

THE PLACE NAMES OF GLENVILLE

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BY

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Of late there has been in educational circles not a little agitation about place names as applied to our mountains and hills, lakes, streams, highways and other features; their origin and meaning and the desirability of advocating the continuance of their use, not only of such commonly applied, but also the resurrection and application of others occasionally coming to light in old land maps, deeds, mortgages and other documents bearing on land boundaries.

In this short paper it is purposed, however, merely to give an outline of some of the place names of Glenville, touching but slightly on their origin and meaning, leaving a more extended study of this phase of the subject for a later paper.

Naturally many of our local place names are of Dutch origin, yet a few are of the Indian tongue. The latter, however, as now known are likely to be far from the original pronunciation, due to the wide variance in spelling practised by our forefathers.

Regarding place names of Indian origin, the late Dr. Beauchamp, the veteran archaeologist of our State, wisely says:

"It is not necessary to prefer Indian place names to others. They are not always pleasanter in sound, and are rarely poetical, yet we are glad to retain many of them. Some of our finest names in New York are aboriginal, but names derived from our own ancestry, dear to us from historic or personal association, full of meaning even to the untrained ear, may be just as good as aboriginal names which mean nothing at all to us, or perhaps any one else."

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Of the place names of Glenville, first in order may be mentioned the names given to its streams. Of these the river of the "Maquas" the Mohawk, has, of course, the place of honor, being the southern boundary of the town for its entire length. Next in importance comes the Aalplaats, "Place for eels," as runs its original and correct spelling now corrupted into the meaningless word "Alplaus." Tributaries to the Aalplaats are the Crabbs Kill, Bonny Brook and other small streams.

The Chaugh-ta-noon-da, meaning "Stony houses," or "Stony places," flows on a rocky bed through the entire length of the picturesque Wolf Hollow, finally reaching the Mohawk at the foot of the hill Kin-a-qua-ri-o-nes, the projecting nose of rock at

the extreme southwest corner of the town. In the shady valley of this stream, just a little above its entry into the Mohawk, took place the famous "last battle" between the Mohawks and the ~~Algonkian~~ ~~Algonkian~~ in 1669, after the unsuccessful attack of the ~~Algonkian~~ on the palisaded stronghold of the Mohawks on the heights at the mouth of the Cayadutta Creek in the present village of Fonda. In the final affray at Kinaquariones the noted ~~Indian~~ chief Chicataubet was slain.

Just below Hoffmans Station another stream fully as large as the Chaughtanoonda comes into the Mohawk from the Glenville hills. This undoubtedly had an Indian name, now long forgotten. Along its upper course can be seen the "Mammy Garrett Boulder," probably the largest glacial erratic in the Mohawk Valley. About ninety years ago, by means of a dam and shallow canal the waters of this stream were for a time diverted from the lower part of their course and made to flow into the Chaughtanoonda at a point near the mouth of the Wolf Hollow. This was done to augment the volume of the latter stream to better turn the wheel of a mill which stood on the lower part of its course, or not far from where it empties into the Mohawk. At this mill, with its near-by quarry and kiln, there was for several years ground an excellent grade of hydraulic cement, or "waterline," as it was then called. The extension of the railroad and the cheap production of cement from larger quarries and kilns in the central part of the State put an end, however, to this early enterprise.

Next east, coming down through a deep cut ravine in the slates, is the Druyberg Kill of the Dutch, afterward mapped as the Vorf Kill, or "Color Creek," as different maps designate it, getting this last name from a deposit of yellowish ochre on its banks, to which it is said the Indians resorted for paint. Of this stream fortunately the rather pretty Indian name is known: Te-quat-se-ra, or "Place of the wooden spoon," as translated by Cusick. The banks of the lower part of this stream abound in copious flowing springs.

Two miles further down the river we find the stream called in Colonial days "Arent Mebie's Kill," Afterwards this was for many years known as the Walton Creek, from the Walton family that lived on its banks. It is now generally known as the Washout Creek in remembrance of the disastrous cloudburst of 1885, which did immense damage to the roadbed and tracks of the New York Central Railroad where it crosses this stream.

Below the Washout Creek there are two or three small streams whose names, if indeed they were ever named, are lost. Then, near Hardins Crossing on the Sacandaga Road, is another little brook also unfortunately nameless, but rich however in historic association, for this is the stream flowing by the "Kleykuil"--down through the Beukendaal, "Beechdale," wherein so many of the brave burghers of old Schenectady were ambushed and slain in the bloody affray of 1748.

A little stream, now often dry in the summer time, flows down the northern slope of the Glenville hills, joining the Crabbs Kill just a little west of the Sacandaga Road. This, as the recent discovery of an old-time land map has disclosed, was once known as the Fall Tree Kill. The use of this rather odd name is now being revived, and many conjectures and guesses have been made as to its origin.

THE HILLS OF GLENVILLE

Of the few known place names applied to elevations in our town, that of Tou-ar-e-una is best known. Formerly and even yet spelled in many ways and locally pronounced "Tower-una," the name is now applied solely to the extreme western elevation in the town, or that part of our hills lying between the Wolf Hollow and the western line of the town. However, according to certain old writers, the name Touareuna was given by the Indians not only to the highest part of the Glenville hills, which attains nearly 1100 feet above sea level, but also to the opposing peak in Rotterdam, now called Yantapuchaberg. While several supposed meanings have been given for the word Touareuna, yet that offered by J.N.B.Hewitt, of the United States Bureau of Ethnology, himself of Indian blood, seems of peculiar significance. Mr. Hewitt writes that the word signifies "Where we dwell together." Now, if as stated the term was given to the opposing peaks, how fit and appropriate--"Where we dwell together,"--the two most easterly summits of the Mohawk, one on either side, guarding the approach to the valley; a true "Western Gateway."

The rocky knob jutting close to the river at the extreme western border of the town, just west from Hoffmans was the Kin-a-qua-ri-o-nes, "She arrow maker." The thick rock layers of this outcrop, well exposed by blasting a way for the railroad and the highway, are known to the geologist as the Little Falls Dolomite, and in certain places in the vicinity they abound in nodular masses of dark blue flint. Here possibly may have been one of the local sources whence the redman got material for the manufacture of his arrowheads, spearheads and knives--a primitive flint quarry, which may yet be found by some zealous antiquarian.

Potchosse Hill was an old-time name for the rise of the Spring Road branching north from the Sacandaga Road at the Beukendaal School at Hardins.

Tinkers Hill, "Tinckor-Hooghten," often mentioned in old publications, has not yet been definitely located though it seems likely that the name was applied to a part of the slope north of a point somewhere between Wyatts and Rectors.

The Druyberg, or Droyberg was the name given by the Dutch to the highest portion of the watershed of the Verf Kill, or Tequatsera, a barren hilltop of slate with a scanty covering of leached-out soil. A document quoted by Pierson speaks of the "Tequatsera, or Droyberg Kil, the boundary between the Sixth and Seventh Flat."

THE MOHAWK TURNPIKE AND OTHER ROADS

Most important of the named highways of our town is, of course, the justly famous old Mohawk Turnpike, now by some heedlessly called the Amsterdam Road. This great artery of the State, and indeed of the nation, about which volumes might be written, figured large in the settlement and development of the western country and in the many military movements of the times. Along it in 1756 passed Gen. Webb with a British regiment and supplies on his ill-fated expedition to reinforce Fort Oswego. Here, too, in 1760, leaving Schenectady on the twelfth of June, marched Gen. Amherst with his imposing British-American army of ten thousand men on the campaign which ended French power in America.

Then, in July of 1777, responding to the urgent call of Gen. Herkimer for "every able-bodied male from sixteen to sixty," to check the threatened invasion of our valley by St. Leger and his motley following of British and Indians, along this road there marched that small but determined body of men and boys, their numbers growing at nearly every homestead passed, so many of them, alas! to meet their death in the ambushade in the swampy ravine of Oriskany.

Tributary to the great Mohawk Turnpike is the Sacandaga Road, an Indian trail afterwards trimmed out as a rude wagon road through the forest. Then, in Colonial days, exploited, though with not much success, as a military road leading up through the Sacandaga region--the wilderness of the lower Adirondacks, to Ogdensburgh. It is said that traces of the abandoned continuation of this road may still be seen in the vicinity of Lake Pleasant, here and there a bit of decayed corduroy road almost obscured by forest growth. Indeed, it is asserted that in one place the muzzle of a field piece yet sticks up from the mire of a swamp, beside the ancient corduroy from which it had slipped; a grim reminder of the toil and hardship our forefathers underwent.

The Vley Road, formerly spelled "Vlaie," received its Dutch name from the former swampy tract, or vlaie, along whose southern margin it runs from Scotia westerly. Even yet despite deep drainage ditches this low-lying tract is sometimes completely flooded in the springtime. In Colonial days this swampy track was known as "Arent Daniel's Vlaie," from Arent Danielse Van Antwerpen an early owner. Among the list of the killed at the Beukendaal battle is a Daniel Van Antwerpen.

The Wolf Hollow Road passes through the deep ravine of that name. It is a trifle over a mile in length and was formerly an almost impassable road during part of each year. A few years ago, however, it was cut to a uniform grade, drained, widened and finely macadamized, and now, due to its scenic beauty, its wealth of wild flowers, its odd and rare ferns, its spring of cold water--"Johnnies Spring," and its abandoned "coal mine" piercing the black

shales, this deep cut through the Glenville hills is getting each recurring summer more and more visitors. Easily reached by automobile by way of the Sacandaga Road and the village of Glenville, or by the Mohawk Turnpike, turning north at Hoffmans, it is also but a few minutes walk from both the steam and electric stations at Hoffmans. To the student of geology the Wolf Hollow offers many attractions, certain of its rock exposures abounding in fossil life forms. Here, too, can be seen and studied the effects of an enormous dislocation of the Earth's surface rocks; a displacement, or "fault," of more than a thousand feet, so it is said. It is mapped by the geologists as the "Hoffmans Ferry Fault."

An old-time and wellnigh forgotten wood road climbing diagonally the northern slope of the hills, up and over the "Commons," was known for a long time as the "Mammy Garrett Road." The present area of our town formerly constituted the Fourth Ward of the City of Schenectady, until by an act of the Legislature, passed April 14, 1920, it was set off as a separate township. Before this date, and thereafter, or until the final sale of the so-called "Commons," all the freeholders and inhabitants of the area in question had equal rights to cut firewood and timber thereon. Then it was that the Mammy Garrett Road and the other woodroads leading to the Commons, at certain seasons of the year would be alive with teams and yokes of oxen hauling firewood and timbers great and small. It is said that nearly all of the older farm barns of our town, and--sub rosa--many of those in the adjoining town to the north, as well, have frames of hewn white oak timber cut on the Commons.

Other highways of the town, of more or less importance, are the Ballston Road; the Brummaghim Road, in East Glenville; The Ridge Road; the Spring Road; the Washout Road; Rabbit Hollow; Lovers Lane, and the North Road, so-called, leading northeast from the village of Glenville. Lastly, there is the highway, locally known as "Touareuna Hill," which, leaving the Mohawk Turnpike just west of Hoffmans, climbs the rocky Kinaquariones. The hill portion of this road gets but little travel, for it is of almost unsurmountable steepness; a road wisely shunned by the automobilist, yet one rewarding the daring and successful climber with an unparalleled and extensive view both up and down the river valley. After the first rugged mile, however, this road leads through a comparatively level and fertile farming section. Closely following the west line of the town, it finally passes out of the bounds of the town near its extreme northwest corner.

As to the Maalwyck; Beukendaal; the Kleykuil; Swaagertown; Lusig Hook; Steenrabie ("Stone Arabia"); De Gravens Hofstede; the Hoek; Bear Swamp; the Powder Spring, and Sanders Lake, these, and many other old-time names given to certain places in our town, will be left for discussion in a future paper.

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