



"THE FAIREST FLOWER THAT EVER BLOOMED AMONG THE MOHAWKS"
(COURTESY SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF MARTYRS, AURIESVILLE, N.Y.)

STORIES AND LEGENDS
OF OUR
INDIAN PATHS
BY
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"Stories and legends told with the charm and vitality of the spoken word, by those who have passed, that we who remain for a time may in our turn hand them on to those who follow, in order that they may not perish from the earth."

-- Ardvane the Yokei



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FOREWORD

In our County of Schenectady we have the gateway of a great transcontinental thoroughfare; a near sea-level pass through the ancient Appalachian uplift -- the Atlantic backbone of our continent.

This great valley, deeply scored in past geologic ages by the mighty flood of the Iro-Mohawk, was naturally chosen as a convenient thoroughfare by the many primitive nations passing between the coastal regions and the interior; by the fur-clad race who followed the skirt of the retreating ice cap that mantled our region for so many thousands of years; by the People of the Red Paint, a somewhat mysterious race of which but little is known; by the Algonkin who wave after wave dwelt in the region; by the mound-building folk, immigrants from the Valley of the Ohio, who ventured into our region only to be destroyed in warfare or perhaps assimilated by the dominant Algonkin, leaving but scant trace of their presence, and lastly by the Mohawks, that war-like, man-eating Iroquoian nation who came hither but a few short years before the advent of the Whites.

The river itself, a waterway with but few and short portages to the interior lakes, gave thoroughfare for the long and large canoes of the Algonkin, craft hollowed by the aid of fire and sharp gouges of stone from the trunks of giant cedars, while on both its shores ran well-beaten paths between populous towns. Other branching paths led both North and South to cornfields, to choice trout streams, to quarries of the indispensable flint, and to remote towns.

This paper is an attempt to portray some of the many stories and legends that cluster around these primitive highways of our region; a region rich in lore of the past.

Glenville, N.Y.
April, 1940

P.M.V.E.

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SECTION ONE
INTRODUCTORY

* * *

When in 1661 Alexander Lindsay the Scotchman, came across the pine plains from Ft. Orange to found his new home by the "River of the Maquaas," followed three years later by a dozen hardy Dutch families, they came into a region covered as far as the eye could reach with a dense forest. Pine, hemlock and oak on the uplands, ash and willows on the lower ground and a tangled jungle of willows and wild grape vines on the river flats with here and there a giant buttonwood whose spreading limbs overhung the water. Nothing broke the uniformity of this expanse of forest before them except perhaps certain small area reddened and desolated by forest fires, lightning kindled.

In this wild area, chosen by the new settlers for their home, they found no fields of grain waving golden in the sunlight, so fancifully pictured by a local historian of the past century, nor did they build their log houses in the shadow of a great castle of the Mohawks, occupying the site of Schenectady as another writer has narrated. Instead of this pleasant fiction the entire area before them was a no-man's-land, a neutral ground between the Mohawk Indians whose nearest towns were some thirty miles up the river and their long-time enemies, the Algonkin, whose territory was then east of the Hudson, reaching even to the coast of New England. Ages before, however, long before the Mohawks had entered the region, the valley was occupied by Algonkin nations whose wattle-fenced corn patches dotted not only the river flats but also certain parts of the uplands. The remains of their numerous and

large villages are found here and there in the area but all those west of the Hudson seem to have been abandoned perhaps centuries before the coming of the Dutch and even of the Mohawks. The forests had again hidden the sites of this early occupation and the sturdy Dutch settlers literally had to hew their homes from the dense inclosing forest which they at once named "the Woestina" (the wilderness); a name that the region west of Schenectady bore for over a century. A name often used today though its original significance is mainly lost with those who use it.

MANY PRIMITIVE PATHS

Lacking cleared areas, corn fields, primitive "Castles" and whatnot, our first settlers, however, shortly became aware of visible traces of the ancient dwellers of the region. This was found in the network of more or less distinct primitive footpaths leading in various directions through the surrounding forest and along the streams; thoroughfares of the Algonkin nations whose extensive villages once stood not only in the river valley but also on certain areas of the uplands. Some of these paths, long unused, doubtless were found overgrown, obscured and hidden by the wastage of the forest, and undergrowth. Others were plainly visible along certain parts of their course as a narrow, deeply worn depression. Old residents have told of seeing such in the woodlands, and it is said a few can yet be traced.

Indian paths running in different directions were shown on certain maps of Colonial time. The course shown of some of these, as we now know, was only approximately correct. Knowing, we will

say, that the Mohawks in Sir William Johnson's time frequently traversed the wilderness between Johnson Hall and Lake George, the map-makers would draw a straight line between these points, under the belief then prevalent that the paths of the red man always followed an air line. This was incorrect, their paths often deviated from a direct course, skirting the base of mountains and steep hills; here swerving to the right or left to avoid swamps and low grounds, often flooded, and anon making a detour around some great glacial boulder or mayhap a tangle of wind-fallen trees. Crossing deep ravines at some strategic point these paths of the red man sometimes to this end used a wind-fallen tree trunk as a bridge. A place of this last character has given a permanent and unique place-name to one of the localities of our region; The Fall Tree Kill.

TRACING THEIR COURSE

Knowledge of the course of the various primitive paths of our Mohawk region has been gained in several ways. Mainly disregarding the vague and generally unsatisfactory course of these old thoroughfares as shown on maps of Colonial time, their actual course, however, has often in recent years been quite well established by a study of the "lay of the land" -- the surface contour of the region, coupled with data learned from a close examination of our Colonial documents so generously published by the state, and by the accounts given by early explorers and travelers like that, e.g. found in the famous journal of Surgeon Vanderbogart who in 1634 journeyed from Fort Orange to the country of the "Macquas and Sinnekans." A journey for years wrongly

said to have been made by Van Curler. But mainly, the course of some of the paths of the red man, only here and there showing actual trace of their trodden surface, has been eventually, though unmistakably traced through the labors of our efficient local archeologists by the disclosure of a more or less continuous chain of fire beds, hut-sites -- known by certain circular blackened areas in the soil, and by the profusion of artifacts found along their course. Also by certain small areas found here and there, well-sprinkled with spalls and chippings of flint; makeshift workshops where the red hunter stopped to re-point his blunted arrow and spear heads or perhaps to flake new ones from a supply of flint carried. It was such mute but pertinent evidence supplanted by allusions found in the manuscript journal of one of the Jesuit missionaries stationed among the Mohawks, that led to the clear determination of the course of the principal Indian path of our region; a great cross-country thoroughfare of the Algonkin, undoubtedly trod during many centuries by wave after wave of that race going between their many inland towns and the coastal regions of New England.

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HERE IN THE SHADOW OF THE KINAQUARIONES, BESIDE OUR
GREATEST PRIMITIVE PATH, THE WILY MOHAWKS TRAPPED
AND SLEW THE GREAT CHIEF, CHIKATAUBUT AND SCORES
OF HIS INVADING, ALLIED, ALGONKIAN WARRIORS

SECTION TWO

PATHS ALONG THE MOHAWK

* * * * *

At the time of the settlement of Scotia and Schenectady there seems to have been no Indian paths then in use close to the river, either on its north or south sides. In the summer time the Mohawks and other Indians coming from their villages up the valley made use of the river as their principal thoroughfare. In the winter their principal path eastward ran well up or over the crest of the Rotterdam hills; a short cut from their villages near the mouth of the Schoharie and westward to the uplands of Schenectady where the path divided, the main branch swinging towards Albany by way of the Normans Kill. The lesser branch diverging not far west of the site of the old Throad and Twine Factory on upper Crane Street ran thence northward to the river, which it is supposed to have approached near the fording place below the Maalwyck.

However, during the many centuries our region was occupied by races of Algonkian stock, and long before the comparatively recent entry of the Iroquois, beyond question there were primitive paths running beside the Mohawk between villages of that race. The sites of several such villages are known and recently have been investigated by the local chapter of the State Archaeological Association, some of these were of large extent. Paths connecting these towns of the Algonkin evidently ran rather close to the river, and on both its north and south sides. There were also workshops along the Mohawk where the Algonkian workers in flint deftly flaked arrow and spear heads from material brought from distant quarries, perhaps from those found near Lake Champlain.

ENTRY OF A MOUND-BUILDING RACE

The primitive path mentioned, running along the north side of the Mohawk would have been that followed and used by red immigrants from the West, apparently of the great mound-building race once so numerous in the valley of the Ohio and the middle West, who entered our region at an early period but whose sojourn here seems to have been short; at least as a distinct race. Burial places of this race have been found in two places in Glenville, one just below Hoffmans and the other and more extensive one about midway between Hoffmans and Schenectady. At these places similar and characteristic relics of this race were found with the burials, the disclosures being made during the progress of excavations. Among the objects found were beads and axes beaten from native copper, ceremonial objects fashioned from alabaster as well as other artifacts differing in material and workmanship from those made and used by the eastern Algonkin. The culture of the Mohawks does not, of course, enter in this premise at all, as their entry and sojourn in the area was clearly in the Historic period.

The mound-building folk probably entered our region in an interim between some of the several distinct periods of Algonkian occupation; not less than three such periods having been disclosed by recent investigation of our local archeologists. Following the whole extent of the Mohawk to its mouth, this race seems to have followed the Hudson for a few miles northward and also to the south, at least as far as Athens. Near this place an extensive cemetery of this race was disclosed some few years

ago, the graves being lined with large and thin stone slabs. With these burials were characteristic relics of the westerners.

What became of these immigrants from the West seems uncertain; they may have been conquered and annihilated in war with the surrounding Algonkin, or as some suggest may have coalesced with that dominant race. They probably never were great in number nor did they long occupy our region. No village site that was definitely occupied by them has yet been found; there remains the chance, however, that such a site may exist in some one of the many areas of our region yet forest clad. Despite much speculation no definite conclusion has yet been reached by the archeologists as to what race the mound-building folk were of.

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KEEPING SHARP WATCH FOR ARTIFACTS OF
THE ANCIENT FOLK WHO, WAVE AFTER WAVE,
OCCUPIED THIS REGION FOR CENTURIES
(PHOTO BY VANDER VEER)

SECTION THREE
ALONG THE GREAT FAULT

* * *

Gen. John S. Clark of Auburn, N.Y., who has written much on the Indian paths of our State, says, "Three trails led southward from Jessup's Landing" * * * "One in almost an air-line to Kinaquarioncs." Here we have another of those "air-line" paths. While the course of this path was approximately straight between its objectives, yet it certainly swerved somewhat to avoid natural obstacles such as swampy areas and rugged outcrops. Diverging from the great cross-country Algonkian path at the Kinaquarioncs this north-bound path ran through the forest, on the uplift-side and close to the margin of the Hoffmans Ferry Fault, following along the line of this great earth fracture through its entire extent in Glenville and also through the towns of Galway and Greenfield. In this latter town it skirted the base of the mountains of the Lake Desolation region, thus reaching the upper Hudson at "Jessup's Landing," as Gen. Clark writes, or somewhere in the vicinity of Corinth, where it may have merged with the Aalplaats path.

The whole extent of this path from the Kinaquarioncs may have been little used by the early Algonkin but seems to have been well known at a later period to the Mohawks and Indians of Canada, figuring in at least two notable events in the historic period, as will be related. First and foremost of these was the spectacular flight to Canada in 1667 of the Indian maiden, Tokakwitha to escape the wrath and persecution of her pagan uncle; she having become a convert to the teachings of the Jesuit fathers.

KATERI TEKAKWITHA
LILY OF THE MOHAWKS

In the summer of 1667, under the auspices and direction of the French authorities, Fremin, Bruyas, and Pierron, Jesuit priests, left the city of Quebec on a mission to the Iroquois of the Mohawk Valley, stopping first at Gandawaguo, a castle at the mouth of the Cayadutta Creek, of the Turtle Clan of the Mohawks. Here they were lodged for a time in the "long house" of one of the chiefs of the village and waited upon by a Mohawk girl, Tekakwitha, who later was destined to figure prominently in the life of the Mohawk towns and in the annals of the Jesuit missionaries stationed there and who, furthermore, may at this late day become a recognized saint of the Catholic Church.

Bruyas after a short stop at Gandawague went among the Oneidas. Fremin remained among the Mohawks nearly a year, finally going westward among the Senecas. Meanwhile Pierron returned to Canada but came again among the Mohawks in October of 1668 remaining with them for some little time.

In some one of the cluster of palisaded Mohawk villages lying in the great bend of the river above the mouth of the Schoharie Creek, in the year 1656 Kateri Tekakwitha was born. Her father was one of the warriors of the Turtle Clan but her mother was a captive from the Algonkin of the Three Rivers in Canada. The fact that her mother was a convert to the Catholic religion may have had somewhat to do with the ready acceptance by Kateri of the teachings of the Jesuit missionaries. Many of the Mohawks of that period embraced the faith of the French. This brought much dissension and trouble among them, finally

leading to the abandonment of their valley home by a certain few who went to Canada; among these was Kryn the famous chief of the Mohawks, who planned and carried out the successful ambushade against the allied army of invading Algonkin in 1669. And, as we shall see, the girl, Kateri.

When Kateri Tekakwitha was yet a small girl her mother died, and a little later her father, whereupon she was placed in the care of an uncle, a prominent man of the Turtle Clan and one who bitterly hated the religion of the Black Gowns and deeply resented his niece's acceptance thereof, letting no opportunity pass for reviling the new belief and reproaching her for listening to the teachings of the missionaries. Ellen Walworth in her life story of Tekakwitha writes (page 173), "She felt that she could not endure it much longer and live; for the Lily was left quite alone among thorns, and the thorns were pricking her almost to death."

THE FLIGHT TO CANADA

Aware of the thorny life this Indian girl led in the village along the Mohawk, relatives of hers who had already gone to Canada, planned to effect her escape and stealthy removal from the valley town. To this end an impulsive and fiery-tempered chief, one Louis Garonhiague, an Oneida by birth, known to the English as "Hot Ashes," volunteered to visit the Mohawk town and if possible bring about Kateri's escape. Accompanied by a brother-in-law of Kateri and by an Indian from the Huron village of Lorette, a speedy journey was made to the Mohawk Valley by way of Lake Champlain and Lake George. Arriving at

Gandawague, Hot Ashes and his companions together with the Jesuit, DeLamberville, then stationed there laid the plan of escape: Hot Ashes himself was not to return at once as he had a mission to the Oneidas, farther up the river. But their visit was at an opportune time as Kateri's pagan uncle who would not have allowed her removal was then on a protracted visit among the Dutch of Schenectady, doubtless on a big drunk. Thereupon, no time was lost in secretly placing Kateri in a canoe with her brother-in-law and the Indian from Lorotte. Paddling down the Mohawk, with caution, however, for they dreaded a meeting with the pagan uncle on his return, a landing was made at the Kinaquarioncs. From there the little party started northward for Lake George; and the start was made not a moment too soon, for when at Gandawague it was discovered that Kateri could not be found, neither the visitors from Canada; a runner was sent in haste to Schenectady to inform her uncle of the flight. He returned at once, perhaps narrowly missed meeting the fugitives on the river, and found that it was indeed true; his niece was not to be found. Enraged beyond reason, and perhaps with drink, he loaded his gun with three bullets declaring he would kill somebody, and at once took to the river, knowing instinctively the route the fugitives would take. Finding the canoe at the Kinaquarioncs he started at once on the northward path. Despite their fair start the fugitives expected pursuit and should they be overtaken they adopted this plan: One of the Indians and Kateri hurried along the path while the other Indian followed at the same pace but

some little distance behind. Should he discover the approach of a pursuer he was to fire the gun he carried, making as though he was leisurely hunting. About half the distance to Lake George had been covered when the warning gun shot was heard, upon which Kateri's companion at once sought out a hiding-place in a dense thicket a little distance from the path. In this he concealed Kateri and then threw himself beside the path where lighting his pipe he lay as in a day dream lazily watching the curling smoke.

The alert rear guard had caught sight of the approach of Kateri's uncle before he actually drew near and staged his hunting play accordingly. Stepping beside the path he aimed and fired his gun as though he had sighted a squirrel in a tree, paying no attention whatever to the newcomer. The irate uncle, bound on vengeance, stopped, looked the young hunter over and as he was apparently unknown to him, passed on coming shortly abreast the meditative smoker who favored him with a glance only. Here was a dilemma; his niece nowhere in sight nor yet the chief, Hot Ashes, in whose care he fully expected to find her, notwithstanding he had been told in Gandawague that Hot Ashes had already gone up among the Oneidas. This it seems he did not believe thinking that it had been told him as a subterfuge to cover the flight of Kateri. Instead here were two indolent, taciturn, young red hunters who could give him no information of those he sought. Both were seemingly strangers to him, for it must be remembered at their arrival at the Mohawk village he was on his spree at Schenectady. Had he been made a fool of and led entirely astray? Perhaps even now Kateri was with the women, work-

ing as usual in the cornfields beside the flats of the Cayadutta, and as for those who had deceived him -- well, he still had the three bullets in his gun. Rather than add to his folly by questioning those unconcerned hunters he would at once retrace his steps, which he accordingly did.

After assuring themselves that their pursuer had actually turned about and was on his return to the Mohawk town, Kateri and her companions thankfully resumed their journey and coming to the head of Lake George they soon found the canoe as it had been hidden in the bushes and from there had an untroubled journey, arriving safely at the Sault (near Montreal) in the autumn of 1677.

Kateri Tekakwitha died at the age of twenty-four at Caughnawaga on the St. Lawrence. Her grave which attracts many worshipers is marked by a handsome granite monument bearing the following inscription:

KATERI TEKAKWITHA
Apr. 17, 1680

Onkwe onwe-ke Katsitsiio Teiotsitsianekaron

This tribute in the Iroquoian language may be rendered in English thus: "The fairest flower that ever bloomed among the Redmen."

* * * * *

FOLLOWING THE PATH TODAY

A pleasant experience at this day would be a rambling walk through the woodland and old highways along the course of the northward path from the Kinaquariones, the path followed by the

Lily of the Mohawks in her flight to Canada. Given a propitious summer day together with a knowledge of the approximate course of this old footpath or perhaps under skillful guidance, to walk say, along its first half-dozen miles would be found an instructive experience long to be remembered. Suppose we start just above the station at Hoffmans, or where the little brook, Chaughtanoonda crosses the Mohawk Turnpike, on its way to the river. Here we will find a State Historical marker telling of the famous battle of 1669 between the Mohawks and an invading army of allied Algonkian nations. At this point we will take a dirt road leading up the hillside, the Touareuna Road. Following this steep highway for a few hundred feet we approach another historic marker. Just beyond is the home of the Swert family, both father and son trained and expert archaeologists, for, forsooth, their estate embraces nearly the whole extent of that bloody combat of 1669 in which the Algonkin, wrote Gookin, their able chronicler, lost their "great chief Chikataubu" with "almost all his captains, in number about 50."

The area of this battleground was, however, the site of an ancient village of the Algonkin as shown by numerous relics of an archaic type found here and by the presence of a notable group of corn pits -- conical cavities in the ground, once bark-lined, wherein the red man stored his winter's supply of maize, or Indian corn. Each pit when filled was capped with a tiny teepee of bark to shield its contents from rain and snows. An interesting find recently made by the Swarts, who

are carefully exploring the area, following the most approved methods of archeologic research, was a handsome crucifix of dazzling porcelain bearing the figure of Christ, once emblazoned with gold. This emblem, of course, can be ascribed to the period of the battle and is unquestionably one of the numerous objects given to the Indians by the Jesuit missionaries. It is safe to say that it was worn by one of the Mohawk warriors and lost during the combat as its broken ring for suspension indicates.

Leaving the log cabin of the Swarts, built on the battleground as a recreation center for the numerous visitors, we will now follow a woodland path that diverges somewhat from the brook Chaughtanoonda flowing below in its shady vale. Passing a rocky outcrop, the "cragged pass," mentioned by the Jesuit father, Pierron, in his manuscript journal, we will soon approach the defile of the Wolf Hollow at a point quite near Johnnys Spring. Here we will keep to the left or on the crown of the west bank of the ravine, here precipitous. The main Algonkian path, the greatest primitive thoroughfare of our Mohawk region, from this point is known to have followed the stream throughout the remaining part of the Hollow, from which, emerging, it ran directly across country to the valley of the Hudson. Our Kinquariones path diverging at this point kept to the top of the ravine, passing through the level forest, not far from the margin of the Hollow, a pleasant woodland path even today.

While on our way through the forest paralleling the verge of the Hollow, if the little stream below be running high we

may hear its chatter as it hurries over its slaty bed. Finally passing the upper end of the ravine we will come out of the forest, thence crossing a succession of small partly-cultivated fields whose stone fence rows are each marked with a broad strip of trees and bushes. We are, however, still closely following the actual line of the great fracture in Earth's surface that geologists tell us occurred millions of years ago, as well as of the path of the red man whose course we have set out to explore - approximately following, for just here there exists no visible trace of its course, like those discovered elsewhere. The line of the great fault, however, has been traced many miles to the northward and the old path closely followed its course.

A CORNFIELD OF THE RED MAN

To our left on the farm lands we are crossing was an Indian cornfield. Here on a level piece of rich soil in the sheltering lee of a high ridge the first white settlers of the region when clearing the land found a group of low and flat-topped mounds scattered without regular order in the woods. At first these were somewhat of a puzzle but their true nature was soon recognized. They were simply corn-hills where the women of some one of the nearby Algonkian villages planted and cared for their crops of maize, squash and beans. When discovered by the whites the area was covered with forest growth but long ages ago this plot of rich black soil had been mainly cleared of its trees by arduous labor of the women and perhaps with very little if any help from the men, if we may believe

the accounts of our old chroniclers. Possibly the area chosen may have been in the path of a forest fire, thereby making easy the labor of preparation. This, like all the corn plots of the Indian, was doubtless inclosed within a fence of wattle-work, pliant saplings interwoven between tall stakes and perhaps between bordering trees. This was necessary to protect the growing crops from the ravages of deer and other animals of the forest.

In our Mohawk region, abandoned long ages ago by the Algonkin, all trace of these wattle-work fences have, of course, disappeared. However, over in the Schaghtikoke region where certain tribes of the Algonkin lingered well in the historic period we find, as one of the boundaries mentioned on a Dutch deed, the "Old Indian Fence."

From this cornfield in the forest on autumn days long ago Indian women carrying baskets or woven hampers strapped to their foreheads, filled with plucked ears of the corn, might have been seen making their way along the pathway whose course we have followed thus far as best we could. Coming to their village at the Kinaquariones the corn would be husked and neatly braided into long "rists," as the Dutch called them, and hung to dry high up in their bark-clad circular houses: the Algonkin seldom built long houses as did the Iroquois. When properly dried a portion of the corn would be placed in the outdoor pits previously described. Corn thus stored by the Indians is said to have saved the Pilgrim families of New England from actual starvation during their first winter on the rock-bound coast of the New World.

BEYOND THE CORNFIELD

Passing beyond the area of the cornfield and through an abandoned limestone quarry we come to and cross the main highway between the village of Glenville and the city of Amsterdam. Here, to the right of the handsome residence of the Kinum family, we find a gravel road leading northward. We are now on our right track for this road was laid out for the next few miles ahead rather close to the course of the Indian path. Many of the crooked roads of our region were originally Indian paths or wood-roads of the first settlers. Keeping to the right at the first intersection we are closely skirting the fault scarp. Soon we will find our way obstructed by barways. Our road has in recent years been practically abandoned as a public highway. Its pavement in places is the bare dolomite rock ground and scored by the grind of the great Labradorian ice sheet that mantled the land for ages.

Passing through a forested area we shortly come out on a well-surfaced postal highway (the Potter Road). Following this to the right where it sweeps around a great bend we are still on the course of the primitive path we have set out to follow. A high and wooded bank rises to the left of this part of the way, but to the right a magnificent view point opens; in the foreground a great depression with fields and forest, once the bed of a postglacial lake. Beyond lies the village of Glenville whose background is the wooded northern slopes of the Glenville Hills. To the east, miles across the Saratoga plains, -- the basin of Lake Albany of geologic time -- we can see the ridge of

Beemis Heights, the scene of the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 where the British army under Gen. Burgoyne surrendered. Just across the Hudson from the battleground rises the black dome of Williards Mountin, in 1777 a signal point for the American army. Far beyond, if the day is clear, we see a hundred-mile reach of the Berkshires and the Green Mountain range in Vermont. Nevertheless, we can imagine that the Mohawk girl, Kateri, passing this fine view point on her flight to Canada with her two companions, paused not an instant but hurried on with many an apprehensive glance behind dreading the approach of pursuers.

THE GONZALEZ MASSACRE OF 1782

At the end of the curve we have followed, the Potter road turns sharply to the right in a long and steep descent to the lowlands, and away from the course of the old Indian path which from this point ran almost directly northward. To follow its course we leave the highway and take to the open fields, keeping close to the exact crown of the slope. Soon our way skirts a forest on the higher level land and we will presently approach a public road. This is the West Charlton-Amsterdam highway, and beside it, and directly before us if we have rightly followed the course of the old path, stands a marker, erected by the Education Department of our State, bearing this inscription:

GONZALEZ HOME
 HERE, IN 1782, JOSEPH
 GONZALEZ AND SON EMANUEL
 WERE KILLED AND SCALPED BY
 ST. REGIS INDIANS. HIS SON
 JOHN WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE

Joseph Gonzalez was a direct descendant of a Spanish Huguenot of that name who, sailing from Holland in his own ship, arrived at New Amsterdam about 1690. Coming to our region from the lower Hudson Valley in the year 1770, he contracted for an area of nearly 1500 acres, mainly in the present town of Charlton but extending somewhat in the north part of Glenville. His son, John, carried captive to Canada and released when peace was declared afterward secured title to a valuable part of the original tract, the greater part of which was lost to the family at the time of the massacre through lack of payments. John's holdings, however, remained in the possession of the family for a century and a half.

The log house of the Gonzalez family stood beside the Indian path and but a few hundred feet north of the marker commemorating the raid.

At this point, the scene of the Gonzalez tragedy, we will, perhaps see fit to conclude our day's walk. Those interested in the full story of the tragic attack on this isolated family by the St. Regis who came over 100 miles south through the Adirondacks for this express purpose may find a detailed account in Stone's "Reminiscences of Saratoga," published in 1880.

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SECTION FOUR
THE SCHOHARIE PATH

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Branching from the Albany-Mohawk path, on the highlands of Schenectady, somewhere in Belleview, an Indian path led across to the Schoharie Valley which it reached a short distance below the mouth of the Foxenkill, at a place known at the time of the settlement of that region as Garlocks Dorff. The road of today often spoken of as the Old Schoharie Turnpike is said to have been built mainly along the course of this path of the red man.

This path between Schoharie and Schenectady was much used by the first Palatine settlers of the valley who, starved out at East Camp (Germantown), where they first settled under the auspices of Queen Anne, braved the journey over the then wild northern flank of the Catskills to make their home in the fertile valley of the Schoharie. During the early years of their settlement they had no mill to grind their grain, the nearest mill being at Schenectady. Accordingly, writes Judge John M. Brown in his "First Settlement of the County of Schoharie by the Germans," written in 1816, "they went sometimes twenty men, women and children in a drove, each with a grist on his back, to Schenectady lowlands to get ground." Judge Brown adds, "each man on this long tramp of nineteen miles to the mill at Schenectady generally would carry about a skipple of wheat." A skipple was about three pecks, our measure.

FIRST WHEAT SOWN IN SCHOHARIE

Judge Brown writes: "The first wheat was sown in Schoharie by Lambert Sternbergh who in the fall of 1713 brought a spint" (printer's error?) "along the Indian foot path from Schenectady to Schoharie; there sowed, or rather planted it, over more than an acre of ground, which grew well; and the next year he reaped and thrashed it, and measured 83 skipple out of it." Regarding this phenomenal yield Judge Brown adds, "The mighty increase as mentioned before, will be doubtful perhaps to every reader; yet my informers were many and of the most credible characters in Schoharie."

So fertile was the virgin soil of the famed Schoharie flat land that forty years after Sternbergh's experiment "it was reckoned that one year after another, they carried 36,000 skipple to Albany." This, of course, after passable wagon roads were cut out and horses procured. At first, writes Brown, nine farmers owned in common the first horse in the Valley -- a grey. The wheels on their wagons were simply sections sawn from large but-tonwood logs and bored for an axle.

Judge Brown, author of this valuable history of Schoharie, was born at Blue Mountain, Ulster County, N.Y., in 1745. He was brought up by his grandfather at West Camp, came to Schoharie in 1757 where he learned the trade of a wheelwright at which trade he worked until he was twenty-four years old. In 1771 he procured a tract of 300 acres in the Town of Carlisle, about five miles north of Cobleskill. Here he made his home until his death in 1838. Judge Brown spoke English as well as Low and

High Dutch and wrote both in English and German. In 1795 he was appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for his County. He was a Captain in the Militia; was a member of the Commission that laid out the public roads of his County also of those of the adjoining County of Otsego. Said Bellinger, his editor, "he wielded a powerful influence, and wrote his name high on the scroll of local history."

JUDGE BROWN FOLLOWS AN INDIAN PATH TO CHURCH

Judge Brown was a devoted member and officer of the Dutch Reformed Church at Schoharie. Regular in attendance on his Church he would journey thoreto on foot. Ofttimes, it is said, of necessity barefoot, a distance of fourteen miles, following an Indian footpath which he would join just below his residence.

A TRAINING DAY AND AN OX ROAST FOR THE SOLDIERS OF OLD DORP

Two Indian paths ran from the Schoharie region across the hills to the Mohawk. One closely followed the stream northward to Fort Hunter. This was the path along whose course was the famed Stone Heap to which each Indian that passed added at least one stone. The Rev. Gideon Hawley who passed it in 1753 believed that this custom was an offering to the unknown God of the red man. When first observed the heap was four rods long, one or two wide, and ten to fifteen feet high. This was the path followed to the Mohawk in 1780 by John Johnson, Brant and the noted Seneca chief, Corn-Planter,

after their unsuccessful attempt to batter their way into the old Church-Fort with their single little popgun cannon which, bogged, was abandoned in the low ground near the Kill. Robert M. Hartley, the historian of that region says that along certain parts of its course this old Schoharie-Fort Hunter path is still plainly marked, and that he has travelled over it many times.

The other path, starting at Kniskernsdorff, ran northwesterly reaching the Mohawk not far from Canajoharie or at a point just west of the south Nose. After the settlement of the Valley by the immigrants from East Camp, this path was used by them, visiting their friends and relatives among the Palatines along the Mohawk. Writes the Judge: "This footpath has been much traveled by the Germans; in the summers for the most part on barefoot."

It was along this latter path, tracked out by the red man long ago, that one summer day in 1762 Judge Brown then seventeen years old left his wheel-wright work and in company with other boys and men of the Valley trudged, many of them no doubt barefoot, the long miles over the hills of Carlyle, Charleston and Glen to witness a general review, ordered by Sir William Johnson, of the Schenectady Brigade of Militia, held at the Upper Castle on the Mohawk. This event, an old-time Training Day on an unusual scale, was marked by the roasting of a whole ox. Said the Judge: "the first I ever heard or saw."

Incidentally, the informative history of the Schoharie region so freely quoted in this section, was written, so the author states, at the personal request of Gov. DeWitt Clinton.



The McDonalds' Cabin.

LOG CABIN OF MICHAEL AND NICHOLAS MC DONALD
BUILT BESIDE AN INDIAN PATH NEAR LONG LAKE
A FAMOUS LANDMARK FOR NEARLY A CENTURY
(FROM A CONTEMPORARY PEN SKETCH)

SECTION FIVE
THE AALPLAATS PATH

* * *

From a point quite near the mouth of the Aalplaats Kill, where ages ago as shown by recent investigations of Lloyd Brinkman, stood an Algonkian village, apparently a notable center of aboriginal occupation, there ran northward an Indian path, following that stream for about three miles, or until its course turns westward through the ravine its waters have cut through the gravel terraces of East Glonville, thereby exposing in a notable way the underlying inclined strata.

Leaving this bend in the course of the Aalplaats the path of the red man continued northward to Ballston Lake running thence on its way to Lake George along the margin of a broad depression said by the geologists to have been occupied by rivers of post-glacial time.

Somewhere along the southern section of the Aalplaats path it crossed a greater primitive thoroughfare, the main east-west path of Algonkin, previously mentioned in this paper. The place of this intersection of the paths was evidently not far from the south end of Ballston Lake, the greater path leading thence eastward over the sand plains towards Round Lake and the valley of the Hudson, while the Aalplaats path continuing northward skirted the western side of Ballston Lake.

After the abandonment of the region by the Algonkin which, as stated before, was many centuries ago, the Aalplaats path possibly had become somewhat obliterated, though the newcomers

in our valley, the Mohawks, well knew of it and occasionally as old records show made use of it. It was along this path, as will be related, that they carried on a litter their great white brother, Sir William Johnson, on the occasion of his memorable visit to a mineral spring in the wilderness of the Kayaderosseras, a healing fountain never before visited by a white man.

AN ARMY CAMPS BY THE AALPLAATS

One hundred years before Sir William was carried along the Aalplaats path by his devoted Mohawks a strange procession of weary, half-frozen soldiers wabbling along as best they could on snowshoes straggled southward along this ancient path. This was the little army under DeCourcelle, Governor of Canada, that left Quebec on the ninth of January in 1666. An expedition whose object was to punish the Mohawks, capture and burn their towns in retaliation for a long series of devastating and bloody raids made on the French settlements of Lower Canada.

Courcelle's force included 300 veteran soldiers from France who had served in the wars of Louis XIV, together with some 200 Canadian volunteers. They were equipped with snow-shoes with whose use the soldiers from France were unfamiliar, each man carrying nearly thirty pounds of supplies. The season selected for the campaign was ill-chosen, the snows being unusually deep and the cold intense. The expedition had got but a little way on their long march before a number of the men had their limbs frozen, thereupon being sent back on improvised sleds.

Enduring incredible hardship Courcelle's little army shuffled their weary way up the length of Lake Champlain and Lake George and weeks went by before they arrived at the intersection of the path they were following, with the great Algonkian cross-country path, near the south end of Ballston Lake. This latter path, whose westward course led to the country of the Iroquois, they had expected to take, along which three days' march would have brought them to Gandawague, the first of the Mohawk towns they had planned to attack. But at this meeting-place confusion arose as to which path they should take. Their Algonkian guides had deserted or failed them. Finally they resumed their march -- on the wrong path -- southward, soon coming to the Aalplaats, not far from High Mills, and on the ninth of February having been exactly a month on the road they encamped, so relates an old London document:

"within 2 myles of a small village called Schonectade, lying in the woods beyond fort Albany in ye territoreye of his Royall highness, and 3 dayes march from the first castle of the Mohaukes."

This encampment was probably on the very place where now stands the village of Alplaus. From here, looking up the frozen expanse of the river, Courcelle's weary troops saw smoke rising from the forest that covered the south shore. This rose from the chimneys of Schonectady, the little village founded only five years before. This, the French thought rose from the long houses of the Indian village they had come so far to attack and destroy and they rejoiced at being so near their destination. This belief was further confirmed when

in their encampment awaiting the morrow and their expected easy conquest of their red enemies they were alarmed to discover in the surrounding forest a large body of painted savages who seemingly were watching their movements, finally making a show of retreating, whereupon Commander Courcelle sent

"a party of 60 of their best Fuzileers after them, but that small party drew the French into an ambuscade of near 200 Mohaukes planted behind trees, (who taking their advantage as it fell into their hands,) at one volley slew eleaven French men whereof one was a Lieuten't, wounded divers others, the french party made an honorable retreat to their body, w'ch was marching after them close at hand, w'ch gave the Mohaukes tyme and opportunity to march off w'th the loss of only 3 slaine upon the plaice and 6 wounded."

The Mohawks, whose alert scouts undoubtedly had known for days of the approach of the French, lost no time in informing their Dutch friends in Schenectady of the encounter at the Aalplaats, bringing with them as a grewsome trophy of their prowess the bleeding heads of four of the slain soldiers. At this, word was at once sent to Beverwyck (then Albany) of the invasion of the region. The authorities of that place, alarmed at this startling news, immediately sent three of their number to the French, still encamped at the Aalplaats, asking what was meant by bringing such a body of armed men into the territory of his majesty, the British King. To this Courcelle replied that he had no evil designs whatever against the Dutch, saying that he had not been made aware that the king of England claimed sovereignty over those parts and that his only object in coming from Canada was that he might "seek out and destroy his enemies, the Mohaukes." He further added a

request that he might buy provision from the Dutch, for which he would freely pay, and that his soldiers wounded in the skirmish might be carried to Albany for medical care and treatment. To these requests the envoys readily agreed and on the next day the wounded soldiers were carried from the camp to Schenectady, "carefully drest and sent to Albany, being seaven in number, the Dutch boers carryed to the camp such provisions as they had, and were too well payd for it; Especially peas and bread, of which a good quantity was bought."

The envoys from Albany brought with them a present of wine and provision for Courcelle. They also offered to give the French shelter for a time in their extremity. This generous offer Commander Courcelle civilly refused to accept, saying that there would not be sufficient accommodation at Albany

"for his men with whom he had marcht and campd under the blew canopy of the heavens for six weeks and he well knew the result of bringing his weary and half-starved men within the smell of a chimney corner."

Resting as best they could in his camp at the Aalplaats he had his men under control and could mainly keep them from

"stragglng or running away, not knowing which way to run for fear of the savages."

From the story of this ill-starred expedition, gleaned from various old-time records, we can readily see that the commander of the little force camped by the Aalplaats fully realized his critical situation. Missing -- perhaps to his

secret satisfaction -- his planned objective, the Mohawk towns yet some thirty miles up the river, he, his weary men near the point of revolt, was well-nigh stranded in this wilderness; in sight, however, of the little Dutch town then but five years old and of whose existence he was ignorant but whose succor was to save him and his men from actual starvation. Of the larger town beyond, (Albany, known to the French as "Orange") he knew but, as it seems, was unaware that it was now claimed as the territory of the King of England with which country his native France was at the point of war.

The taste Courcelle's men had on their arrival of Mohawk strategy and warfare had dampened or extinguished desire for further encounter. These seasoned veterans from the Regiment Carignan-Salieres who had fought against the Turks in stand-up face-to-face combat were confused and terrified by this strange warfare in the forest where their foe rarely could be seen and whose number, due to the speed with which the savages changed their position, seemed far greater than it really was. Said the Jesuit Father, Vimont, "I would as soon be besieged by hobgoblins as by the Iroquois. The one is scarcely more visible than the other. When they are afar off, one believes they are at our doors."

Here, deep in the wilderness of the New World, Courcelle's men, poorly fed, frost-bitten and foot-sore from the unfamiliar snow-shoes, doubtless wished themselves safely back in Quebec, or better still, in sunny France. Besides they knew that the Mohawks, who had now returned to their castles, would be warily

awaiting their approach, if, indeed, they could avoid deadly ambushade going thither. So we cannot wonder that Commander Courcelle and his entire force, after resting a few days in their camp on the Aalplaats and securing such provision as they could from the burghers of Schenectady, made, evidently to save their prestige with the Dutch,

"a shew of marching towards the Mohaukes Castles but with faces about and with great dilligence returned towards Canada."

Courcelle's invasion happened at a time when, due to swiftly-changing political events in the Old World, the Colonists of Albany, and of Schenectady as well, hardly knew from one month's end to the next under whose dominion they were living; whether subjects of Holland or of the King of England. Albany founded by the Dutch in 1615 as Fort Nassau, became Fort Orange in 1623, which name it bore until 1652 when it was officially changed to Dorpe Beverwyck. After the capture of the New Netherlands by the British in 1664 Beverwyck became Albany. Other changes both in rule as well as name swiftly followed. These, however, lie beyond the province of this story.

Therefore, considering the length of time it took to get news from the mother countries in those days, we cannot wonder Commander Courcelle seemed surprised at learning that the little Dutch settlement across the river above his encampment on the Aalplaats was in territory now claimed by the English. As the old record quaintly had it:

"He was disturbed in minde that the British were Masters of these parts of the Country. The King of England did graspe at all America."

CONSIDERS ASSAULTING
THE FORT AT ALBANY

From the London records quoted we learn that Courcelle while still encamped near Schenectady pondered whether being so near he should make an attempt to surprise and capture the fort at Albany. Having no designs whatever against the Dutch, who had treated him so kindly and now made aware that the region was claimed by the English, he no doubt thought that a conquest of the English garrison would redound to the glory of the French cause; the more so as reports had reached Quebec that the French King and the States of Holland were on the point of uniting against England.

With this possible attack in mind Courcelle cautiously made inquiry and was told that the fort at Albany was small, had four bastions, was armed with nine pieces of ordnance and garrisoned with sixty English soldiers, under a captain Baker. However, after considering the matter and learning that the commander of the fort evidently alarmed at the near proximity of the little French army had hurriedly sent for a reinforcement from the fort at the Esopus, also taking in account the exhausted state of his men coupled with their fear of a surprise attack from the dreaded Mohawks whose alert scouts were likely watching their every movement. Courcelle finally gave up any further thought of this advance against Albany and, as related, shortly gave orders for the return march to Canada.

Thus ingloriously ended Governor Courcelle's punitive expedition against the troublesome Mohawks -- and yet not quite ended, for the vengeful savages like hornets pursued the retreating French as far as Lake Champlain, taking a few of them prisoners, one of which, unable to march, they killed at his own request. Others were found lying dead along the way, having perished from hunger and cold. These the Mohawks scalped, as the old record quaintly says, "according to their manner brought the crownes of their heads away."

SIR WILLIAM TAKES THE AALPLAATS PATH

In the bloody battle of Lake George fought in September, 1755, between the British and the French, Sir William Johnson, then in command of the British force engaged, received a severe wound in his thigh by a musket ball. This wound, from which the bullet was never extracted, gave him much trouble for the rest of his life rendering him at times incapable of taking active exercise or of riding on horseback. In the summer of 1767 during a severe attack of this nature his Mohawk wards strongly urged him to visit a certain spring in the wilderness of the Kayaderosseras that they knew of and that no white man had yet seen, whose waters were medicine for many ills.

After some little discussion Warraghiyagoy, the name given their great white brother after full adoption into their nation, finally consented to make this visit. Thereupon, after due preparation, on the 26th of August, Sir William left the Hall at Johnstown, crossing to his former home at Fort Johnson on

the river, then occupied by his son, John, from which he was to continue his journey down the Mohawk by canoe. No doubt he made this first cross-country lap of eight miles in his coach, for it is recorded that the Baronet in his later years often rode from the Hall in his coach, sometimes drawn by six horses, over such roads as were then passable for such an equipage.

Arriving at Fort Johnson the carriage was dismissed at the big stone house -- now the home of the Montgomery County Historical Society -- the mansion that Johnson built in 1742 after leaving Warrensbush, his first home in America. Here the Baronet stopped for a short chat with his son and his son's first love and mother of his children, Clara Putman the Mohawk Valley girl afterwards so deeply wronged, being with her two young children ruthlessly thrust aside in order that Sir William's scion might wed a daughter of the aristocratic Watts family of New York City; a marriage planned and brought about by the elite of New York, dazzled by the title of Baronet foolishly given Sir William's son by the silly old monarch of Britain.

After a short stop, Sir William crossed the rude wagon road leading to Schenectady and the East, thus approaching the landing below the house, on the river's bank. Here a waiting group of his Mohawks with blankets and provision brought from the Hall were making ready the canoes for the journey down the Mohawk, the great summer-time thoroughfare of the Iroquois, the first real stage of the trip to the healing spring.

The canoes here nosed against the shore were mainly the large and somewhat clumsy ones made from the bark of the red, or slippery elm, such as were mostly used by the Mohawks, some being long and large enough to carry from ten to twenty men. One of the craft moored here was, however, a small and graceful canoe fashioned from birch bark. These, says Watson in his Memoirs, "sail like ducks upon the water, and some of them are whimsically painted."

To this canoe of birch the Baronet was led and comfortably seated with his favorite and ever-present servant and body-guard, Pontiac, a half-breed Indian lad, named after the once famous red warrior. Next four stalwart red paddlers took their place, two side by side on their knees. Dipping their paddles of carved maple into the water the canoe was quickly turned into the current where, closely followed by two of the larger craft, good progress was made down the stream. In the larger canoes were a dozen or more of the Indians who were to accompany the Baronet for the extent of his visit to the spring in the wilderness. When the mouth of the Aalplaats should be reached, about three miles below Schenectady, the canoes would be beached, for here was the beginning of the primitive path leading northward.

As the little flotilla drew opposite the large stone house at Guy Park, some three miles down the river, the home of Sir William's daughter, Mary, and her husband Col. Guy Johnson, a nephew of the Baronet, a flutter of handkerchiefs from the mansion told the voyagers that their passage had been

looked for and was seen. Response was, of course, made from the canoes, doubtless aided by lusty and loud-voiced "Niarows!" -- shouts of greeting and of joy -- from the red paddlers.

Only to hold its proper course in the channel and along the deep and still reaches where the current was sluggish did the Indians need to use their paddles. Soon they passed the mouths of the two Chuctanundas, North and South, where the City of Amsterdam now stands. Not far below these streams, on the south side of the river was Warrensbush, a great tract of thousands of acres acquired by Sir Peter Warren who, however, may never have visited his purchase. To this estate came in 1738 his nephew, William Johnson, a young Irishman then twenty-three years old. And here, with his housekeeper, Catharine Weisenberg, he lived until 1742 when he removed to the north side of the river, calling his new home "Mount Johnson," now known as Fort Johnson. Catherine, the mother of Johnson's first three children, came to America as an immigrant of German birth, as some historians assert, the only lawfully-wedded of Johnson's wives. We may well wonder if when passing this, his first home in America, memories and reflections came to the Baronet of his life as a young man on this large estate of his uncle, then little dreaming of the career and honors that lay before him; and; too, less did he then foresee the endless care and worryment that would be his in the oversight and guidance of his fickle-minded and petulant Indian wards.

Warrensbush left behind, the party soon approached and passed the Willigas (Place of Willows), often thus mentioned in

old-time deeds. Five miles further brought the voyagers opposite the wooded nose of the Kinaquariones, a rocky barrier projecting nearly to the water's edge, in after years blasted away for the passage of the Mohawk Turnpike and the Utica and Schenectady Railroad. This rocky projection, now the western boundary of that area of Schenectady County lying north of the river, was sometimes spoken of by the Indians approaching it in their canoes as the "Countenance bowed down." In Sir William's time when viewed from the east it was likened to a sleeping lion and when in 1772 the question of an eastern boundary for the proposed county of Tryon came up, this very eminence was suggested as such by Sir William, and adopted. The Baronet's boatmen, passing, pointed to the Kinaquariones -- said to mean "She Arrowmaker" -- as the place where in ancient days lived those who prayed to the god, Woonand, and the home of a woman who with marvelous skill chipped and flaked arrow and spearheads from flint. Also, said they, here, in the dark valley of the Chaughtanoonda, under the shadow of the Face Bowed Down, long moons ago our warriors fought and slew many of those who came seeking to destroy our nation. This was the famous battle of 1669 when the Mohawks fought the allied eastern Algonkin.

A PLACE OF TORTURE

But a mile below the rocky Kinaquariones there came in sight on the south side of the river, just below the mouth of the Sandsea Kill, a small park-like glade dotted with stately

elms. In this place, said Sir William's Indians, our fathers sometimes burned captured enemies both of the French and the Algonkin. They did not add, however, that certain portions of the roasted victims were often eaten on these grewsome occasions, thereby to endow the banqueters with whatever desirable traits the victims might have possessed. Incidentally, this place of torture to which the Baronet's attention was called was known as such to the early Dutch settlers who from their homes on the north side of the river, so family tradition relates, sometimes watched these satanic orgies, helpless to interfere. Nevertheless, the finding of many large musket balls washed from the bank at this place may indicate that some of the Dutch lads may slyly have taken potshots at the red fiends.

PASSING "KNOCK-'EM-STIFF"

Beyond the Place of Torture Johnson's skillful Mohawks guided their canoes through and over two or three lesser rifts. Ahead, however, and some two miles west of Schenectady was the most difficult and dangerous rift in this part of the river's course. This was at the eastern end of Bents Island and just below the famous old Maalwyck House, and here, in low water, the utmost skill and caution was necessary for a safe passage. Thirty years later, in the days of the great flat-boat commerce, this was considered by the boatmen the worst rift they had to encounter and as such it bore for years the expressive name, "Knock-'Em-Stiff." This name, seriously given, appears in legal documents relating to the vicinity.

To rest themselves and gain courage for the passage of this formidable barrier the boatmen if bound up-river would snub their flat-boat or battoaux against the north bank and resort for a time to the shade of a famous landmark of that vicinity, the Rum Tree. This was a large and spreading button-wood that stood quite close to the river's bank, not far from the foot of Scotia's Pleasantview Avenue. Here, with sundry and odd nips of rum they would fortify themselves for the strenuous job before them of poling and steering their craft through the boulder-strewn channels of the rift. Sometimes, it is said, men carrying ropes would wade to the shore where they would assist by towing.

If tradition is true, the sturdy navigators of the craft passing down stream through Knock-'Em-Stiff would also sometimes resort to the Rum Tree, no doubt there to properly render thanks by an interior libation for the safe passage accomplished. The Rum Tree was yet standing in the memory of older residents of Scotia today.

Due to the skill of Johnson's Mohawks and with the slight draft of their light canoes the dangerous rift was quickly left behind and soon the houses of Schonectady came in sight just beyond the group of islands that here divided the river into a maze of channels. Steering between Hog and Van Slyck's islands the canoes were held to the straight course down the main channel, save the one in which the Baronet was seated which here at his request was turned into the Binne Kill, that branch of the Mohawk that fronted the entire western side of the little

Dutch town. Here, probably at the inn kept by Douw Aukes or at the home of one of his Schenectady agents, Sir William was to stop over night, resuming his journey to the Kayaderosseras on the following morning. The attendant canoes meanwhile, as arranged, held their course down the river.

Leaving the Baronet in the care of his friends in Dorp we will follow the attendant Mohawks. Some four miles below they beached their canoes on the north bank and not far from the mouth of the Aalplaats. Here, after a fire was built some went out seeking fish and game while others set about the making of a litter on which their great white brother was to be carried to the healing spring on the morrow.

The making of the litter was after this fashion: stout poles were cut and spaced equidistant, about three feet apart. Between these many pliant saplings or willows were interlaced in sort of a wickerwork at which the Indians were expert. On this finished network blankets would be placed on the morrow. The free ends of the poles extended beyond the interlaced withes in order that the litter might be easily carried by four men walking in single file along the narrow forest paths.

The litter constructed at the Aalplaats by Johnson's Mohawks possibly was made after directions given by Johnson himself, for the only litters made and used by the Indians of the region of which we have record were sort of hamper-like baskets in which their wounded and likely their dead were carried on the backs of relays of stalwart savages. In these, wrote Champlain:

"tumbled in a heap, doubled and strapped in such a way that it is impossible to stir; less than an infant in its swaddling clothes; not without considerable pain, as I can certify, having been carried several days on the back of one of our Indians, thus tied and bound, so that I lost all patience. As soon as I had strength to bear my weight, I got out of this prison, or to speak plainer out of hell."

Sir William, of course, never would have consented to be carried in one of those affairs so vividly described by Champlain.

An early morning visitor at this overnight camp at the Aalplaats doubtless would have found some of Johnson's Mohawks still asleep wrapped in their blankets under the trees. Others were replenishing the fire, which done, they prepared certain little stakes each about two feet long, cut from small saplings. These were sharpened on one end the other being split down part of its length. In these split ends eels and small fish, fresh caught in the Kill, were inserted and the stakes thus burdened were carefully pushed into the ground close to the glowing coals of the fire. Here, turned a few times, the fish would fitly roast.

Hospitably entertained by innkeeper Aukes, it was nearly noon before the lone canoe bearing Sir William and his attendants was seen approaching the landing at the Aalplaats. But with the still long days of August there was yet ample hours of daylight to cover the half-dozen miles between the Mohawk and the cabin of the McDonald brothers on Ballston, or Long Lake as it was then called, where the Baronet and his party were to spend the second night.

THE McDONALDS

Leaving Sir William ensconced with blankets and pillows on his improvised litter, carefully being carried northward by four of his faithful Mohawks, a few words here about the McDonalds will not be out of place: The McDonald brothers, Michael and Nicholas, born in Ireland, were shanghaied on board a ship about to sail for America. Landing in Philadelphia they were bound out for a term of years by the miscreant captain of the vessel to pay for their enforced passage. Finally, freed from service they are said in some way to have reached Johnstown, the home of Sir William by whose advice they selected and settled, in 1763, a tract of about 200 acres on the west side of Long Lake, as it was then called. The first white settlers in that region, they built their log cabin not far from the shore of the lake and beside the Indian path, which they had cut out to this point as a rude cartway. Their log house stood for nearly a century, a notable landmark of pioneer days. A photographic reproduction of a sketch made many years ago of their cabin is given in this paper.

After spending the night at the McDonalds the Baronet and his attendants continued their way along the path, which beyond was in its primitive state. Stone in his fanciful account (*Reminiscences of Saratoga*, 1880) speaks of the noble bald eagles leaving their eyries on the beetling crags beside the way, wheeling above and with the little party as they wended their way along the forest path; "a presage of health and happiness to the Baronet." Alas, he had little of either in his few

remaining years and as for the noble eagles and the beetling crags, they seem to have entirely disappeared.

Reaching the spring in the forest the Indians at once set about building a rude bark lodge or shelter in which the Baronet was to sleep, as he planned to stay several days to test the supposed healing properties of the spring.

It has been generally supposed, and so stated in many local histories that the spring visited by Johnson was that known as the High Rock at Saratoga. John C. Booth, however, in a manuscript history of Saratoga County, asserts and gives well-grounded reasons for his belief that it was the mineral springs at Ballston rather than at Saratoga visited by the Baronet. There has been considerable discussion of this question. Johnson himself, in his letters published by our State, gives no exact location of the spring he visited, saying simply, as in a letter of September 19, 1767 addressed to Thomas Gage: "Having lately paid a visit to try the Effects of a Spring lately discovered to the Northward of Schenectady," etc. Under the same date Hugh Wallace of New York City writes to the Baronet: "I am sorry the Spring at Kayaderosseras has not had any good effect." Incidentally, it may be added that Sir William wrote more than once of the little benefit he had derived from his visit to the spring in the Kayaderosseras as well as to those at Lebanon, which he also visited.

ALGONKIAN TOWNS ON THE AALPLAATS

While the forest path leading north from the Aalplaats was well known to the Mohawks, as we have seen, yet we know that it

was also used by the Algonkin who occupied the region for many centuries, long before the coming of either the Mohawks or the Whites. This former occupation has been conclusively shown by archeological evidence found in several places along its course. It has long been known that a primitive village stood not far from the mouth of the Aalplaats. Recent investigations by Lloyd M. Brinkman have disclosed that there had been more than one Indian town in that area; undoubtedly of different periods. Shedding light on the expressive name given by the Dutch to this tributary of the Mohawk, meaning "place for ccls," Mr. Brinkman has pointed out that the remains of a primitive cel wior exists on the blue clay bottom of the stream, extending across its entire width, at a point about one-half mile north of the river. A notable discovery of Mr. Brinkman's, of peculiar interest from an archeological standpoint, was his fortunate find of a cache of some half-dozen stone gouges. Caches, as they are called, deposits of arrow and spearheads and other forms of flint objects, have been found in many parts of our State, but so far as known this find of a cache of gouges is unique. The stone gouge was distinctively an Algonkian tool, seldom if ever made or used by the Iroquoian nations. From the number of these distinctive implements found together by Mr. Brinkman the inference has been ventured that here, in the sheltered valley of the Aalplaats long ages ago there was, if we may call it such, a primitive shipyard whercin the craftsmen of the Algonkin from logs had by burning down selected trees slowly hollowed out and shaped their long and slender dugouts by the

repeated application of fire and the aid of gouges such as those discovered by Mr. Brinkman, who may well have recovered the equipment of the canoe-makers of the Aalplaats. The log dugout, made from pine or cedar, was a distinctive feature of the woodcraft of the Algonkin. The eastern Iroquoian nations generally made their canoes from the bark of the elm or of birch.

LIVING MARKERS OF THE PATH

Lieut. Claude Bailey of Fo-Castle Farm has called attention to certain notable markers found along the course of the Aalplaats Path. These were made by the Indians who with their tomahawks hacked small saplings, growing beside the path, part way through, some two or three feet above the ground. The top part was then carefully bent over without breaking, at right angles and tied or fastened in that position. If the helpless and mutilated sapling survived this surgery, as they sometimes did, it grew into an odd L-shaped tree, a prominent marker beside the path that might last for a century or two. Accounts have recently been published of the discovery of a long line of such L-shaped trees marking the course of a path connecting ancient Indian villages in Michigan.

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SECTION SIX

AN AMBUSH ON THE ALBANY ROAD

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An incident in which the famous Indian chief, Brant, (Thayendanegea) figured happened in revolutionary times along the course of our Albany-Schenectady road. This event, which seems to have been neglected or overlooked by the historians of our County, is recorded in Stone's "Life of Joseph Brant." It was a futile attempt, instigated by John Johnson, and made by a small party of Indians headed by Brant, to capture John Taylor, a prominent member of the Council of Safety, for the part he took in the banishment from Albany of Mary Watts, wife of Johnson, who while in duress in Albany was active as a spy, conveying information of military value to the British army, then in possession of New York City.

The story properly goes back to the time at the outbreak of the Revolution when John Johnson, heir to his father's baronial Hall at Johnstown, headquarters of the Tories of the vicinity, after giving the Continental authorities much trouble and worry had finally given his promise of good behaviour and nonresistance to the cause of the Colonies, a promise illy kept and soon broken. When in May, 1776, Col. Dayton with a force of Continentals appeared at the door of the Hall with a warrant for his arrest, the agile scion of Sir William was hurriedly leaving by a back exit from which, with some of his Scotch Highlanders, Tory neighbors, he swiftly streaked across to the wilderness of the Sacandaga, through which, after a

tedious and hunger-smitten journey, they finally reached Canada. So precipitate was the flight of the erstwhile baron and his henchmen that but little food or provision was taken, consequently it has been said they were compelled to eat their shoes before arriving at their destination.

Lady Johnson made no attempt to accompany or follow her husband but remained at the Hall, exulting, says de Poyster, in her belief that her husband would soon return with an armed force, to ravage the Mohawk country and take revenge on those who had dispossessed him. Here she was not disturbed by the Colonial authorities until it was learned that stealthily she was in communication with her husband in Canada, sending such information as she could obtain regarding movements in the Mohawk Valley. Then, with her children and a few house servants she was removed to Albany where her movements might be more closely watched.

LADY JOHNSON A SPY IN ALBANY

But this removal to Albany did not mend matters, for from there, as it was soon suspected and found to be true, she found means through the Tories of the town to convey information of military movements to the British in New York. Better, perhaps, had she been left in Johnstown for at Albany she was able to procure and send information of greater military value to the enemy, which as it soon appeared she lost no time in doing.

Among the members of the Albany Council of Safety was John Taylor, a shrewd and capable man who, after personal investigation, becoming aware of the pernicious activities of Lady Johnson proposed to the Council that forthwith she be given a pass through

the American lines down the river and banished from the town. After some little objection from members of the Council to this drastic proposal it was, however, finally agreed that it was essential for the good of the cause.

In accordance with the resolution of the Council, Lady Johnson made this ordered removal from Albany in January of 1777, and according to Watts de Peyster, the apologist of John Johnson, she with her three small children, their nurse and Negro servant, had a somewhat strenuous experience reaching the British lines, where, so states Susan Griffiths Colpoys in her "Adventures of a Lady in the War of Independence in America," (pages 53-57) "she was clasped in the arms of her husband." That John Johnson had left Canada and at the time of Lady Johnson's banishment was with the British force in New York has been questioned. Furthermore, we read in de Peyster's sketch of Johnson that she made "her escape in disguise," leading the reader to infer that this removal from Albany was voluntarily made. A few paragraphs beyond, however, we find the often inconsistent de Peyster stating that she had a pass to carry her safely through the Continental outposts.

Johnson, learning the cause of this removal and that Councilman Taylor was the one chiefly responsible for its effect, was wildly enraged thereat and vowed vengeance on its author. Not only on account of the loss of an extremely valuable spy at Albany for the British cause but also trusting that the army of occupation at New York would soon advance up

the Hudson and effect the capture of Albany, in which event he with his reunited family and henchmen would regain and occupy the extensive estate acquired by his father, in Tryon County.

In his malevolent rage Johnson found means to convey to Taylor a most despitoful letter, in which his true character was revealed. In this he brutally wrote that should the fortune of war bring about his capture, he should be at once delivered over to the fury of the savages. Taylor's reply to this satanic threat -- a fate that only a Dore could picture -- was characteristic of the man: "if Mr. Taylor should be so fortunate as to have Sir John Johnson in his power, he should most assuredly be treated as a gentleman."

That the threat made by the vindictive Johnson was not an idle fleeting one was soon shown by several bold attempts made to capture Taylor whom, as leading spirit of the Council, had incurred his especial hatred. One of these attempts, as it was made in a situation well within the sphere of this paper, will be here related: Taylor was accustomed to ride on horseback for exercise and quite often these rides were taken on the road leading to Schenectady, generally in company with his intimate friend through life, Major Popham, an officer under Gen. James Clinton. Knowing of this custom and of the usual time of its observance, a small band of Indians under the leadership of Joseph Brant and at the instigation of Johnson, planted an ambush on this Schenectady road at a point it was supposed the riders would be sure to pass. In the words of Col. Stone: "Providentially, however, and for reasons never explained, and per-

haps not known to themselves, on the morning referred to, the friends shortened their ride, and wheeled about without passing the ambushade, though approaching it within striking distance. One of the Indians, afterward taken prisoner, stated that "Mr. Taylor might easily been shot, but that their orders were to take him alive." Incidentally, the author of "The Bloody Mohawks" makes use of not less than five caustic adjectives in describing the infamous character of John Johnson.

Other and bolder attempts, said to have been instigated by Johnson were afterwards made to capture Councilman Taylor. These, all futile, were made outside the province of this paper.

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- James M. Van Etten
