly, evidence of the rapid increase in the number of settlers. At this election the vote was as follows:

For Senators—Caleb Hyde, 146; Vincent Mathews, 5.

For Members of Assembly—Daniel Chapin, 182; Ezra Patterson, 155; John Swift, 160; Polydore B. Wisner, 4; Nathaniel W. Howell, 28; Amos Hall, 9.

In June, 1803, the court house at Batavia being nearly completed, the first courts of the county were organized there. The judges were Ezra Platt, John H. Jones and Benjamin Ellicott, and Nathan Perry was an assistant justice. Among those admitted to practice in the new court as attorneys and counselors were Timothy Burt, Gouverneur Ogden, John Greig, Richard Smith and George Hosmer. At this term of court the first grand jury west of the Genesee river was organized. It consisted of Alexander Rhea, Asa Ransom, Peter Vandeventer, Daniel Henry, Samuel F. Geer, Lovell Churchill, Jabez Warren, Zerah Phelps, Jotham Bemis, Seymour Kellogg, John A. Thompson, Jonn Ganson, jr., Isaac Smith, Elisha Farwell, Peter Shaeffer, Hugh McDermott, John McNaughton and Luther Cole. In November following, at a second session of the courts, Ebenezer F. Norton, Robert W. Stoddard, Jonathan T. Haight, John Collins, Daniel B. Brown and Jeremiah R. Munson were admitted to practice. The first issue joined in a court of record west of the Genesee river was tried at this term. It was the case of Rufus Hart versus Erasmus Enos.

At the next term of courts in June, 1804, several indictments were tried, and the jury was the first traverse jury drawn and organized in the new court. It consisted of William Rumsey, Joseph Selleck, Abel Rowe, John Forsyth, Benjamin Morgan, Alexander McDonald, Peter Campbell, James Woods, Benjamin Gardner, Lovel Churchill, John Anderson and John McVean. The first jury empanelled in a civil suit in these courts consisted of Job Pierce, Andrew Wortman, Gilbert Hall, John

McNaughton, Isaac Smith, Archileas Whitten, Isaac Sutherland, Samuel Davis, Ransom Harmon, Peter Vanderventer, Hugh McDermott, and Jabez Fox.

The Big Tree road, or the Middle road, as it was known by the Holland Company, was surveyed and cut out in the summer of 1803 by Jabez Warren of Aurora, who was paid $2.50 per mile for surveying and $10 per mile for cutting out the road. This highway extended from near Geneseo to Lake Erie in a nearly westerly direction. It ran about a mile south of the southerly line of the Big Tree Reservation.

The Legislature of 1804 divided the town of Batavia into four towns. These were: Batavia, on the east; next, Willink, including the 4th, 5th and 6th ranges; next Erie, containing the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th ranges, the State Reservation and adjacent waters; then the town of Chautauqua, consisting of the remainder of the purchase.

Dr. Dwight, who traveled through the town of Pembroke in October, 1804, while making a tour of the West, notes the circumstance of his passing through "oak plains" or "openings," as he refers to them. He describes these grounds as having a varied surface, and in a great degree destitute of forests, but covered with grass, weeds and shrubs of various kinds. He supposes these openings to have been caused by the Indians burning them over, to produce pasturage for deer. In the fourth volume of his "Travels" he writes:

> When one of these plains is seen at a little distance, a traveler emerging from the forest naturally concludes, that it is the commencement of a settled country, and as he advances toward it, is instinctively led to cast his eye forward to find the village of which it is the outskirt. From this impression his mind will be unable to free itself; for the thought, though given up, will recur again and again, in spite of his absolute conviction that he is in the heart of an immense wilderness. At the same time a sense of stillness and solitude, a feeling of absolute retirement from the world, deeper and more affecting than any in which he has ever suspected before, will be forced upon him while he is roving over one of these sequestered regions. No passage out of them is presented to his eye. Yet though the tract around him is seemingly bounded everywhere, the boundary is everywhere obscure; being formed by trees thinly dispersed, and retired beyond each other, at such distances, as that while in many places they actually limit the view, they appear rather to border dim, indistinct openings into other tracts of country. Thus he always feels the limit to be uncertain; and until he is actually leaving one of these plains, will continually expect to find a part of the expansion still spreading beyond the reach of his eye. At every little distance, especially on the higher grounds, the view is widely, though indefinitely extended along the surface; and a little above where he looks through the stems of the trees, is bounded only by the horizon. On every side a multitude of chasms conduct his eye beyond the labyrinth by which he is surrounded; and pre-

sent an imaginary passage back into the world, from which he is withdrawn; bewildering him with expectation, continually awakened to be continually disappointed. Thus in a kind of wild, romantic rapture, he wanders over these plains, with emotions similar to those with which, when a child, he roamed through the wilderness created in Arabian tales, or the imaginary regions spread before him in a dream. He is not only separated from all human beings, but is every moment conscious of this separation. Whenever he ascends one of the superior elevations, he seems to stand above the rest of the globe. On every side he looks downward; and beholds a prospect with many vistas, opening indeed around him, but conducting his eye to no definite object, and losing it in confusion and obscurity. His view is confined by neither forests nor mountains; while yet trees in a thin dispersion partly interrupt it; but at the same time discover, through their various openings, that it has no other limitation than the skirts of the heavens. While he wanders on through this bewildering scenery, he cannot fail to remember, that on these plains Indians have lived, and roved, and hunted, and fought, ever since their first arrival from the shores of Asia. Here, unless they molested each other, there was nothing to molest them. They were the sole lords, the undisturbed possessors of the country. Here, therefore, he will call up before his imagination the secret windings of the scout; the burst of the war-whoop; the fury of an Indian onset; the triumphant display of scalps; and the horrors of the war dance before the tortured and expiring captive. Whether these thoughts will be excited in the mind of any future traveler, I know not; in my own they sprang up instinctively.

An idea of the manner in which some of the pioneers lived, and of the business of those early days, may be gleaned from the following narrative of William H. Bush, a pioneer who came from Bloomfield, Ontario county, and located upon the Tonawanda three and a half miles below Batavia:[1]

I moved my family from Bloomfield in May, 1806. The settlers on Buffalo road, between my location and Batavia village, were Isaac Sutherland, Levi Davis and Timothy Washburn. Rufus McCracken, Daniel McCracken, Thomas Godfrey, Linus Gunn, Henry Starks, Alanson Gunn, David Bowen, John Lamberton, lived on the road west. There were then less than one hundred acres of land cleared on the Buffalo road in the distance of six miles west of Batavia.

I built a log house, covered it with elm bark—could not spare time to build a chimney; the floor was of slabs and hemlock boards. I immediately commenced building a saw mill and had it completed before the middle of October. That summer my wife did the cooking for family and hired men by an out of door fire, built up against stumps. The first winter, I attended my own saw mill, working in it from daylight to dark, cutting my firewood and foddering my stock by the light of a lantern. Before winter set in, I had built a stick chimney, laid a better floor in my house, plastered the cracks, and hired an acre of land cleared—just enough to prevent the trees falling upon my house. When the mill was built I had it paid for, but to accomplish it, I had sold some pork and grain I had produced by working land upon shares in Bloomfield—in fact, everything but my scanty household furniture. My saw mill

[1] Turner's History, page 471.

proved a good investment, boards were much in demand at seven dollars and fifty cents per thousand; the new settlers stocked the mill with logs to be sawed on shares.

In 1808 I built a machine shop, a carding and cloth dressing establishment. These were the first upon the Holland purchase. On the 10th of June of that year, I carded a sack of wool, the first ever carded by machine on the Holland Purchase. It belonged to George Lathrop of Bethany. In February, 1809, I dressed a piece of full cloth for Theophilus Crocker, the first ever dressed upon the Holland Purchase. There are on my books, the names of customers, from as far south as Warsaw and Sheldon; from the east, as far as Stafford; from the west to the Niagara river and Lake Erie, including Chautauque county; from pretty much all of the settled portion of the Holland Purchase. I carded in the season of 1808, 3,029 lbs. of wool; the largest quantity for any one man, was 70 lbs., the smallest, 4 lbs. The lots averaged 18 lbs. Allowing 3 lbs. to a sheep, the average number of sheep then kept by the new settlers, would be six; although it is presumed that the number is larger, as in those days, much of the wool was carded by hand.

The machinists of the present day, may be glad to learn how I procured my machinery. I bought my hand shears of the Shakers at New Lebanon; my press plate at a furnace in Onondaga; my screw and box at Canaan, Conn., my dye kettle, press papers, &c. at Albany. My transportation bill, for these things, was over two hundred dollars.

I built a grist mill in 1809; in 1817, a paper mill and distillery. I manufactured the first ream of paper west of the Genesee river.

During all the period of my milling operations I was clearing up the farm where I new reside, coming into the woods as I have related, dependent almost wholly upon the labors of my hands, in the first twenty years, success had so far attended my efforts, that I had accumulated some fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars.

An exhaustive search among the records of the oldest churches in Genesee county adduces evidence of the most reliable character that the first religious society to be established in this county is the First Congregational church of Bergen, which was organized in December, 1807, by the Rev. John Lindsley and thirteen other inhabitants of that town who became the first communicants.[1] This church, in all probability, was not only the first to be founded in Genesee county, but it is the oldest religous organization west of the Genesee river, with the single exception of the old Scotch Presbyterian church at Caledonia, Livingston county. At the time of its organization Bergen was a part of the great town of Northampton. At the time of the organization Levi Ward, sr., and Benjamin Wright were elected deacons, and Levi Ward, jr., clerk. January 25, 1808, organization was perfected by the

[1] Some authorities claim that the Presbyterian church in Alexander was organized a short time prior to this date; but this statement cannot be thoroughly authenticated. It is possible, however, that the Presbyterian church at Alexander and the First Congregational of Bergen, in the absence of positive documentary evidence, may have to divide the honor falling to the pioneer church of Genesee county.

election of Alexander White, Simon Pierson and Levi Ward, jr., as trustees. The other original members were John Ward, John Gifford, Josiah Pierson, Selah Wright and W. H. Munger. The Rev. John Lindsley preached for the new society for a few months, but the first regularly ordained pastor was the Rev. Allen Hollister, who was installed July 4, 1810. The first church edifice was built on Cemetery Hill, about a mile to the south of the second location, to which place the church was removed in the spring of 1854, during the pastorate of the Rev. A. O. Whiteman. Although organized as a Congregational church, the society placed itself in charge of the Presbytery soon after its organization, since which it has remained a Presbyterian church.

Meetings had been held by the Presbyterians of Alexander for over two years, under the direction of Elder Burton, before the Presbyterian church in that town was organized. The exact date of the establishment of this church is not known. It was in existence in 1808, and some authorities claim that it was founded about the same time as, or even shortly prior to, the organization of the Congregational society in Alexander. Harvey Hawkins and Cyrenus Wilbur were the principal promoters of the movement which resulted in its formation. It was not a strong society at the start, as is shown by the fact that upon its reorganization, or the perfection of its organization, in 1818, it had but ten members. The first house of worship, a stone structure, was not erected until 1828. The Rev. Solomon Hibbard was the first regular pastor. A second edifice was constructed in 1845, at an expense of five thousand dollars.

The first murder case in the court of Genesee county occurred at the term held in June, 1807, when James McLean, who had been indicted for the murder of William Orr, was placed on trial. Hon. Daniel D. Tompkins was the presiding judge, and Judge Howell was council for the prisoner. A right then existing by common law, but long since abolished by statute, was that the accused, being an alien, was entitled to be tried by a jury one-half of whom were aliens. In accordance with the demand of the counsel for the defense a jury thus composed was selected, as follows:

Citizens—Benjamin Morgan, Ebenezer Cary, Samuel Geer, Worthy L. Churchill, John Olney and Daniel Fairbanks.

Aliens—Duncan McLelland, James McLelland, John McPherson, John McVane, Daniel McKinney and Patrick Powers.

The jury convicted the prisoner, who was sentenced to be hanged in

August following. The crime was committed near Caledonia Springs. McLean, Orr and a man named McLaughlin, who were squatters on the forty thousand acre tract, had been to the Springs together, had drunk at least one glass of beer each, but McLean was not intoxicated. While there a dispute arose regarding a tree located on land which McLean claimed, and which had been felled by Orr. McLean knocked Orr down with an axe, killing him at the second blow. McLaughlin interfered to prevent a tragedy, and he too was killed. That night the murderer remained in a hollow log near his house, and the following morning took to the woods. As soon as the news of the crime reached the ears of the authorities Judge Platt ordered out the militia, which, in small squads, searched the entire region. Several days passed, when McLean was captured while attempting to make his escape eastward, he having been recognized at a tavern a few miles east of Canandaigua, where he was arrested. A great crowd from all parts of the country attended the public execution, the first to take place in Genesee county and consequently an event of extraordinary interest for those days.

Several other events of interest occurred in the county during the period prior to the war of 1812. The development of the numerous resources of the community progressed favorably during these years. In the villages of Batavia and Le Roy, as well as in the smaller settlements, the spirit of progress was constantly in evidence. New business buildings were erected annually to accommodate the increasing trade of the community, and many handsome residences also were erected. Road improvement during these years was carried on at a satisfactory rate, enabling the rapidly increasing farming community to carry on trade with the villages with greater facility.

In 1807 the first printing press ever seen west of the Genesee river was set up in Batavia, and soon after the opening of the office the first number of the Genesee Intelligencer, the pioneer newspaper of the county, and indeed of the entire Holland Purchase, was issued from that press, by Elias Williams, editor and publisher.

Until 1810 James Brisbane and Ebenezer Cary were the only merchants in the village of Batavia. In that year an extensive store was opened by Ephraim Hart, who intrusted its management to Clark Heacox.

The pioneer religious society of Batavia was organized September 19, 1809, by Rev. Royal Phelps, a missionary sent out by the Hampshire Missionary Society of Massachusetts. It was of the Congrega-

tional denomination. This church was not regularly incorporated until Feburary, 1811. Its first regular pastor was Rev. Ephraim Chapin, who served in this capacity from 1818 to 1821 inclusive.[1]

The fourth religious society to be founded in Genesee county was the Freewill Baptist church at West Bethany, which was organized in 1809 by the Rev. Nathaniel Brown. Every town in Genesee county, excepting Bethany, received from the Holland Land Company a grant of one hundred acres of land for religious purposes. But this neglect on the part of the Land Company did not dampen the spiritual ardor of the adherents of the Baptist denomination in Bethany, as is demonstrated by the very early establishment of their church society. This church experienced a steady, though not rapid, growth from the start. Lack of means, however, deterred the society from erecting a house of worship for three decades, the first edifice, a frame building, not being erected until 1839.

The first church in the town of Byron was of the Baptist denomination. This society was organized at Byron Centre in 1810, but after a few years it disbanded. Religious services had been conducted in that town, however, a year before the establishment of this pioneer society, by the Rev. Royal Phelps, a Presbyterian missionary from Cayuga county. In the same year (1810) the Rev. Joshua Spencer, a Congregational minister, held services in Pembroke and organized a Congregational church at Long's Corners, now Corfu. This was the first religious society in the town of Pembroke. Its existence covered but a brief period.

The East Elba Methodist Episcopal church began its existence by the formation of a class of eleven under the leadership of Joseph Walton, an exhorter of that denomination. Among those who thus associated themselves together for worship were Elder Grant, John Howe, Seth Howe, Zalmon Luttington, Fayette Luttington and others. The class was organized by the Rev. Ralph Lanning. A year later the Rev. Marmaduke Pierce became the first regular pastor of the society, and in 1814, so greatly had the organization prospered, that the erection of a small house of worship was found practicable. In 1830 a new church was dedicated, and Levi Barnes, John Taylor, Phineas Howe, William Knapp, Isaac Barber and Locklin Norton were chosen to be its trustees.

In 1811 a public library, the first in the county, was established in

[1] This church afterward became the First Presbyterian church of Batavia.

Alexander. The trustees were Alexander Rea, Harvey Hawkins, Seba Brainard, Samuel Latham, Henry Hawkins, Noah North and Ezra W. Osborn.

It was not until February 7, 1812, that the first Presbyterian church of Le Roy was organized, although religious services had been held in that town with some degree of regularity ever since 1800, when they were inaugurated by the Rev. David Perry, a missionary from Massachusetts. The Le Roy church of 1812 at once was increased in numbers by the admission into membership of the local adherents of the Congregational denomination. The organization of the society was perfected by the Rev. Oliver Ayer and the Rev. Reuben Parmalee. David Anderson was the first to be ordained to the deaconate. The Rev. David Fuller, the first resident clergyman, served the society for a short time, when the Rev. Calvin Colton was installed as the first regular pastor. A substantial house of worship was erected by the society in 1826.

The old arsenal at Batavia, which was abandoned about 1816, was erected just prior to the war of 1812. This was one of the numerous measures for defense adopted by the State Government for the protection of the frontier as soon as it was seen that hostilities were inevitable. About 1810 the State entered into a contract with Joseph Ellicott for the construction of a building twenty feet square and twelve feet in height, to be used for the storage of military supplies. The arsenal remembered by the present generation was not built until after the close of that war.

In 1811 a Protestant Episcopal church was established in Sheldon (Bennington), then in Genesee county, this being the first church of that denomination organized upon the Holland Purchase. The first wardens were Joshua Mitchell and Fitch Chipman, and the first vestrymen were John Rolph, John W. Coleman, Seneca Reed, James Case, Philo Welton and James Ward. The Union Religious Society was established in 1812 at Warsaw, then also in Genesee county. The first trustees were Isaac Phelps, Abraham Reed, John Munger, William Bristol, Zerah Tanner and Shubael Goodspeed. The first Baptist church of Sheldon was organized in 1812 with the following trustees: Pelatiah Case, Darius Cross, Justin Loomis, Solomon King, William W. Parsons and Ezra Ludden.

CHAPTER IX.

PIONEERS OF GENESEE COUNTY.

The settlement of the territory west of the Genesee river was retarded greatly by reason of the continued Indian troubles. Immediately after the close of the war a number of New England farmers, principally from the western part of Connecticut, started out with their families to build new homes in the already famous "Genesee country;" but soon after entering the State of New York they learned of the dangers that beset the whites in that locality, and abandoned the project. Some returned to the locality whence they had come, and others located in the Mohawk valley or in Saratoga county. As early as 1783 two families, named Reynolds and Rogers, left Canaan, Connecticut, with the intention of settling west of the Genesee river, but their journey ended in Saratoga county.

While the tide of immigration in the direction of the rich and productive plains of the famed Genesee country was not very strong until the close of the eighteenth century, still a number of daring seekers after new homes found their way into this region prior to 1800. In a preceding chapter appear the names of most of the taxpayers west of the Genesee river in 1800. Just when they came and where they located has never been ascertained in some cases. The pioneers of those days, while building for posterity, did not keep a record of their movements and other important events, consequently later generations have been compelled to live on with but meagre knowledge of the careers of their ancestors, excepting rare cases.

It is probable that the first white man to locate in the territory now comprised within the confines of the county of Genesee, and perhaps the first to locate permanently at any point on the Holland Purchase, was Charles Wilbur, who, in 1793, began the cultivation of a farm which subsequently became a part of the site of the village of Le Roy. Wilbur erected a small log house, which he used as a residence and a tavern. There has been some difference of opinion on this point, but modern research, reinforcing the records of the past, leads to the con-

clusion that Wilbur was the first white man to found a home in that part of New York State west of the Genesee river.

While Wilbur was the pioneer settler, his residence at this point covered a comparatively brief period, and he did little to perpetuate his name or fame. It is to the Ganson family that the credit for pioneer progress and industry properly belongs.

Captain Ganson was born in Bennington, Vt., in 1750. At the beginning of the Revolutionary war he enlisted as a private in the patriot army, went at once with a Vermont regiment to Boston, arriving there in time to participate in the battle of Bunker Hill. During that engagement a British musket ball carried away one of his fingers. Soon after he was commissioned as captain, and kept command of a company until the close of the war, when he returned to his home at Bennington.

During a part of the war Captain Ganson was a member of the command of General Sullivan, and as such participated in the latter's expedition against the Seneca Indians. During his brief sojourn in the borders of the famed "Genesee country" he was impressed by the remarkable fertility of the land and the agreeable climate. It was to him an ideal spot for a home and for carrying on agricultural pursuits. Compared with the rugged hills of Vermont, it was little short of a paradise for a farmer.

With the close of the war Captain Ganson decided to make a still further personal investigation of the wonderful new country, and the fear of the dreaded Seneca Indians did not deter him from starting out on his trip of inspection. In 1789 he left Bennington, accompanied by his two sons. Of these, John was fourteen years of age and James was twelve. Late in the fall of that year they reached a point about two miles south of the site of the village of Avon, where he purchased land on which to build his future home.

Leaving his sons in the custody of a friendly Seneca he returned to Vermont for the purpose of bringing the remainder of his family west with him. But soon after reaching home his wife died, and it was not until late in the spring of 1790 when he began his final journey westward with the remnant of his family. At this time there were few settlements west of Utica, and most of the latter part of the journey had to be made over Indian trails. From Canandaigua to the Genesee river, a distance of over twenty miles, hardly a white habitation was to be seen. Soon after settling upon the Genesee the Gansons erected

the first grist mill located upon that river. It was a log structure and a primitive affair, but it proved a great convenience to the pioneers for miles around.

In 1797 Captain Ganson and his sons decided to remove to the west side of the river, and the former purchased the farm and house owned by Charles Wilbur. This place was the beginning of what subsequently became generally known as "the Ganson settlement," the neighborhood which ultimately developed into the thriving village of Le Roy. Here, a few years later, following the completion of the Holland Land Company's surveys, came immigrants in large numbers, and for many years the tavern of John Ganson, who as a lad of fourteen came west with his father, was one of the most noted between the Hudson river and the Great Lakes.

Both Stafford and Le Roy have long laid claim to the honor of being the location of the first permanent settlers in Genesee county. Though Captain Ganson purchased the Wilbur farm in 1797, it is generally believed that he did not remove there until the following spring. On this point there is some doubt. In 1798 James Brisbane, the first merchant on the Holland Purchase, came to Stafford with a load of supplies and general merchandise for sale to the surveyors at work under direction of Joseph Ellicott. He at once opened a store, on the site of the present village of Stafford, which was called the Transit storehouse; but its exact location is not now known. Though the truth is not definitely known, there are many reasons for believing that Captain Ganson had moved upon his newly acquired property in Le Roy a short time before Brisbane built his store, where he also at first resided. It is not likely that the mooted question will ever be definitely decided.

Settlements were also made at Batavia in 1798. These are more fully described in the chapter devoted to the history of the village of Batavia.

To revert to "the Ganson settlement:" Immigration hither assumed large proportions immediately after the completion of the surveys made by the Holland Land Company. Capt. Jotham Curtis, one of the earliest to come, was a farmer and tavern keeper. Joseph Hewitt and Daniel Davis came soon after. All three were there, however, before 1802, the year when the surveys were completed. Chapman Hawley located east of Le Roy village about 1801, and was well known as "the fiddler" for that section. For some time he was an important func-