

CHAPTER XII.

FROM 1802 TO 1807.

Formation of Genesee County — First Murder — First Town Meeting — Primitive Balloting — The Big Tree Road — Buffalo Surveyed — Dr. Chapin — Erastus Granger — The Pioneer of the South Town — A Hard Trip — Snow Shoes — Division of Batavia — Willink — Erie — Settlement of Boston — An Ancient Fort — Settlement of East Hamburg — Of Evans — Of Aurora — Of Lancaster — Le Couteux and Pratt — First Post Office — Organization of Willink — Erie Town-Book — A Primitive Mill — Warren and Williams — A Tavern in Evans — A Grist Mill in Hamburg — A Four Days' Raising — First Meeting-house in the County — A Mill in Aurora — Settlement in Wales — First Methodist Society — A Traveling Ballot Box — First Erie County Lawyer — Chivalry at a Discount.

DOWN to this time Ontario county had retained its original boundaries, including all that part of the State west of Seneca Lake, except that Steuben county had been taken off. The Holland Purchase was a part of the town of Northampton.

In the spring of 1802, Mr. Ellicott, by earnest personal solicitation at Albany, procured the passage of an act creating the county of Genesee, comprising the whole of the State west of the river of that name and of a line running south from the "Great Forks." By the same act, Northampton was divided into four towns, one of which, Batavia, consisted of the whole Holland Purchase and the State reservation along the Niagara.

The county-seat was established at Batavia, where Mr. Ellicott had already laid out a village site, and whither he transferred his headquarters that same spring. The new county was not to be organized by the appointment of officers until the next year.

In July, 1802, the first recorded murder of a white man in Erie county, took place at Buffalo, where a man named John Hewitt was stabbed to death by an infuriated Indian, called by the whites "Stiff-armed George," under circumstances more fully narrated in the history of the city. It is worthy of notice, as showing the weakness of the whites in Western New York, that, although the criminal was duly tried at Canandaigua, and convicted of murder, he was pardoned by Governor George Clinton on condition of his leaving the State and remaining out of it during life, a condition which was faithfully complied with. The Governor evidently thought it would be prudent to wait until the frontier was more thickly populated before beginning to *hang* Indians, if the task could possibly be postponed.

During 1802, immigrants came more freely than before. The list of land-owners in what is now Clarence was increased by ten names, most

of whose bearers located permanently in that town, while several more established themselves in township 12, range 5, (now Newstead.) All the new comers thus far had settled either on or close to the old "Buffalo road," laid out by "White Chief," which was the only line of communication with the outside world.

Peter Vandeventer this year built him a log cabin, cleared up half an acre of land, ("just enough" as another old settler said "to keep the trees from falling on his house,") and opened a tavern, the first in Newstead.

At that little log tavern, on the first day of March, 1803, occurred the first town-meeting on the Holland Purchase. Although it was a hundred miles to the farthest corner of the town of Batavia, yet the settlements were almost all on or near the "Buffalo road," the farthest being at New Amsterdam, twenty-two miles west, and at the East Transit, twenty-four miles east. Vandeventer's was evidently selected as a central location.

A very interesting account of this, the first political transaction in Erie county, was furnished to the Buffalo Historical Society by the late Amzi Wright, of Attica, who was present.

There was a general turn-out of voters, apparently stimulated by rivalry between the eastern and western parts of the town. The little tavern was soon overrun, and the polls were opened out of doors by Enos Kellogg, one of the commissioners to organize the town. He announced that Peter Vandeventer, the landlord, and Jotham Bemis, of Batavia village, were candidates for supervisor.

The worthy commissioner then proceeded to take the vote by a method which, though it amounted to a "division of the house," was in some of its details rather peculiar. He placed the two candidates side by side in the middle of the road, facing southward, Vandeventer on the right and Bemis on the left.

"Now," said he, "all you that are in favor of Peter Vandeventer for supervisor of the town of Batavia take your places in line on his right, and you that are in favor of Jotham Bemis take your places on his left."

The voters obeyed Mr. Kellogg's directions, Bemis' line stretching out along the road to Batavia, and Vandeventer's toward Buffalo. The commissioner then counted them, finding seventy-four on Vandeventer's right, and seventy on Bemis' left. Peter Vandeventer was then declared duly elected. A primitive method truly, but there was a poor chance for fraudulent voting.

The men from east of Vandeventer's, who were considered as Batavians, then gathered in one cluster, and those from the west, who passed as Buffalonians, in another, and counted up the absentees. As in those times everybody knew everybody else within ten miles of him, this was not difficult.

It was found that but four were absent, Batavia way, and but five from the Buffalo crowd. So the whole number of voters on the Holland Purchase on the 1st day of March, 1803, was one hundred and fifty-three, of whom a hundred and forty-four were present at town meeting. Certainly a most creditable exhibition of attention to political duty. There were perhaps two or three voters in the vicinity of Fort Niagara who did not attend and were not counted, but these, although in the town of Batavia, were not on the Holland Purchase.

The other officers were afterwards elected by uplifted hands. The following is the complete list:—

Supervisor, Peter Vandeventer; Town Clerk, David Cully; Assessors, Enos Kellogg, Asa Ransom, Alexander Rea, Isaac Sutherland, and Suffrenus (or Sylvanus) Maybee; Overseers of the Poor, David Cully and Benjamin Porter; Collector, Abel Rowe; Constables, John Mudge, Levi Felton, Rufus Hart, Abel Rowe, Seymour Kellogg, and Hugh Howell; Overseers of Highways, (pathmasters,) Martin Middaugh, Timothy S. Hopkins, Orlando Hopkins, Benjamin Morgan, Rufus Hart, Lovell Churchill, Jabez Warren, William Blackman, Samuel Clark, Gideon Dunham, Jonathan Willard, Thomas Layton, Hugh Howell, Benjamin Porter, and William Walsworth.

Of these, Vandeventer, Cully, Ransom, Maybee, Felton, Timothy and Orlando Hopkins, and Middaugh, and perhaps others, were residents of Erie county.

At this town meeting, as at most others in Western New York at that time, one of the most important subjects which claimed the attention of the sovereigns was the wolf question. An ordinance was passed offering a bounty of five dollars for wolf-scalps, "whelps half price," while half a dollar each was the reward for slaughtered foxes and wild-cats.

The first State election on the Holland Purchase was also held at Vandeventer's, in April following, (in which month elections were then held,) and in that short time the increase of population had been such that a hundred and eighty-nine votes were cast for Member of Assembly.

In June, 1803, Jabez Warren, by contract with Ellicott, surveyed the "Middle road" from near Geneseo to Lake Erie. Afterwards, during the same summer, he cut it out. It ran nearly due west, over hill and dale, keeping a mile south of the south line of the reservation, occasionally diverging a little in case of some extraordinary obstacle.

It was called the "Middle road" by the Company, but as it started from the Big Tree reservation—that is, the one belonging to the band of Indians of which "Big Tree" was chief—it was almost universally called the "Big Tree road" by the inhabitants.

Mr. Warren received \$2.50 per mile for surveying it, and \$10.00 for cutting it out. The latter seems astonishingly cheap, but "cutting

out" a road on the Holland Purchase meant merely cutting away the underbrush and small trees from a space a rod wide, leaving the large trees standing, making a track barely passable for a wagon.

In this year the village of New Amsterdam was surveyed, (though not completed ready for sale,) by William Peacock.

This year, too, the first ship was built in the county by Americans. It was the schooner "Contractor," built by a company having the contracts for supplying the western military posts, under the superintendence of Captain William Lee, who sailed the schooner for six years.

The first physician who practiced in Erie county arrived at New Amsterdam with his family, but being unable to obtain a house, located himself temporarily on the west side of the Niagara, where he remained two years; practicing meanwhile on both sides of the river. This was Dr. Cyrenius Chapin, a robust, broad-shouldered man of thirty, who throughout the pioneer period was probably its best known and influential citizen. His practice extended to every part of the county, and far beyond its borders. We shall have occasion to mention him again and again, in connection with the history of Buffalo, of the War of 1812, and of the Medical Society, in relation to all of which he occupied a very conspicuous position.

Another very important arrival of that year was Erastus Granger, a cousin of Gideon Granger, then Postmaster-General under President Jefferson. He was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs, and soon afterwards postmaster of Buffalo, and appears to have been intrusted with the management of the politics of this section on behalf of the administration. He became the leader of the Republican* party on the Niagara frontier as Dr. Chapin was of the Federal party, and until the arrival of Peter B. Porter, several years later, there was no one to dispute the supremacy of either.

Though New Amsterdam was not yet ready for sale, the adjoining land in that township was, and several purchases were made. The prices ranged from \$3.50 to \$5.00 per acre.

Several sales were made in the autumn of 1803, in each of the present towns of Amherst, Clarence and Newstead, all being townships through which the "Buffalo road" ran. But the hardy pioneers soon bore farther south in their search for land. In November, 1803, Alanson Eggleston became the first purchaser in township 11, range 6 (now Lancaster.) There the land was put down to \$2 per acre, while in Amherst it was rated at from \$3.26 to \$3.50 per acre. Amos Woodward and William Sheldon also bought in Lancaster that month.

All these purchases and settlements we have named were north of the Buffalo Creek reservation, which cut the present county of Erie com-

* It will be remembered that the political organization which was then called "Republican" party afterwards named itself the "Democratic" party, which appellation it still bears.

pletely in twain. Several townships, however, were surveyed south of the reservation that year, and in the fall adventurous land-hunters found their way into the valley of Eighteen-Mile creek.

On the 3d of October, Didymus C. Kinney purchased part of lot 33, township 9, range 7, being now the southwest corner lot of the town of East Hamburg. He immediately built him a cabin, and lived there with his family during the winter, being unquestionably the earliest pioneer of all Erie county south of the reservation. Records and recollections agree on this point.

Cotton Fletcher, who had surveyed the southern townships, purchased land in the same township as Kinney, but did not locate there till later; neither did John Cummings, who purchased the mill-site a mile and a half below Water Valley.

In November, 1803, too, Charles and Oliver Johnson, two brothers, made a purchase in the present town of Boston, near the village of Boston Center. Samuel Eaton bought farther down the creek. The price was \$2.25 per acre. Charles, with his family, lived with Kinney through the winter, and moved on to his own place the next spring.

The Indians were frequently a resource of the early settlers who ran short of food. Charles Johnson, while at Kinney's, went to the Seneca village and bought six bushels of corn. He had snow-shoes for locomotion and a hand-sled for transportation. As a load of three hundred and forty pounds sank the sled too far into the deep snow, he slung part of it on his back, and thus weighted and freighted he trudged through the forest to his home.

The snow-shoe was an important institution of that era. It consisted of a light, wooden frame, about two and a half feet long and fifteen inches wide, with bars across it, the intervening spaces being filled with tightly stretched green hide. With a pair of such articles strapped to his feet, the hunter or traveler strode defiantly over the deepest drifts, into which, without their support, he would have sunk to his waist at every step. Strange as it may seem, too, old hunters declare that these forest gun-boats did not seriously impede locomotion, and that the accustomed wearer could travel from three to four miles an hour without difficulty.

Kinney and Johnson with their families, in that solitary cabin in the valley of the Eighteen-Mile, were the only residents of Erie county south of the reservation in the winter of 1803-'04, and their nearest white neighbors were at "New Amsterdam," fourteen miles distant.

The year 1804 was marked by a more decided advance than any previous one.

Turning first to municipal matters, we find that the town-meeting for Batavia was again held at Peter Vandeventer's, and that popular landlord was again chosen supervisor.

But at that session of the legislature a law was passed, (to take effect the next February,) dividing Batavia into four towns. The easternmost was Batavia, consisting of the first, second and third ranges of the Holland Purchase. Next came Willink, containing the fourth, fifth and sixth ranges. Then Erie, comprising the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth ranges, the State reservation and the adjacent waters. The rest of the Purchase constituted the town of Chautauqua.

It will be seen that Willink, as thus organized, was eighteen miles wide and just about a hundred miles long, extending from Lake Ontario to Pennsylvania. It contained one range of townships east of Erie county, the eastern parts of Niagara and Cattaraugus counties, and the present towns of Clarence, Newstead, Lancaster, Alden, Elma, Marilla, Aurora, Wales, Colden, Holland, Sardinia and part of Concord.

The West Transit was the line between Willink and "Erie," which last town also stretched the whole width of the State. At its southern end it was twenty-four miles wide, but it was narrowed by the lake and the Canadian boundary, so that its northern half was only from eight to twenty miles wide. It comprised one short range of townships in Chautauqua county, the western part of Niagara and Cattaraugus, and in Erie county the city of Buffalo and the towns of Grand Island, Tonawanda, Amherst, Cheektowaga, West Seneca, Hamburg, East Hamburg, Evans, Eden, Boston, Brant, North Collins, Collins, and the west part of Concord.

This town of Erie has had a somewhat curious history, having been completely obliterated not only from the list of political organizations, but from the memories of its own oldest inhabitants. The story of its early annihilation will be told in another chapter.

Next to East Hamburg, Boston was the first town settled south of the reservation. In March, 1804, Charles Johnson having erected a cabin, left his friend Kinney's and moved four miles farther into the wilderness. His brother Oliver, Samuel Eaton and Samuel Beebe followed a little later.

The Johnsons and some of their neighbors had less trouble clearing their land than most settlers in the south towns. Where they located, close to Boston Center, there was a prairie of fifty acres. Close by there was another which occupied thirty acres except a few trees, and there were some smaller ones. In the thirty-acre one there was an old fort, enclosing a space of about two and a half acres. It consisted of an embankment which even then was two feet high, with a ditch on the outside nearly two feet deep. There were a few trees growing on the embankment, one of them being a chestnut from two to two and a half feet in diameter.

From this fort there was a narrow artificial road running southwest nearly to Hamburg village. On dry ground little work had been done, but on wet land the evidences that a road had been made were plain for a

long time. From Hamburg village to the lake there is a narrow natural ridge, suitable for a road, and on which one is actually laid out, called the "Ridge road."

It looks as if some band of Indians, (or of some other race,) had preferred to reside on the lake shore for pleasure and convenience, but had constructed this fortress between the hills, with a road leading to it, as a place of safety from their foes.

In this vicinity, as elsewhere throughout the county, were found large numbers of sharpened flint-stones, with which it was supposed the Indians skinned deer. The largest were six or seven inches long and two inches broad, the sides being oval and the edges sharpened. If the Indians had ever used them, as seems probable, they had thrown them aside as soon as knives were brought among them by the Europeans.

We believe that John Cummings located himself this spring on his land below Water Valley, becoming the first settler in the present town of Hamburg.

That same spring Deacon Ezekiel Smith came from Vermont with his two sons, Richard and Daniel, and bought a tract of land two miles southeast of Kinney's, in what has since been known as the Newton neighborhood. A young man named David Eddy came with him and selected land near Potter's Corners. Smith returned for his family, leaving his sons to clear land.

In September he came back, with his wife, several daughters, and two or three others, and five more sons, Amasa, Ezekiel, Zenas, Amiah and Almon. Such a family of itself was enough to start a pretty good settlement. Four of the seven sons were married. With them came another big Vermont family, headed by Amos Colvin, with his sons Jacob, George, Luther, Amos and Isaac.

In June, 1804, Joel Harvey located at the mouth of the Eighteen-Mile creek, on the west side, being the first settler in the present town of Evans, and the farthest one up the lake in the county of Erie.

Meanwhile another settlement had been commenced farther east. Jabez Warren, when cutting out the Big Tree road, must have been extremely well pleased with the land about Aurora, for on the 17th of April, 1804, he took a contract for four entire lots, comprising the greater part of the site of the village of East Aurora, and a large territory adjoining it on the north and west. The tract contained 1,743 acres, being the largest amount purchased in the county by one person at any one time. The price was \$2 per acre.

The same day Nathaniel Emerson, Henry Godfrey, (a son-in-law of Warren,) Nathaniel Walker, John Adams and Joel Adams took contracts covering the whole creek valley, for three miles above East Aurora, at \$1.50 per acre. This was the cheapest that any land was sold in the county, though it included some of the best. In May, Rufus and Taber Earl located in the southeast corner of East Aurora village.

Four or five other persons made purchases during the summer, but out of the whole list, though most of them became permanent residents, only one, Joel Adams, remained with his family through the winter. Taber Earl, however, built him a house and moved into it immediately after buying his land. His wife was the pioneer woman of the county south of the reservation and east of the West Transit. But Earl with his family wintered in Buffalo.

In connection with the first settlement of Aurora, it may be noted that there, as in so many other places, were found indications of ancient occupancy. A little north of the village of East Aurora, and close to the north line of the town, are several abrupt hills, almost surrounded by muddy ponds and by low grounds once undoubtedly covered with water. Two of these hills, thus conveniently situated for defense, were found fortified by circular breastworks, resembling those in Boston.

There is also a tradition of bones of "giant size" being dug up there at an early day, but I am somewhat skeptical, not as to the bones, but the size. Exaggeration is extremely easy where there is no exact, scientific measurement.

Numerous settlements were made north of the reservation, in 1804, and the woodman's axe resounded in every direction. Mr. James Clark, of Lancaster, informed the writer that he had ascertained that James and Amos Woodward were the first settlers in Lancaster, locating at Bowman's Mills, and it was probably in 1804 that they came. Several new settlers also located themselves in the embryo metropolis at the mouth of Buffalo creek, the most prominent of whom were Louis Stephen Le Couteulx, a French gentleman who established the first drug store in the county, and Captain Samuel Pratt, who engaged largely in trade with both whites and Indians, and who brought his family to Buffalo in the first coach ever seen in all the region round about.

The only other event it is necessary to notice in this year is the establishment of a post-route and post-office. A law was passed in the spring, establishing a route from Canandaigua to Fort Niagara, by way of Buffalo creek. In September following it was put in operation, and Erastus Granger was appointed the first postmaster in Erie county, his office being denominated "Buffalo Creek." Even Congress would not recognize the unfortunate name of New Amsterdam.

The new postmaster's duties were not onerous. Once a week a solitary horseman came from Canandaigua, with a pair of saddle-bags and the trifling mail, and once a week he returned from Fort Niagara.

During 1805, there is no record of any new townships being occupied, but the work of improvement progressed rapidly in and around the settlements already made.

In accordance with the law of the previous year, the towns of Willink and Erie were organized in the spring of 1805. The first town

meeting in Willink was held at Vandeventer's, all the voters being north of the reservation, except Joel Adams in Aurora and Roswell Turner in Sheldon, Wyoming county. The following officers were elected:—

Supervisor, Peter Vandeventer; Town Clerk, Zerah Ensign; Assessors, Asa Ransom, Aaron Beard, John J. Brown; Collector, Levi Felton; Commissioners of Highways, Gad Warner, Charles Wilber, Samuel Hill, Jr.; Constables, John Dunn, Julius Keyes; Overseers of the Poor, Henry Ellsworth and Otis Ingalls.

The first town meeting in the town of Erie was held at Crow's tavern, but the record of it was destroyed, with nearly all others pertaining to that town, in 1813. In fact, notwithstanding the law, it would be difficult to establish the actual, organized existence of such a town, were it not for a rough little memorandum book, preserved among the treasures of the Buffalo Historical Society. It is marked "Erie Town Book," but it does not show any of the usual town records except receipts from licenses to sell liquor.

Five of these were recorded in 1805, three being to persons in the present county of Erie and two at Lewiston. There were two in Buffalo, two in Gillett, and one given to Nathaniel Titus on the lake shore in the present town of Hamburg. There must, however, have been others. The price of licenses was five dollars each. Orlando Hopkins was collector of the town that year, and the whole general tax was a hundred and fifty dollars.

The first resident of Erie county who had a right to the appellation of "Judge," was Samuel Tupper, a gentleman then in charge of what was known as the "Contractors' Store," in Buffalo, who was appointed an Associate Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Genesee county in the autumn of 1805. The position of Associate Judge of the Common Pleas at that time corresponded closely to that of Justice of Sessions in later years, and the possession of the office, though with the title of judge, did not necessarily indicate any great amount of legal knowledge.

Asa Ransom erected a grist-mill at Clarence Hollow in either 1804 or 1805. The accounts differ in that respect, but it was certainly the first mill for grinding wheat in the county, and was for several years the only one north of the reservation.

In 1805, Daniel Smith put up a rude mill, for grinding corn only, on a little stream since called Hoag's brook, two miles southwest of Potter's Corners, in the present town of East Hamburg. It was a log building about eighteen feet square, with wood gearing, and would grind five or six bushels a day. This was the first grist-mill (if it can be called by that name) in that part of the county south of the reservation.

David Eddy, also of East Hamburg, built a saw-mill for the Indians the same year, by contract with Superintendent Granger, on Cazenove

creek, near what is now "Lower Ebenezer." It furnished the first boards for the inhabitants of the south towns. The cranks, saws, etc., had to be transported from Albany.

Among numerous settlers of 1805, we can notice but two in this part of our history, leaving the others to be mentioned in the city or township records. One was Jonas Williams, a clerk in the law office at Batavia, who had purchased the water power and an abandoned mill on Ellicott's creek, and in the spring of 1805 began to rebuild the mill; becoming the founder of the village which still bears his name. The other was William Warren, afterwards better known as General Warren, then a youth of less than twenty-one years, though already married, who located himself the same year at the east end of the present village of East Aurora.

The future general had an early predilection for military affairs, had been an "ensign" of militia at his former home, and immediately after his arrival in Erie county was commissioned as captain. His district embraced all the south part of Erie and Wyoming counties. With his commission came an order to call his company together for organization. He did so, and nine men responded.

In the year 1806, Joel Harvey, the first settler of Evans, began keeping tavern at his residence, at the mouth of Eighteen-Mile creek. There were some purchases made in that year near East Evans, and temporary settlements, but according to Peter Barker, who furnished an interesting sketch of Evans to the Buffalo Historical Society, the discouraged pioneers left, and no permanent settlements were made till several years later. Mr. Harvey's was the frontier house, yet it was a good location for a tavern, on account of the heavy travel that went up the beach of the lake to Chautauqua county and Ohio.

It was in 1806, too, as near as can be ascertained, that the first regular grist-mill was erected in the southwest part of the county, probably the first south of the reservation. It was built by John Cummings, on the Eighteen-Mile creek, at a place now called McClure's Mills, a mile or so below Water Valley, in the town of Hamburg.

The raising of it was a grand affair. Old men still relate how from all the south part of the county the scattered settlers came with their teams, elated at the idea of having a grist-mill, and willing to make a week's journey if necessary to give it a start. Yet so few were they that their united strength was insufficient to put some of the great timbers in their places. The proprietor sent to the reservation and obtained a crowd of Indians to help in the work. One does not expect very hard lifting from an Indian, but he can lift, when there is a prospect of plenty of whiskey as a reward. It was only, however, after four days' work by white men and red men, that the raising of the big grist-mill was completed.

Some of the society of "Friends," or "Quakers," had been the earliest pioneers around what has since been known as "Potter's Corners," in East Hamburg, and in 1806 had become numerous enough to organize a "Friends Meeting," which was undoubtedly the first religious organization in the county. The next year they built a log meeting-house in the same locality. This was not only the first church-building of any description in the county, but for more than ten years it was the only one.

The Quakers were equally zealous in the cause of education, and as early as 1806 built a log school-house—certainly the first one south of the reservation, and perhaps in the county. Henry Hibbard taught the first school.

In 1806 or '07 the "Friends Yearly Meeting" of Philadelphia sent a mission to instruct the Indians of the Cattaraugus reserve, having bought three hundred acres adjoining the reservation. The mission was composed of several single gentlemen and ladies, who called themselves a family. The whole was under the management of Jacob Taylor. His nephew, Caleb Taylor, gave the names of Stephen Twining and Hannah Jackson as members of the family.

They located at the place since known as Taylor's Hollow, a few rods from the reservation line, where they gave instruction in farming to all the Indians who would receive it, in housework to the squaws, and in reading, writing, etc., to the youth. Whatever the improvement made, the Quakers generally produced a favorable impression on the red men. Even the bitter Red Jacket spoke of them as friends—the only white friends the Indians had.

With this exception the valley of the Cattaraugus, including all its tributaries in Erie county, remained an unbroken wilderness till the fall of 1807. At that time two hardy pioneers, Christopher Stone and John Albro, crossed the ridge, made their own roads through the forest, and finally located on a pleasant little stream running into the Cattaraugus from the north; in fact on the site of Springville. There they and their families remained during the winter, their nearest neighbors being at least ten miles distant, in the valley of Eighteen-Mile creek.

In 1807 (possibly 1806) Phineas Stephens built the first grist-mill in the southeastern part of the county, the material being hewn logs.

In 1806 or early in 1807, he does not remember which, young William Warren hung out a sign before his log house, and became the first tavern-keeper in the southeast part of the county. In the summer of the latter year the little cabin he had first lived in was converted into a school-house, where the first school in all that section was taught by Mary Eddy, of East Hamburg. The next winter Warren himself kept school in the same house. That enterprising young pioneer was thus school-teacher, tavern-keeper and captain all at once. His second "com-

pany training" was held at Turner's Corners, in Sheldon, in 1806, when there were about sixty men present, instead of the nine of the year before. Asa Ransom had then been appointed Major-Commandant.

In 1806 William Allen made the first settlement in Wales, locating where the Big Tree road then crossed Buffalo creek, about half a mile south of Wales Center. The road then made a half-mile curve to the south to avoid the long and steep hill east of Wales Center. The same fall Amos Clark and William Hoyt located a little east of Holmes' Hill.

This locality received its name from two brothers, Ebenezer and John M. Holmes, whose arrival occurred in February, 1808, just before the formation of Niagara county, when they located themselves on the top of the hill, close to the present west line of Wales. As both had large families—Ebenezer eight and John M. nine children—most of whom grew up and settled in that vicinity, it was natural that the name of "Holmes' Hill" should soon be adopted, and become permanent.

It may be observed, in passing, that vegetation was at that time almost as luxuriant on the hill-tops as in the valleys, and frequently deceived the keenest of the pioneers as to the value of the soil.

In 1807 the first settlement was made in the present town of Holland. Arthur Humphrey, (father of the Hon. James M. Humphrey,) Abner Currier and Jared Scott began clearing farms on the creek flats, between South Wales and Holland village. Humphrey settled that year on the farm where he lived till his death, fifty years later. Currier and Scott brought their families a year or so afterwards.

In 1806 the first purchase was made in the present town of Alden, in the northwest corner, by Jonas Vanwey. According to all accounts, however, there was no settlement till some years later.

Among other new comers to what is now the town of Newstead in 1807 was Lemuel Osborn, whose widow stated in 1875 that a Methodist society was organized soon after their arrival, with twelve members; her father, Charles Knight, being the first class-leader. It was the first Methodist organization on the Holland Purchase, and probably the second religious society in Erie county, the Friends' Meeting in East Hamburg being the first. It was organized by the Rev. Peter Van Ness, one of the two first Methodist missionaries who came upon the Purchase, the Rev. Amos Jenks being the other. Both were sent out in 1807, under the auspices of the Philadelphia conference.

In 1806 or '07, too, Archibald S. Clarke started a store on his farm near Vandeventer's. This was the first store in the county, outside of Buffalo, and was hailed by all the people round about as marking a decisive epoch in the advance of civilization.

Down to and including 1806, the elections and town meetings for the town of Willink were every year held at Peter Vandeventer's, and every year the worthy landlord was chosen supervisor. In 1807, however, the

town meeting was held at Clarence Hollow, and then Asa Ransom was elected supervisor.

This time the scattering voters in Willink, south of the reservation, had to cross it to exercise the elective franchise. General elections, however, in those times were held three days, and in April, 1807, the southern settlers got sight of a ballot-box. The election was held a day and a half north of the reservation, and on the afternoon of the second day the "board" crossed the wilderness. The next forenoon they held open the polls at Warren's tavern in Aurora, and in the afternoon in Wales, at the house of Jacob Turner.

The Commissioners of Excise of Willink for 1807 certified to the qualifications of no less than ten persons to keep hotels in that town. Doubtless all these, and perhaps more, actually kept tavern, but there was only a single store in town.

In September, 1806, the earliest lawyer made his advent in Erie county. If any of the frontiersmen were disposed to look askance on a representative of the legal profession, as a probable provoker of disputes and disturber of society, they must soon have been disabused of their prejudices, for Ebenezer Walden, the new comer, was of all men one of the most upright and most modest. He immediately commenced practice in Buffalo, and for a year or two was the only attorney west of Batavia.

We will close this chapter with the description of an amusing scene which occurred in Buffalo in the fall of 1807, as related by General Warren. Militia regiments in those days had no colonels, but were each organized with a lieutenant-colonel commanding, and two majors. In 1807, the militia of the western part of Genesee county had been formed into a regiment, with Asa Ransom as Lieutenant-Colonel commanding, and T. S. Hopkins and Sylvanus Maybee as Majors. There had been several "company trainings," but as yet no "general training."

At the first "officer meeting" after the new appointments were made, a dispute arose between Colonel Ransom and Major Maybee, as to who should be recommended to the governor for the vacant captaincy of the Buffalo Company, in place of Maybee, promoted.

The war of words grew more and more furious, until at length the doughty Major challenged his superior officer to fight a duel. For this infraction of military discipline Colonel Ransom put the Major under arrest, and reported his case to the higher authorities. In due time a court-martial was convened, Captain Warren being one of the witnesses, and Maybee was tried and cashiered.

He must have taken his military misfortune very much to heart, for, though he had been a prominent man in Buffalo, he immediately disappeared from its records, and undoubtedly left the village, apparently preferring the discomfort of making a new home to remaining where he could not enjoy the glory of a duel, nor the honors of a militia major. Thus sadly ended the first display of chivalry in Erie county.



Emerson

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