On the receipt of these disastrous news the garrison at once surrendered. The control of the Niagara river, which had been in the hands of the French for over a hundred years, passed into those of the English. For a little while the French held possession of their fort at Schlosser, and even repulsed an English force sent against it. Becoming satisfied, however, that they could not withstand their powerful foe, they determined to destroy their two armed vessels, laden with military stores. They accordingly took them into an arm of the river, separating Buckhorn from Grand Island, at the very northwesternmost limit of Erie county, burned them to the water's edge, and sunk the hulls. The remains of these hulls, nearly covered with mud and sand, are still, or were lately, to be seen in the shallow water where they sank, and the name of "Burnt Ship Bay" perpetuates the naval sacrifice of the defeated Gauls.

Soon the life-bought victory of Wolfe gave Quebec to the triumphant Britons. Still the French clung to their colonies with desperate but failing grasp, and it was not until September, 1760, that the Marquis de Vaudreuil, the Governor-General of Canada, surrendered Montreal, and with it Detroit, Venango, and all the other posts within his jurisdiction. This surrender was ratified by the treaty of peace between England and France in February, 1763, which ceded Canada to the former power.

The struggle was over. The English Octavius had defeated the Gallic Antony. Forever destroyed was the prospect of a French peasantry inhabiting the plains of Erie county; of baronial castles crowning its vine-clad heights; of a gay French city overlooking the mighty lake and the renowned river.

CHAPTER VII.

ENGLISH DOMINION.

Pontiac's League — The Senecas Hostile — The Devil's Hole — Battle near Buffalo — Treaty at Niagara — Bradstreet's Expedition — Israel Putnam — Lake Commerce — Wreck of the Beaver — Tryon County — The Revolution — Four Iroquois Tribes Hostile — The Oswego Treaty — Scalps — Brant — Guienguahtoh — Wyoming — Cherry Valley — Sullivan's Expedition — Senecas Settle in Erie County — Gilbert Family — Peace.

NOTWITHSTANDING the disappearance of the French soldiers, the western tribes still remembered them with affection, and were still disposed to wage war upon the English. The celebrated Pontiac united nearly all these tribes in a league against the red-coats, immediately after the advent of the latter, and as no such confederation had been formed against the French, during all their long years of possession, his action must be assigned to some cause other than mere hatred of all civilized intruders.

In May, 1763, the league surprised nine out of twelve English posts, and massacred their garrisons. Detroit, Pittsburg and Niagara alone escaped surprise, and each successfully resisted a siege, in which branch of war, indeed, the Indians were almost certain to fail. There is no positive evidence, but there is little doubt that the Senecas were involved in Pontiac's league, and were active in the attack on Fort Niagara. They had been unwilling to fight their brethren of the Long House, under Sir William Johnson, but had no scruples about killing the English when left alone, as was soon made terribly manifest.

In the September following occurred the awful tragedy of the Devil's Hole, when a band of Senecas, of whom Honayewus, afterwards celebrated as Farmer's Brother, was one and Cornplanter probably another, ambushed a train of English army-wagons with an escort of soldiers, the whole numbering ninety-six men, three and a half miles below the Falls, and massacred every man with four exceptions.

A few weeks later, on the 19th of October, 1763, there occurred the first recorded conflict of arms in Erie county in which white men took part. It is said to have been at the "east end of Lake Erie," but was probably on the river just below the lake, as there would be no chance for ambushing boats on the lake shore.

Six hundred British soldiers, under one Major Wilkins, were on their way in boats to reinforce their comrades in Detroit. As they approached the lake, a hundred and sixty of them who were half a mile astern of the others, were suddenly fired on by a band of Senecas, ensconced in a thicket on the river shore probably on the site of Black Rock. Though even the British estimated the enemy at only sixty, yet so close was their aim that thirteen men were killed and wounded at the first fire. The captain in command of the nearest boats immediately ordered fifty men ashore and attacked the Indians. The latter fell back a short distance, but rallied, and when the British pursued them they maintained their ground so well that three more men were killed on the spot, and twelve others badly wounded, including two commissioned officers. Meanwhile, under the protection of other soldiers, who formed on the beach, the boats made their way into the lake, and the men who had taken part in the fight were enabled to re-embark. It does not appear that the Indians suffered near as heavily as the soldiers.

This was the last serious attack by the Senecas upon the English. Becoming at length convinced that the French had really yielded, and that Pontiac's scheme had failed as to its main purpose, they sullenly agreed to abandon their Gallic friends and be at peace with the triumphant Britons.

In April, 1764, Sir William Johnson concluded peace with eight chiefs of the Senecas, at Johnson's Hall. At that time, among other agreements, they formally conveyed to the King of England a tract four-

teen miles by four, for a carrying place around Niagara Falls, lying on both sides of the river from Schlosser to Lake Ontario. This was the origin of the policy of reserving a strip of land along the river, which was afterwards carried out by the United States and the State of New York.

This treaty was to be more fully ratified at a council to be held at Fort Niagara in the summer of 1764. Events in the West, where Pontiac still maintained active but unavailing hostility to the British, as well as the massacres previously perpetrated by the Senecas, determined the English commander-in-chief to send a force up the lakes able to overcome all opposition.

Accordingly, in the summer of 1764, General Bradstreet, an able officer, with twelve hundred British and Americans, came by water to Fort Niagara, accompanied by the indefatigable Sir William Johnson and a body of his Iroquois warriors. A grand council of friendly Indians was held at the fort, among whom Sir William exercised his customary skill, and satisfactory treaties were made with them.

But the Senecas, though repeatedly promising attendance in answer to the baronet's messages, still held aloof, and were said to be meditating a renewal of the war. At length General Bradstreet ordered their immediate attendance, under penalty of the destruction of their settlements. They came, ratified the treaty, and thenceforward adhered to it pretty faithfully, notwithstanding the peremptory manner in which it was obtained. In the meantime a fort had been erected on the site of Fort Erie, the first ever built there.

In August, Bradstreet's army increased to nearly three thousand men, among whom were three hundred Senecas, (who seem to have been taken along partly as hostages,) came up the river to the site of Buffalo. Thence they proceeded up the south side of the lake, for the purpose of bringing the Western Indians to terms, a task which was successfully accomplished without bloodshed. From the somewhat indefinite accounts which have come down to us, it is evident that the journey was made in open boats, rigged with sails, in which when the wind was favorable, excellent speed was made.

Bradstreet's force, like D'Aubrey's, was a somewhat motley one. There were stalwart, red-coated regulars, who, when they marched, did so as one man; hardy New England militia, whose dress and discipline and military manœuvres were but a poor imitation of the British, yet who had faced the legions of France on many a well-fought field; rude hunters of the border, to whom all discipline was irksome; faithful Indian allies from the Mohawk valley, trained to admiration of the English by Sir Walter Johnson; and finally the three hundred scowling Senecas, their hands red from the massacre of the Devil's Hole, and almost ready to stain them again with English blood.

Of the British and Americans, who then in closest friendship and under the same banners passed along the western border of Erie county, there were not a few who in twelve years more were destined to seek each other's lives on the blood-stained battle-fields of the Revolution. Among them was one whose name was a tower of strength to the patriots of America, whose voice rallied the faltering soldiers of Bunker Hill, and whose fame has come down to us surrounded by a peculiar halo of adventurous valor. This was Israel Putnam, then a loyal soldier of King George, and lieutenant-colonel commanding the Connecticut battalion.

For a while, however, there was peace, not only between England and France but between the Indians and the colonists. The Iroquois, though the seeds of dissension had been sown among them, were still a powerful confederacy, and their war parties occasionally made incursions among the Western Indians, striding over the plains of Erie county as they went and returning by the same route with their scalps and prisoners.

Hither, too, came detachments of red-coated Britons, rowing up the Niagara, usually landing at Fort Erie, where a post was all the while maintained, and going thence in open boats to Detroit, Mackinaw and other western forts. Some also came by this route on their way to Pittsburg, though that post was usually supplied and re-enforced by way of Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Along the borders of Erie county, too, went all the commerce of the upper lakes, consisting of supplies for the military posts, goods to trade with the Indians, and the furs received in return. The trade was carried on almost entirely in open boats, propelled by oars, with the occasional aid of a temporary sail. In good weather tolerable progress could be made, but woe to any of these frail craft which might be overtaken by a storm.

The *New York Gazette*, in February, 1770, informed its readers that several boats had been lost in crossing Lake Erie, and that the distress of the crews was so great that they were obliged to keep two human bodies found on the north shore, so as to kill for food the ravens and eagles which came to feed on the corpses. Other boats were mentioned at the same time as frozen up or lost, but nothing is said as to sail-vessels. There were, however, at least two or three English trading-vessels on Lake Erie before the Revolution, and probably one or two armed vessels belonging to the British government. One of the former, called the *Beaver*, is known to have been lost in a storm, and is believed by the best authorities to have been wrecked near the mouth of Eighteen-Mile creek, and to have furnished the relics found in that vicinity by early settlers, which by some have been attributed to the ill-fated *Griffin*.

The Senecas made frequent complaints of depredations committed by whites on some of their number, who had villages on the head waters

of the Susquehanna and Ohio. "Cressap's war," in which the celebrated Logan was an actor, contributed to render them uneasy, but they did not break out in open hostilities. They, like the rest of the Six Nations, had by this time learned to place implicit confidence in Sir William Johnson and made all their complaints through him.

He did his best to redress their grievances, and also sought to have them withdraw their villages from those isolated localities to their chief seats in New York, so that they would be more completely under his jurisdiction and protection. Ere this could be accomplished, however, all men's attention was drawn to certain mutterings in the political sky, low at first, but growing more and more angry, until at length there burst upon the country that long and desolating storm known as the Revolutionary war.

Before speaking of that it may be proper to remark that, municipally considered, all the western part of the colony of New York was nominally a part of Albany county down to 1772, though really all authority was divided between the Seneca chiefs and the officers of the nearest British garisons. In that year a new county was formed, embracing all that part of the colony west of the Delaware river, and of a line running northeastward from the head of that stream through the present county of Schoharie, then northward along the east line of Montgomery, Fulton and Hamilton counties, and continuing in a straight line to Canada. It was named Tryon, in honor of William Tryon, then the royal governor of New York. Guy Johnson, Sir William's nephew and son-in-law, was the earliest "first judge" of the common pleas, with the afterward celebrated John Butler as one of his associates.

As the danger of hostilities increased, the Johnsons showed themselves more and more clearly on the side of the King. Sir William said little and seemed greatly disturbed by the gathering troubles. There is little doubt, however, that had he lived, he would have used his power in behalf of his royal master. But in 1774 he suddenly died. Much of his influence over the Six Nations descended to his son, Sir John Johnson, and his nephew, Colonel Guy Johnson. The latter became his successor in the office of superintendent of Indian affairs.

In 1775 the Revolution began. The new superintendent persuaded the Mohawks to remove westward with him, and made good his influence over all of the Six Nations except the Oneidas and Tuscaroras, though it was near two years from the breaking out of the war before they committed any serious hostilities. John Butler, however, established himself at Fort Niagara, and organized a regiment of Tories known as Butler's Rangers, and he and the Johnsons used all their influence to induce the Indians to attack the Americans.

The Senecas held off for a while, but the prospect of both blood and pay was too much for them to withstand, and in 1777 they, in common

with the Cayugas, Onondagas and Mohawks, made a treaty with the British at Oswego, agreeing to serve the king throughout the war. Mary Jemison, the celebrated "White Woman," then living among the Senecas on the Genesee, declares that at that treaty the British agents, after giving the Indians numerous presents, "promised a bounty on every scalp that should be brought in."

The question whether a price was actually paid or promised for scalps has been widely debated. There is not sufficient evidence to prove that it was done, and the probabilities are that it was not. Mary Jemison was usually considered truthful, and had good means of knowing what the Indians understood on the subject, but the latter were very ready to understand that they would be paid for taking scalps. An incident on the American side, which will be narrated in the account of the War of 1812, will illustrate this propensity of the savages.

As formerly the Senecas, though favorable to the French, hesitated about attacking their brethren of the Long House, so now the Oneidas who were friendly to the Americans, did not go out to battle against the other Iroquois, but remained neutral throughout the contest. The league of the Hedonosaunee was weakened but not destroyed.

From the autumn of 1777 forward, the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Mohawks were active in the British interest. Fort Niagara again became, as it had been during the French war, the key of all this region, and to it the Iroquois constantly looked for support and guidance. Their raids kept the whole frontier for hundreds of miles in a state of terror, and were attended by the usual horrors of savage warfare.

Whether a bounty was paid for scalps or not, the Indians were certainly employed to assail the inhabitants with constant marauding parties, notwithstanding their well-known and inveterate habit of slaughtering men, women and children whenever opportunity offered, or at least whenever the freak happened to take them. In fact they were good for very little else, their desultory method of warfare making them almost entirely useless in assisting the regular operations of an army.

The most active and most celebrated of the Iroquois chiefs in the Revolution was Joseph Brant, or Thayendenegea, a Mohawk who had received a moderate English education under the patronage of Sir William Johnson. He was most frequently intrusted with the command of detached parties by the British officers, but it does not appear that he had authority over all the tribes, and it is almost certain that the haughty Senecas, the most powerful tribe of the confederacy, to whom by ancient custom belonged both the principal war-chiefs of the league, would not have submitted and did not submit to the control of a Mohawk.

Three of the chiefs of the Senecas during the Revolution are well known—"Farmer's Brother," "Cornplanter," and "Governor Blacksnake;" but who was their chief-in-chief, if one may coin the expression,

is not certain. It is very probable that there was none, but that the leader of each expedition received his orders directly from the English officers.

W. L. Stone, author of the "Life of Brant," says that at the battle of Wyoming in 1778, the leader of the Senecas, who formed the main part of the Indian force on that occasion, was Guiengwahtoh, supposed to be same as Guiyahgwahdoh, "the smoke-bearer." That was the official title of the Seneca afterwards known as "Young King," he being a kind of hereditary embassador, the bearer of the smoking brand from the great council-fire of the confederacy to light that of the Senecas. He was too young to have been at Wyoming, but his predecessor in office, (probably his maternal uncle,) might have been there. Brant was certainly not present.

We have called that affair the "battle" instead of the "massacre" of Wyoming, as it is usually termed. The facts seem to be that no quarter was given during the conflict and that after the Americans were routed, the Tories and Senecas pursued and killed all they could, but that those who reached the fort and afterwards surrendered were not harmed, nor were any of the non-combatants. The whole valley, however, was devastated, and the houses burned.

At Cherry Valley, the same year, the Senecas were present in force, together with a body of Mohawks under Brant, and of Tories under Captain Walter Butler, son of Colonel John Butler, and there then was an undoubted massacre. Nearly thirty women and children were killed, besides many men surprised helpless in their homes.

These events, and other similar ones on a smaller scale, induced Congress and General Washington to set on foot an expedition in the spring of 1779 which, though carried on outside the bounds of Erie county, had a very strong influence on that county's subsequent history. We refer to the celebrated expedition of General Sullivan against the Six Nations.

Having marched up the Susquehanna to Tioga Point, where he was joined by a brigade under General James Clinton, (father of De Witt Clinton,) Sullivan, with a total force of some four thousand men, moved up the Chemung to the site of Elmira. There Colonel Butler, with a small body of Indians and Tories, variously estimated at from six hundred to fifteen hundred men, had thrown up intrenchments, and a battle was fought. Butler was speedily defeated, retired with considerable loss, and made no further opposition.

Sullivan advanced and destroyed all the Seneca villages on the Genesee and about Geneva, burning wigwams and cabins, cutting down orchards, cutting up growing corn, and utterly devastating the country. The Senecas fled in great dismay to Fort Niagara. The Onondaga villages had in the meantime been destroyed by another force, but it is

plain that the Senecas were the ones who were chiefly feared, and against whom the vengeance of the Americans was chiefly directed. After thoroughly laying waste their country, the Americans returned to the East.

Sullivan's expedition substantially destroyed the league which bound the Six Nations together. Its form remained, but it had lost its binding power. The Oneidas and Tuscaroras were encouraged to increase their separation from the other confederates. Those tribes whose possessions had been destroyed were thrown into more complete subservience to the British power, thereby weakening their inter-tribal relations, and the spirits of the Senecas, the most powerful and warlike of them all, were much broken by this disaster.

It was a more serious matter than had been the destruction of their villages in earlier times, as they had adopted a more permanent mode of existence. They had learned to depend more on agriculture and less on the chase and possessed not only corn-fields, but gardens, orchards, and sometimes comfortable houses. In fact they had adopted many of the customs of civilized life, though without relinquishing their primitive pleasures, such as tomahawking prisoners and scalping the dead.

They fled *en masse* to Fort Niagara, and during the winter of 1779–'80, which was of extraordinary severity, were scantily sustained by rations which the British authorities with difficulty procured. As spring approached, the English made earnest efforts to reduce the expense, by persuading the Indians to make new settlements and plant crops. The red men were naturally anxious to keep as far as practicable from the dreaded foes who had inflicted such heavy punishments the year before, and were unwilling to risk their families again at their ancient seats.

At this time a considerable body of the Senecas, with a few Cayugas and Onondagas, came up from Niagara and established themselves near Buffalo creek, about four miles above its mouth.* This was, so far as known, the first permanent settlement of the Senecas in Erie county. They probably had huts here to use while hunting and fishing, but no regular villages. In fact this settlement in the spring of 1780, was probably the first permanent occupation of the county since the destruction of the Neuter Nation, a hundred and thirty-five years before.

The same spring another band located themselves at the mouth of the Cattaraugus.

The Senecas who settled on Buffalo creek, were under the leadership of Siangarochti, or Sayengaraghta, an aged but influential chief, sometimes called Old King, and said to be the head sachem of that tribe. They brought with them two or more members of the Gilbert family,

* The Senecas chose a location south of the creek near the site of "Martin's Corners," the Onondagas made their home near where the southern village of Ebenezer is now situated, while the Cayugas erected their wigwams a little further north, near the banks of Cayuga creek.

quakers who had been captured on the borders of Pennsylvania, a month or two previous. After the war the family published a narrative of their captivity, which gives much valuable information regarding the period of our history.

Immediately on their arrival, the squaws began to clear the ground and prepare it for corn, while the men built some log huts and then went out hunting. That summer the family of Siangarochti alone raised seventy-five bushels of corn.

In the beginning of the winter of 1780–'81, two British officers, Captain Powell and Lieutenant Johnson, or Johnston, came to the settlement on Buffalo creek, and remained until toward spring. They were probably sent by the British authorities at Fort Niagara, to aid in putting the new settlement on a solid foundation. Possibly they were also doing some fur-trading on their own account. They made strenuous efforts to obtain the release of Rebecca and Benjamin, two of the younger members of the Gilbert family, but the Indians were unwilling to give them up.

Captain Powell had married Jane Moore, a girl who, with her mother and others of the family, had been captured at Cherry Valley. The "Lieutenant Johnson" who accompanied him to Buffalo creek was most likely his half-brother, who afterwards located at Buffalo, and was known to the early settlers as Captain William Johnston. There seems to have been no ground whatever for the supposition which has been entertained by some that he was the half-breed son of Sir William Johnson. All the circumstances show that he was not.

Lieutenant Johnston, who was probably an officer in Butler's Rangers, was said by Mrs. Jemison, (the "white woman,") to have robbed Jane Moore of a ring at Cherry Valley, which he afterwards used to marry the lady he had despoiled. As Jane Moore married Captain Powell instead of Lieutenant Johnston, this romantic story has been entirely discredited; but since it has been ascertained that Johnston was a half-brother of Powell, it is easy to see how Mrs. Jemison might have confounded the two, and that Johnston might really have furnished the "confiscated" ring for his brother's wedding instead of his own. Captain (afterwards Colonel) Powell is frequently and honorably mentioned, in several accounts, as doing everything in his power to ameliorate the condition of the captives among the Indians.

It must have been about this time that Johnston took unto himself a Seneca wife; for his son, John Johnston, was a young man when Buffalo was laid out in 1803.

Elizabeth Peart, wife of Thomas Peart, son of the elder Mrs. Gilbert by a former husband, was another of the captives who was brought to Buffalo creek. She had been adopted by a Seneca family, but that did not cause much kindness on their part, for they allowed her child, less

than a year old, to be taken from her and adopted by another family, living near Fort Niagara. She was permitted to keep it awhile after its "adoption," but when they went to the fort for provisions, they took her and her infant along and compelled her to give it up.

Near the close of the winter of 1780–'81, they were again compelled to go to Fort Niagara for provisions, and there she found her child, which had been bought by a white family from the Indians who had adopted it. By many artifices, and by the connivance of Captain Powell, she finally escaped to Montreal with her husband and children.

Others of the Gilbert family still remained in captivity. Thomas Peart, a brother of Benjamin, obtained his liberty in the spring of 1781, and was allowed to go to Buffalo creek with Captain Powell, who was sent to distribute provisions, hoes and other implements among the Indians. At the distribution, the chiefs of every band came for shares, each having as many sticks as there were persons in his band, in order to insure a fair division.

That spring still another body of Indians came to Buffalo creek, having with them Abner and Elizabeth Gilbert, the two youngest children of the family. But this band settled some distance from the main body, and the children were not allowed to visit each other.

In July of that year, the family in which Abner Gilbert was, went to "Butlersburg," a little village opposite Fort Niagara, named after Colonel Butler. The Colonel negotiated with the woman who was the head of the family for Abner, and on receiving some presents she agreed to give him up at the end of twenty days. She took him back to Buffalo creek, but returned with him before the stipulated day, and he and Elizabeth were sent to Montreal by the first ship.

Meanwhile, the war had gone forward with varying fortunes. Guy Johnson and Colonel Butler kept the Indians as busy as possible, marauding upon the frontier, but they had been so thoroughly broken up that they were unable to produce such devastation as at Wyoming and Cherry Valley.

In October, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered, and thenceforth there were no more active hostilities.

Rebecca Gilbert and Benjamin Gilbert, Jr., were released the next year. This appears to have been managed by Colonel Butler, who, to give him his due, always seemed willing to befriend the captives, though constantly sending out his savages to make new ones. Not until the arrangements were all made did the Indians inform Rebecca of her approaching freedom. With joyful heart she prepared for her journey, making bread and doing other needful work for her captors. Then, by canoe and on foot, she and her brother were taken to Niagara, and after a conference, the last two of the ill-fated family were released from captivity in June, 1782.

In the fall of 1783, peace was formally declared between Great Britain and the revolted colonies, henceforth to be acknowledged by all men as the United States of America. By the treaty, the boundary line was established along the center of Lake Ontario, Niagara river and Lake Erie. Although the forts held by the British on the American side of the line were not given up for many years afterwards, and although they thus retained a strong influence over the Indians located on this side, yet the legal title was admitted to be in the United States. Thus the unquestioned English authority over the territory of Erie county lasted only from the treaty with France in 1763 to that with the United States in 1783, a little over twenty years.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM 1783 TO 1788.

Treatment of the Six Nations — The Treaty of Fort Stanwix — The Western Boundary — Origin of the name of Buffalo — Miss Powell's Visit — "Captain David" — Claims of New York and Massachusetts — How Settled — Sale to Phelps and Gorham — The Land Rings — A Council Called.

NO provision whatever was made in the treaty of peace for the Indian allies of Great Britain. The English authorities, however, offered them land in Canada, but all except the Mohawks preferred to remain in New York.

The United States treated them with great moderation. Although the Iroquois had twice violated their pledges, and without provocation had plunged into the war against the colonies, they were readily admitted to the benefits of peace, and were even recognized as the owners of all the land in New York over which they had ranged before the Revolution. The property line, as it was called, previously drawn between the whites and Indians, ran along the eastern border of Broome and Chenango counties, and thence northwestward to a point seven miles west of Rome.

In October, 1784, a treaty was made at Fort Stanwix (Rome) between three commissioners of the United States and the sachems of the Six Nations. The Marquis de LaFayette was present and made a speech, though not one of the commissioners. It is almost certain, however, that Red Jacket, then a young man, who afterwards claimed to have been there, did not really take any part in the council. Brant was not present, though he had been active in a council with Governor Clinton, only