

**HISTORY
of
SCHOHARIE COUNTY,
and
BORDER WARS OF NEW YORK;**

containing also
A Sketch of the Causes which led to the American Revolution;
and Interesting Memoranda of the Mohawk Valley;
together with
Much Other Historical and Miscellaneous Matter, Never Before Published.
by Jephtha R. Simms
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Chapter 2 – pages 51 to 78. “Battle between Captain Hartman and his Indian neighbors -- Puts a spell upon their guns -- Smoking of the calumet”

It has been already remarked, that the Germans settled in clusters or dorfs, to be the better able to repel Indian invasion, if tradition speaks the truth. The privilege the writer claims, he allows to the reader, to wit: that of believing as much of the following story as he pleases. When related to him, the author thought it too good to be lost.

At the foot of the hill south of where stood Hartman's dorf, which is the descent from a table land to the river flats, as the road now lies, may be observed on one side a kind of marsh, through which runs a brook, receiving in its course the waters of several springs. At the period to which I allude, this marsh was thickly covered with alders and other swamp timber, and afforded a safe covert for no inconsiderable force. Early upon a certain day, in a certain year, Karighondontee and many of his warriors were assembled at this swamp, to give battle to the good people of Hartman's dorf, distant half a mile from the encampment. If the reader desired to know the cause of difficulty, or in what precise year it arose, I should be unable to inform him; it must have been previous to the arrival of Bayard. It being rumored through the place that it was besieged, great was the commotion through its one important street. By times, the brave Captain Hartman had taken a public station, and around him a multitude were soon gathered. The tactic skill of the Captain required little time in marshaling his brave followers-his tender care about their temporal affairs at the Camps being still remembered-who waited with impatience the march to glory. What other officers assisted Captain Hartman on the momentous occasion, is of no consequence at this late period. Various were the weapons with which the dangerous looking corps were armed. Few fire-arms might have been seen, but forks, shovels, broad hoes, axes, poles, clubs, hand-saws, and the Lord knows what other missiles, gleamed threateningly in the sun. Indeed, the care-worn and trusty sword of Captain, when drawn, added not a little to the warlike appearance of the troop, to say nothing of its multiform, military garb. "What a fine martial array," thought he, as his eye ran along the ranks, and he gave the command to

"face towards the river and march!" Each individual of the brave band cast a furtive, speaking glance at the front stoop of his own dwelling, where stood the domestic circle weeping or encouraging, or that of his lover, who was leaning upon the half opened door, with an arm across her face to conceal the gushing tear, or her pouting, nectareal lip; and to the enlivening sound of the violin, their favorite and only music, set forward with a firm step, determined to conquer or die. Two-thirds of the distance from the village to the rendezvous of the enemy already in his rear, the Captain ordered a halt, to communicate to his troops some necessary instructions about the plan and manner of prosecuting the attack. Some of his men now hesitated about assaulting the enemy, as they were mostly armed with unerring rifles. The misgivings on this score soon became general, and then was called forth all the dormant eloquence their brave leader was so noted for possessing. Stepping upon a stump, from which position his commanding person and cheerful countenance were truly conspicuous, he addressed his followers. He directed their attention to the time when they were persecuted in Germany-to the perils they had overcome by sea and land. He assured them that although the enemy had rifles, yet not one of them should discharge. He conjured them not to sully, by cowardice, their national character. He reminded them of their social relations which were jeopardized-of the love of their wives, their parents, their children, and lastly of their plighted. He accompanied the latter part of his pathetic speech, with a significant flourish of his sword towards their village, a part of which was still in view. The appeal was irresistible, and with one voice the whole corps, in true German, responded-"Fuehret an!" Lead on! Fearlessly he did lead on, and thus was he followed. Faith is the vital principle by which every successful effort of man is put forth, and without it, the sinews of war are powerless. Indeed, faith is no less requisite in war than religion, and no battle ever was won without it. So thought the daring Hartman, and so had he instructed his followers to think. When they came to the wood in which the enemy had taken a position, the Germans, following the example of their Captain, rushed furiously upon the wary foe. They met, as had been anticipated, his leveled guns, but no sound, save their repeated clicks, was heard: no death-telling report rang through the valley, and the whoops of the savages, as they noted the failure of their rifles, gradually died away on the morning air. The confidence of the colonists was increased, on beholding the prophecy of their Captain verified, in the click of nondischarging fire-arms, and true to their leader, they seconded all his movements. The red man fell back abashed, and ere he could discover the cause of his ill luck, the sturdy German was upon him, the sight of whose weapon was enough to carry terror to his heart's warmest blood, and he was compelled again to flee. "An!" shouted the immortal Captain, "An!" The charge was too impetuous to be withstood, and the Indians fled in terror, uttering, as they left the swamp in possession of their fellows, or with obtruding trees, and now and then with the head or shoulders of their comrades, that the carnage was terrible, and the reason for the death yell obviously augmented. What a cruel, bloody art, is war. The troops of Captain Harman belabored the natives lustily with fork and hoe, as may be supposed, in their retreat. Here, some were seen hobbling off from the field of battle with bruised shins; there, others with elbows or fingers disjointed- all amazed at the manifest prowess of their German enemies, and still more dismayed that their rifles gave no report. If any there were among them who fought on that memorable occasion with bows and arrows, and doubtless there were some, it is highly probable the thick buck-

skin garments of the colonists arrested the further progress of their arrows; else the fate of the day might still have been different, and I now had to record the success instead of the defeat, of the stout Canadian Chief, Karighondontee. The little army of Hartman were soon left complete masters of the bloodless field, (as it would have been, had not the careless wielding of the missiles brought them occasionally in contact with a nasal organ;) and the repeated German huzzas of the conquerors, reverberated along the Oucongona.

The enemy fairly ousted and the field gloriously won, the victors returned again to their homes to a still more enlivening air than the one with which they had left them, the whole length of the bow being given it; where awaited them the cheers and smiles of their fair ones. It is but reasonable to suppose, that a messenger had been sent forward to apprise the villagers of the great success and triumph of the German arms, without loss of life or limb, since I must believe, that had the good matrons been expecting to see any of the corps borne home on a litter, they would not have made the welkin ring with their shouts. Thus ended the first regular battle of the Germans in the valley of Schoharie, no less gloriously than did the siege of Smith's hotel, already before the reader, on which occasion they compelled their supposed enemy to flee by night. One thing, however, remained to be done, the pipe of peace was yet to be smoked. Accordingly, on an appointed day, soon after the battle, the parties met in the shade of a majestic oak, not a mile from the battle field, which had buffeted the storms of several centuries, and may be still standing, and well and faithfully did the Germans smoke the calumet. They are a people extremely fond of fumigating, and the opportunity to show their Indian neighbors their patience and skill in the art, as may be supposed, was heartily embraced. Nor is it improbable, that their countrymen at Weiser's dorf were guests on so important an occasion. The Indians were again compelled to accord to their (now) friends of the pipe, superior skill. The Virginia weed all burned, the parties dispersed. Well would it be if all battles ended, like the battle of Hartman's dorf, in nothing worse than smoke.

Perhaps thou art amazed, kind reader, while perusing the simple narrative of this battle, to find that the fire-arms of the Indians did not discharge. The days of witchcraft are now happily passed forever; but the time has been, when it was no uncommon thing for a spell or enchantment to extend to the lock of a rifle: so says tradition.- *George Warner.*