

PIONEER HISTORY

OF ORLEANS COUNTY, NEW YORK

AUDIOBOOK

ARAD THOMAS

EDITED BY A.BURRIS

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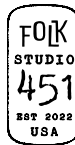
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This book is part of a series:
Pioneers of Orleans County, NY
Pioneer History of Orleans County, New York (vol1)
*Pioneer Handbook: Mastering Pioneer Life
in Orleans County, New York* (vol2)
Pioneer Cookbook: Wilderness Recipes of Orleans County (vol3)

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Want to learn more about
The Pioneers of Orleans County, New York?

Visit *pioneerhistory.us* to view the accompanying online reference material and notices of updates when they occur.

Online reference material includes high-resolution historical maps, statistics related to the emigration of settlers from New England to New York and extended information on key events such as the construction of the Erie Canal and the “Year without a summer.”

And if you have not already done so, check out the two companion volumes “*Pioneer Handbook: Mastering Frontier Life in Orleans County, New York*” and “*Pioneer Cookbook: Wilderness Recipes of Orleans County*.” These two books provide a wealth of information to help you better understand the life and times of the Orleans County Pioneers.

AUDIOBOOK CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: THE INDIANS OF WESTERN NEW YORK

CHAPTER 2: PHELPS AND GORHAM'S PURCHASE

CHAPTER 3: THE 100,000 ACRE TRACT

CHAPTER 4: THE HOLLAND PURCHASE

THE BOUNTIFUL LAND; THE TONAWANDA SWAMP

CHAPTER 5: THE LOG HOUSE

CHAPTER 6: LOG HOUSE FURNITURE

CHAPTER 7: CLEARING LAND AND FIRST CROPS

CHAPTER 8: HARDSHIPS AND PRIVATIONS

EARLY MERCHANTS - THEIR STORES AND GOODS; DOMESTIC
MANUFACTURERS

CHAPTER 9: THE ERIE CANAL

CHAPTER 10: PUBLIC HIGHWAYS

CHAPTER 11: RAILROADS IN ORLEANS COUNTY

CHAPTER 12: STATE OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 13: STATE OF RELIGION

CHAPTER 14: BURYING GROUNDS

CHAPTER 15: THE TOWN OF BARRE

CHAPTER 15B: BIOGRAPHIES OF EARLY SETTLERS

LANSING BAILEY; EBENEZER ROGERS; ASA SANFORD; ANDREW
H. GREEN; LINUS JONES PECK; HARVEY GOODRICH; ORSON
NICHOSON; TIMOTHY C. STRONG; NATHAN WHITNEY; AVERY
M. STARKWEATHER; AMOS ROOT; OZIAS S. CHURCH; WILLIAM
BRADNER; A. HYDE COLE;

CHAPTER 15C: BARRE BIOGRAPHIES (CONT)

BENJAMIN L. BESSAC; HENRY R. CURTIS; ZENAS F. HIBBARD;
WILLIAM TANNER; ROSWELL S. BURROWS; WILLIAM PENNIMAN;
JESSE MASON; STEPHEN B. THURSTON; RUFUS HALLOCK; JONATHAN
CLARK; OLIVER BENTON; MOSES SMITH; ANTHONY TRIPP; ALLEN
PORTER; ELIZUR HART; JARVIS M. SKINNER; NATHANIEL BRALEY;
LUCIUS STREET; THOMAS W. ALLIS; JOSEPH BARKER;

CHAPTER 15D: BARRE BIOGRAPHIES (CONT)

ENOS RICE; LUTHER PORTER; NEHEMIAH INGERSOLL; JUSTICE
INGERSOLL; LORENZO BURROWS.; GEORGE E. MIX; "THINGS I CAN
REMEMBER"; BY GEORGE E. MIX; MRS. LYDIA MIX; JOSEPH HART;
ADEN FOSTER; ALEX WARD; THE LEE FAMILY; ABRAHAM CANTINE;
CAROLINE P. ACHILLES

CHAPTER 16: THE VILLAGE OF ALBION

CHAPTER 17: TOWN OF CARLTON

THE UNION COMPANY; GEORGE KUCK; DANIEL GATES; ELIJAH
HUNT; RAY MARSH; JOBE SHIPMAN; LYMAN FULLER

CHAPTER 18: TOWN OF CLARENDON

HORACE PECK; BENJAMIN G. PETTINGILL; BRADSTREET SPAFFORD;
NICHOLAS E. DARROW; ELDRIDGE FARWELL; WILLIAM LEWIS;
MARTIN EVARTS; LEMUEL COOK; ISAAC CADY

CHAPTER 19: TOWN OF GAINES

RICHARD TREADWELL; WALTER FAIRFIELD; JOHN PROCTOR;
SAMUEL HILL.; SAMUEL SALSBUURY; PERRY DAVIS; LEVI ATWELL;
SAMUEL C. LEWIS; GIDEON S. LEWIS; NATHAN SHELLEY; THE
BULLARD FAMILY; THE BILLINGS FAMILY; ARBA CHUBB; THE
ANDERSON FAMILY; MOSES BACON;

CHAPTER 19B: GAINES BIOGRAPHIES (CONT)

SAMUEL BIDELMAN; JOHN HENRY BEECH; OLIVER BOOTH; JAMES
MATHER; ELIHU MATHER; HENRY DRAKE; SIMEON DUTCHER;
HONORABLE WILLIAM J. BABBITT; GIDEON FREEMAN; CHESTER
FREEMAN; DANIEL PRATT; DANIEL BROWN; WILLIAM W. RUGGLES;
EAGLE HARBOR

CHAPTER 20: TOWN OF KENDALL

AIDIN MANLEY; ROBERT CLARK; SAMUEL BATES; AMOS RANDALL;
DAVID JONES

CHAPTER 21: TOWN OF MURRAY

HARLEY N. BUSHNELL; ARETAS PIERCE; HUBBARD RICE; CHAUNCEY
ROBINSON; HIRAM FRISBIE; JACOB HINDS; AUSTIN DAY; ELIJAH
W. WOOD; RECOLLECTIONS OF MRS. SALLY SMITH; ALANSON
MANSFIELD; ABNER BALCOM; REUBEN BRYANT

CHAPTER 22: VILLAGE OF HOLLEY

CHAPTER 23: THE VILLAGE OF HULBERTON

CHAPTER 24: VILLAGE OF HINDSBURGH

CHAPTER 25: THE TOWN OF RIDGEWAY

ISRAEL DOUGLASS; WILLIAM C. TANNER; LEVI DAVIS; JEREMIAH
BROWN; JOSEPH L. PERRY; CHARLES D. BURLINGHAM; JOSIAS
TANNER; LUCIUS BARRETT; SEYMOUR B. MURDOCK; GLYMAN
BATES; DAVID HOOKER; OTIS TURNER; THOMAS WELD; SAMUEL
CHURCH; WILLIAM N. PRESTON; JAMES DANIELS; WILLIAM
COCHRANE; WILLIAM COBB; SEYMOUR MURDOCK; GROSVENOR
DANIELS; LAURA BAKER; NAHUM BARRETT; LUTHER BARRETT;
CHRISTOPHER WHALEY; ANDREW WELD; WILLIAM JACKSON;
ELIJAH HAWLEY; JAMES JACKSON; JOHN LE VALLEY;

CHAPTER 25: RIDGEWAY BIOGRAPHIES (CONT)

AMOS BARRETT; SIDNEY S. BARRETT; WILLIAM KNOWLES; AVERY
V. ANDREWS; NANCY G. MASTEN; LYSANDER C. GROVER; EDWIN P.
HEALY; MILO COON; PETER HOAG; DAVID HOOD

CHAPTER 26: VILLAGE OF MEDINA

CHAPTER 27: THE VILLAGE OF KNOWLESVILLE

CHAPTER 28: THE TOWN OF SHELBY

THE GREGORY FAMILY; AMOS GREGORY; MATTHEW GREGORY;
DAVID DEMARA; ABRAM BIDELMAN; JOTHAM MORSE; DAVID
BURROUGHS; DARIUS SOUTHWORTH; NEWMAN CURTIS; HORATIO
N. HEWES; LATHROP A. G. B. GRANT; ANDREW A. ELLICOTT;
ALEXANDER COON; JACOB A. ZIMMERMAN; JOHN GRINNELL

CHAPTER 29: THE TOWN OF YATES

YATES CENTER; VILLAGE OF LYNDONVILLE; REUBEN ROOT;
SAMUEL TAPPAN; JOHN H. TYLER; HORACE O. GOOLD; JOSIAH
PERRY; ALFRED BULLARD; HENRY MCNEAL; AMOS SPENCER;
ELISHA SAWYER; BARUCH H. GILBERT; ELISHA BOWEN

CHAPTER 30: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

JOSEPH ELLICOTT; EBENEZER MIX

CHAPTER 31: ORLEANS COUNTY PIONEER ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER 32: ADDRESS

FORWARD.

by A.Burris (2025)

Having grown up in a modern American single-parent household and separated from my grandparents by thousands of miles, I had only a vague understanding of my family's history. In 1989 I was a young adult, hungry to learn more. My mother gave me a stack of documents with details of our family's past. Among them was an old book with hundreds of stories written in a language from a bygone era. This book was an original copy of *Pioneer History of Orleans County, New York*, by Arad Thomas, which had been passed down through generations of my family.

Within its pages are over thirty chapters detailing the history of Western New York, the Holland Purchase, the county's settlement, biographies, and first-hand stories told in the pioneer's own words.

Despite my repeated attempts, I found it difficult to read more than a few pages at a time. Yet, I felt a strong connection to its content and the stories of my pioneer ancestors. For years, I have felt called to share these tales with a wider audience but lacked the resources to do so. Until

now. Recently retired and with new advancements in technology, I finally had the time and means to turn this dream into reality.

My goal was to update the language of the original piece for a contemporary audience. While refreshing the language, I worked hard to maintain its elegance and preserve every detail. Highly detailed information, difficult to understand in this format, such as the description of civil divisions in chapters 2 through 4, has been relocated to an online repository along with a glossary, high-resolution maps, and other information that bring the material to life.

Arad Thomas's poignant 1851 speech to the Pioneer Association and the first-hand accounts of the Pioneers remain unchanged.

And so I'm delighted to present to you, dear listener, this audiobook version of Arad Thomas's original work, completed just in time for the Orleans County Bicentennial Celebration in 2025.

If you, like me, feel disconnected from your family roots, I hope this book instills in you a sense of strength and pride in our shared heritage. For history enthusiasts, this book offers a detailed glimpse into the lives of early Americans during the birth of our nation—stories that have been lost in time but that deserve remembrance.

[Ague, Currier, Gill, Halcyon, The Creature]
19th Century American English Can Be a Bear!
View the glossary at the end of this document
—you'll be glad you did.

PREFACE.

by Arad Thomas (1871)

The origin of this book is briefly this: the Orleans County Pioneer Association had collected a volume, in manuscript, of the local history of many of its members, written by themselves, which they desired to publish.

Some difficulty existed in getting the work by the Association out, and many of his friends requested that the author write a book on his own account, which should contain the substance of the histories and such other material and matter connected with the Pioneer History of Orleans County as might be of general interest to readers.

The author used records from the association and histories of the Pioneers and extracted and condensed the parts that he believed would be of more general interest.

Many of the facts were collected from his own knowledge and the testimony of early settlers and others familiar with the matter.

The character of this book is local, many names of persons and events of private history have been introduced, of little interest perhaps out of the families and neighborhood of the parties; but with these, the author has endeavored to collect and preserve the memory of such events of a more public character, as marked by the progress of settlement in this portion of the Holland Purchase, and as many be worthy of remembrance.

For this purpose, *O'Reilly's Sketches of Rochester*, *Turner's History of Phelps and Gorham Purchase*, and of the Holland

Purchase and French's *Gazetteer of New York* have been consulted, and such extracts and compilations made as could be found there.

It has been an object, kept in view, to collect as much personal reminiscence as possible, for the gratification of the older inhabitants of Orleans County for whom the book was more particularly designed.

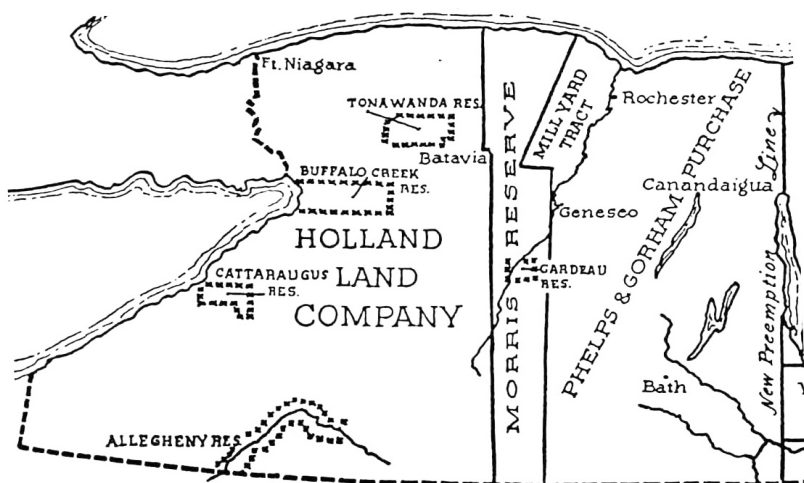
Errors and dates, events, names and narratives, no doubt may be found in the work. Such errors are unavoidable in giving details of statements of aged people, often conflicting in their character, and the intelligent reader may sometimes regret that he finds no notice here of facts and incidents in the Pioneer History of this region of country, which he may deem of more importance than what the book contains.

Some such facts and incidents may not have come to the notice of the author, and he has been compelled to omit much matter of interest, lest his work should be too large, beyond the plan proposed.

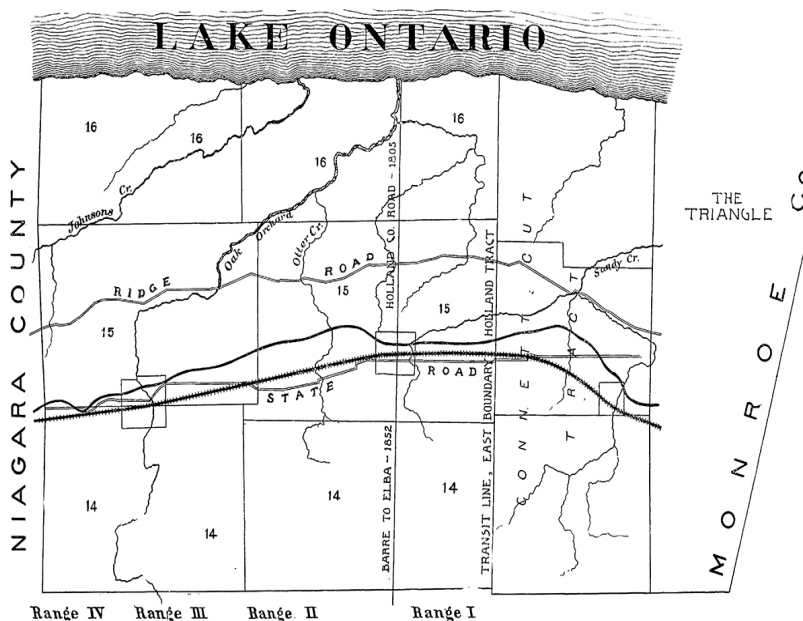
Much as an apology may seem to be needed, the author has little to make, more than to say he is not a professional book maker, and has no hope of founding a literary reputation on this work. He has little fear therefore of critics, and will be happy, if by this labor he has pleased the old settlers of Orleans County and done his part to save from oblivion, good matter for history, fast passing away; for in the beautiful language of Whittier—

*“Still from the hurrying train of life, fly backward far and fast,
The milestones of the fathers—the landmarks of the past.”*

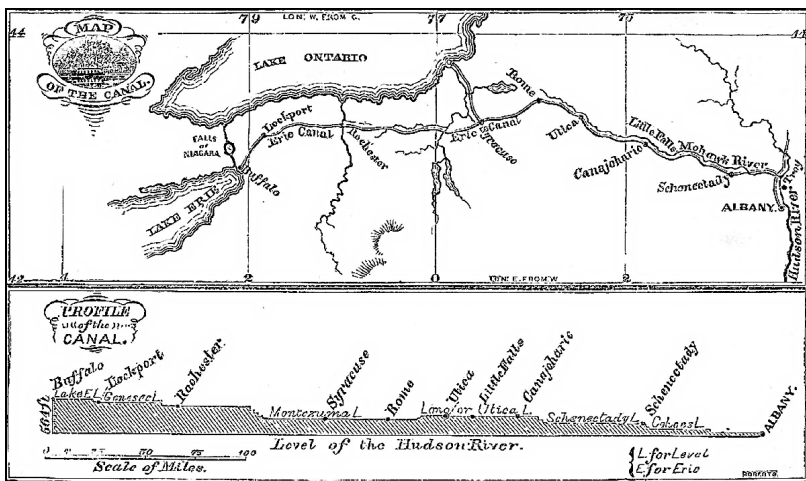
—John Greenleaf Whittier



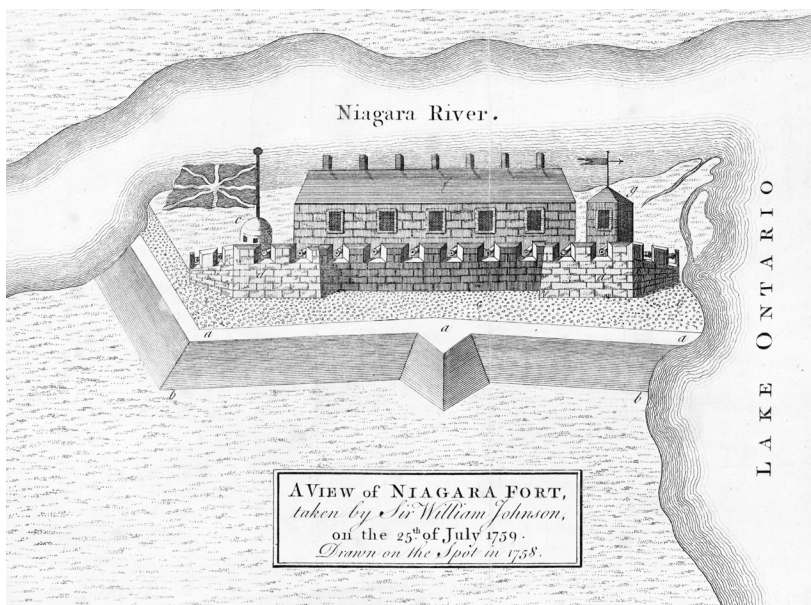
WESTERN NEW YORK LAND PURCHASES EARLY 1800S



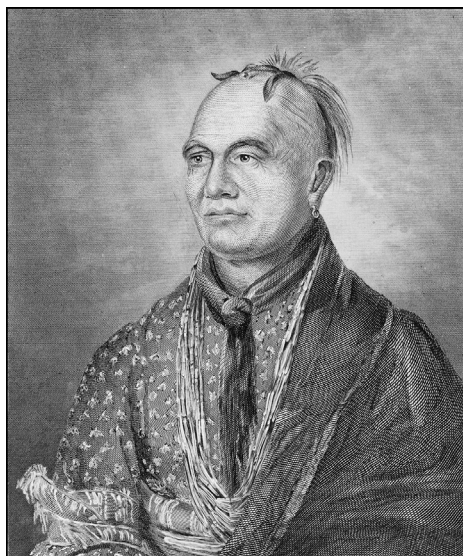
TOWNSHIPS AND RANGES IN HOLLAND PURCHASE



PATH AND ELEVATION OF ERIE CANAL



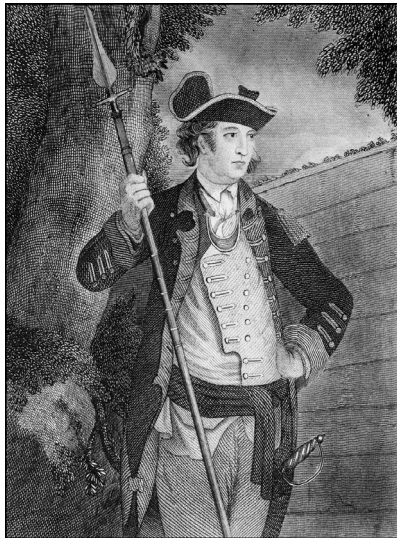
A VIEW OF NIAGARA FORT



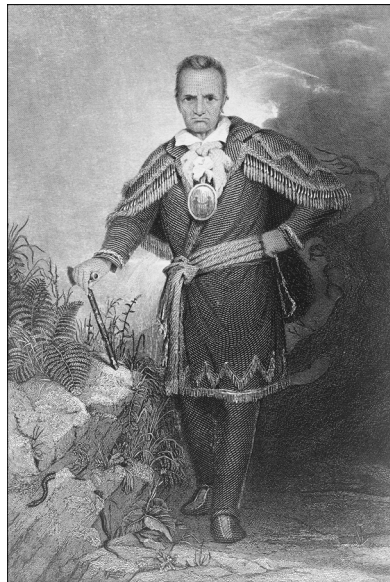
JOS. BRANT THAYENDANEGEA



SR. WILLIAM JOHNSON, BART. MAJOR GENERAL OF THE
ENGLISH FORCES IN NORTH AMERICA.



MAJ. GENERAL JOHN SULLIVAN



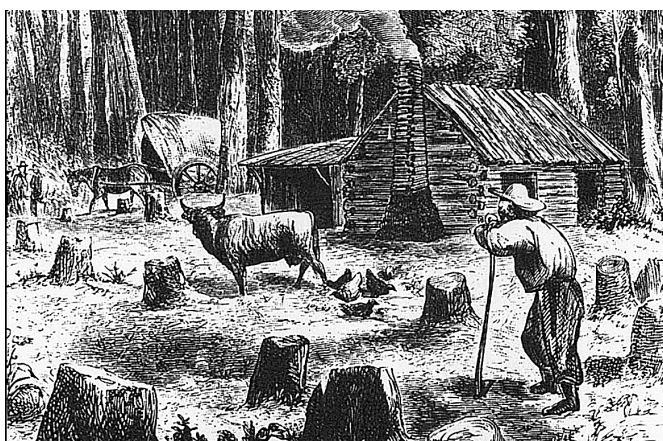
SA-GO-YE-WAT-HA (SENECA CHIEF RED JACKET)



ERIE CANAL



DEWITT CLINTON MINGLING THE WATERS
OF LAKE ERIE WITH THE ATLANTIC.



NEW ENGLAND SETTLERS. FROM
"ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PROGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES



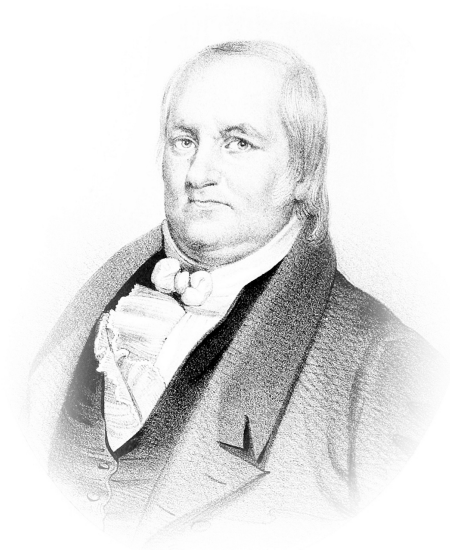
"PHIPPS UNION SEMINARY



ALBION ACADEMY



ROSWELL S. BURROWS BLOCK DOWNTOWN ALBION



JOSEPH ELLICOTT



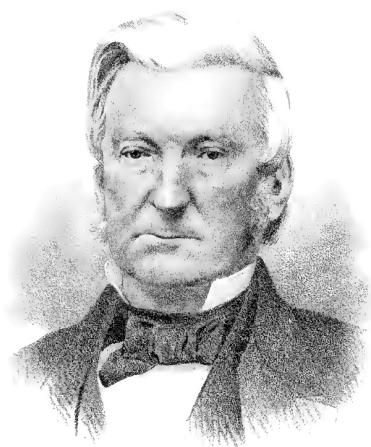
GIDEON HARD



ORSON NICHOSON



HON. ALMERON HYDE COLE



ROSWELL BURROWS



ELIZER HART



NEHEMIAH INGERSOLL



JAMES MATHER

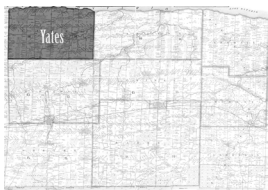


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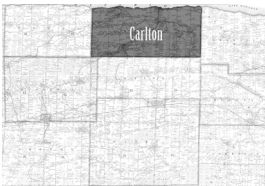


JEREMIAH BROWN

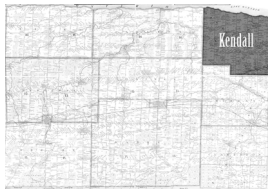
LOCATION OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES



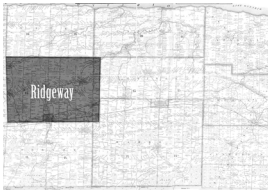
YATES



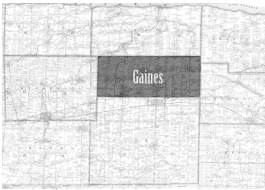
CARLTON



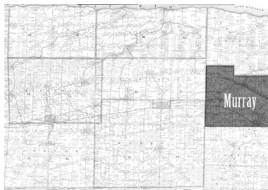
KENDALL



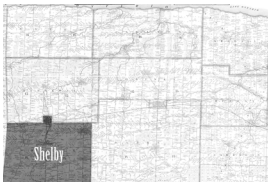
RIDGEWAY



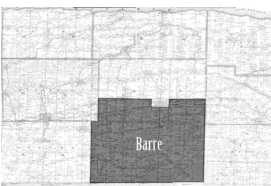
GAINES



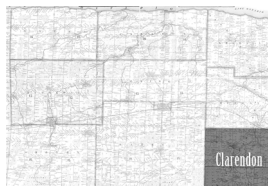
MURRAY



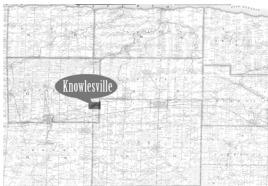
SHELBY



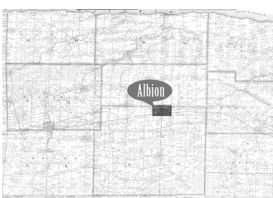
BARRE



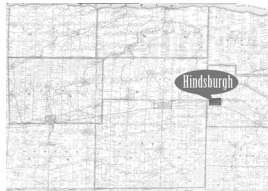
CLARENDON



KNOWLESVILLE



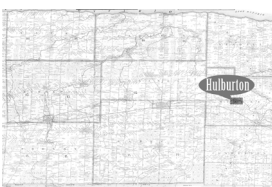
ALBION



HINDBURGH



MEDINA



HULBURTON



HOLLEY

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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GLOSSARY

100,000 Acre Tract

A large area of land in Western New York that was part of a land purchase known as the Holland Purchase. It was jointly owned by the State of Connecticut and the Pulteney Estate, and its lands were surveyed and sold to settlers over time.

Academy

A secondary school offering advanced education beyond the elementary level. In the 19th century, academies were often private institutions providing instruction in a range of subjects, including classical languages, sciences, and the arts.

Accessory (in the context of a crime)

A person who helps commit a crime but is not present during the crime.

Acclimating fever (Fever & Ague)

An illness that early settlers often experienced when they moved to new regions with different climates or environments. It often included symptoms similar to malaria or other fever-inducing diseases and was a significant cause of early deaths among settlers.

Actual Settlers

Refers to individuals who settled on and developed land, as opposed to speculators who bought land

with the intention of selling it later for a profit without making improvements.

Act of Legislature

A law passed by the legislative body of a government.

Admitted to the bar

This refers to the process by which a lawyer is officially allowed to practice law before the courts. Being admitted to the bar means they completed the necessary legal education and passed the required examinations to become a licensed attorney.

Adoption by the Indians

A custom in some Native American tribes where a captured person could be adopted into the tribe, often to replace a deceased family member.

Ague

A fever, often with alternating chills and sweating, commonly associated with malaria. In the early settlement period, “fever and ague” was a common affliction for pioneers, especially when they first arrived in a new area.

Aide-de-Camp

A military officer acting as a confidential assistant to a senior officer. The Aide-de-Camp helps with administrative tasks, communication, and other duties as assigned by the commanding officer.

Algonquins

A group of Native American tribes originally from the northeastern part of North America, particularly in the region of what is now Canada. They were allies of the French during the conflicts with the Iroquois.

Alleghenies

(Allegheny Mountains)

A range of the Appalachian Mountains running through the eastern United States, often referenced in historical accounts of early American expansion westward.

Allopathic

A term used to describe the conventional medical practice of treating symptoms with remedies that produce effects opposite to those caused by the disease. In the early 19th century, this was the dominant form of medical treatment, characterized by the use of strong medicines like quinine and blue pill.

Amherst, General (Jeffery Amherst)

A British general who led military campaigns during the French and Indian War. He played a key role in the British conquest of Canada, including the defeat of French forces and the acquisition of their territories.

Anterior lobe

The front part of the brain's cerebral hemisphere. In this context, it refers to the skulls found at the site, noting that the anterior lobe was well-

developed, indicating intelligence or a certain level of mental capacity.

Anti-Masonic Excitement

Refers to a period in the early 19th century when there was widespread suspicion and opposition to Freemasonry, particularly after the abduction and presumed murder of William Morgan in 1826, who had threatened to expose Masonic secrets. This event led to the formation of the Anti-Masonic Party and widespread anti-Masonic sentiment in the United States.

Antiquity

The ancient past, especially the period before the Middle Ages. Here, it is used to describe the growing historical interest and reverence for the pioneer era.

Apprenticeship

The system under which Samuel Tappan learned the shoemaking trade, a common practice in the 18th and 19th centuries where young people learned a trade by working for a master.

Aquafortis

An old term for nitric acid, which was commonly used in early chemical processes, including metalworking.

Ardent temperament

Describes someone with a passionate and enthusiastic personality. They would have intense feelings and strong opinions, especially on topics like slavery and temperance.

Arrowheads

Sharpened points, usually made of stone, attached to arrows and used as weapons or hunting tools by Indigenous peoples.

Arsenic

A toxic substance that was historically used in small doses as a treatment for various illnesses, such as fever and ague. Its use was dangerous, and it was often administered with caution by early doctors.

Article

A written contract provided by the Holland Land Company to settlers, specifying the terms of land purchase, including payment schedules and conditions. The “Article” allowed settlers to take possession of the land while paying off the purchase price over time.

Ashery

A facility where wood ashes were processed to produce potash or perlash, which were valuable commodities in the early 19th century. Asheries were common in areas where land clearing created large amounts of wood ash. Potash was an important commodity for trade, especially in rural and frontier areas.

Assembly’s Catechism

A reference to the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism, a set of religious doctrines used by Presbyterian and Congregational churches. It was an essential part

of the religious education for many early settlers.

Assembly for Orleans County

Refers to the New York State Assembly, the lower house of the New York State Legislature. Representatives (Assembly members) are elected from various districts, including Orleans County, to serve in the Assembly and participate in making state laws.

Assignee in Bankruptcy

A person appointed to handle the assets of a bankrupt individual or entity.

Assigning (an Article)

The process by which a settler could transfer their interest in a land purchase contract (Article) to another person. This practice was common among settlers, tradesmen, and speculators.

Aqueduct

A structure built to carry water over obstacles, such as rivers or valleys. In the context of the Erie Canal, aqueducts were used to carry the canal over streams and rivers.

Auld Lang Syne

A Scottish phrase meaning old long since or days gone by, often used to express nostalgia for the past. The term is famously associated with the song of the same name, traditionally sung at New Year’s Eve.

Bachelor's Hall

A term used to describe the living arrangement of unmarried men sharing a cabin or house, often in pioneer settings.

Backlog

A large log placed at the back of a fireplace, often used as the primary source of fuel in a log house. It would burn slowly, providing heat and light for several days.

Bake Pan (Cast Iron)

A heavy iron pan with a moveable lid and legs, used for baking before stoves became common. The pan could be placed over coals, with additional coals placed on top of the lid to cook the contents evenly.

Baptist Church

A Christian denomination characterized by the practice of baptism by full immersion. In early Orleans County, Baptists were among the first to establish formal religious organizations.

Bark Roof

A roof made from strips of bark, typically from basswood or other trees, used in the construction of early log cabins

Barre

A town in Orleans County, New York, named after Barre, Massachusetts, by Judge John Lee. The town was officially separated from Gaines in 1818.

Barrel Head

The flat top surface of a barrel, which early settlers sometimes used as a makeshift table. This was a practical solution in the absence of more formal furniture.

Basin

A basin in the context of a canal is an artificial body of water created by digging out the bank, allowing boats to turn around or dock. It serves as a small harbor within a canal.

Basswood

A type of tree, also known as linden, commonly found in the forests of New York. The wood was often used by early settlers for building floors, furniture, and other wooden items due to its soft and workable wood.

Batavia

A city in Western New York that served as the administrative center for the Holland Land Company. The company's main land office was located here, managing land sales and other business activities related to the Holland Purchase.

Battle of Fort Erie

A key battle in the War of 1812, fought near present-day Buffalo, New York.

Bee (as in "house raising bee")

Social gatherings where neighbors came together to help each other with large tasks, such as building barns, houses, or other communal projects where everyone contributes labor without expectation of

payment. These were common in frontier and rural communities where labor-intensive tasks needed to be completed quickly.

Benefactors

Those who give aid, particularly in the form of money or resources. The term here refers to the pioneers who established the foundations for future generations.

Bible

A significant religious text for Christians. In the context of the time, it was common for families to pass down a family Bible, which often contained records of births, marriages, and deaths.

Black Ash Swamp

A type of wetland habitat commonly found in New York State, particularly in low-lying areas. The term here refers to a specific swamp area in what later became Rochester, noted for its difficult terrain.

Black Earthenware Teapot

A small, black ceramic teapot commonly used by early settlers. These teapots were highly valued for making tea, whether from store-bought tea leaves or herbs collected from the wild.

Black North

A term referring to a remote and wild area that was sparsely settled, often associated with difficult living conditions such as harsh weather, thick forests, and the prevalence of diseases like fever and ague.

Black Salts

A crude form of potash, produced by leaching ashes from burned wood. Black salts were an important product for early settlers, as they could be further refined into potash or used in trade. It was often sold to asheries for further refinement.

Blacksmith

A craftsman who works with iron and steel, forging and shaping metal objects, such as tools, horseshoes, and other items. They were essential in early American towns for maintaining tools and equipment.

Block House Fort

A small, fortified structure used during the American Revolutionary War to provide protection against attacks.

Blocks of Logs

Simple, rough-cut sections of logs used as makeshift stools or seats in early log houses. These were often used in place of chairs.

Blue-edged Plates

Crockery with a distinctive blue rim, often found in households of the 18th and 19th centuries. These plates were part of the minimal tableware owned by many early settlers.

Blue Pill

A type of pill containing mercury, used in the 19th century to treat various ailments, including syphilis and digestive issues. It was a common medication among early settlers but is now recognized as toxic.

Body Maple

Refers to the solid, central part of a maple tree.

Bond and Mortgage

A financial agreement where the land buyer received the deed to the land but provided a bond (a promise to pay) and a mortgage (a lien on the property) to secure the remaining balance owed to the Holland Land Company.

Bonfire

A large, controlled outdoor fire used for warmth, light, or celebration.

Border Settlement

The process of settling land on the frontier, often at the edges of established territories or in newly acquired regions.

Boughs

Branches of a tree, often used as feed for livestock when other fodder was scarce. Early settlers would cut down trees to provide boughs for their cattle during harsh winters.

Booked (in context of land ownership)

In this context, booked refers to the practice of informally claiming land by having it noted in an agent's records before it was officially put on the market. This was a way for settlers to secure their rights to the land before purchasing it.

Bran Bread

Bread made from the outer layers of grain, known as bran, which was

often less desirable but used when resources were scarce.

Brant, Joseph

A Mohawk military and political leader who was closely associated with the British during the American Revolutionary War. He was instrumental in persuading many of the Iroquois nations to side with the British against the American colonists.

Break-even financial situation

A situation where one's income or revenue is equal to their expenses, meaning they are not gaining or losing money. It implies that an individual was not able to save money despite his efforts.

Brewery/Distillery

A brewery is a facility where beer is produced, while a distillery is where spirits like whiskey are made. Both were common in early American towns, providing local beverages and often serving as social hubs.

Brick Oven (Scotch Oven)

An oven made of brick, often used for baking, that marked a significant improvement in the domestic facilities of early settlers. The term "Scotch oven" refers to outdoor brick ovens raised on a frame, commonly used before the widespread introduction of kitchen ovens inside the house.

Brigadier-General

A rank in the military hierarchy, typically commanding a brigade or being responsible for a specific task or operation. A Brigadier General is a senior rank, usually the first rank of General Officer in the U.S. military.

Brigade Staff Officers

Military officers who assist a Brigadier General in managing the various functions of a brigade, including logistics, administration, and medical services.

Brine

A strong solution of salt in water. Brine springs were natural sources of salty water used to produce salt, an important preservative and seasoning in the 19th century.

Broadcast

A method of sowing seeds by scattering them widely over the surface of the soil rather than planting them in rows. This was a common technique for planting wheat in the early days of settlement.

Brown University

An Ivy League research university located in Providence, Rhode Island. Founded in 1764, it is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the United States.

Browse (as in browse his cattle)

Refers to the twigs, leaves, and shoots of trees and shrubs that are eaten by livestock, particularly during the winter months when

other forage is scarce. It indicates a time of scarcity when livestock had to be fed on less nutritious or less conventional fodder.

Buggy

A light, horse-drawn carriage with four wheels, commonly used for personal transportation in the 19th century. Buggies became popular as roads improved and transportation needs grew.

Bunker Hill

A significant early battle in the American Revolutionary War, fought on June 17, 1775, in Charlestown, Massachusetts. John Anderson, the ancestor of the Anderson family in Gaines, fought in this battle.

Burying Ground

An old-fashioned term for a cemetery or burial site. It was common for early American settlements to have a designated area for burying the dead.

Bush Shanty

A temporary shelter constructed using branches and foliage.

Busti, Mr. Paul

A key agent for the Holland Land Company, who managed many of its affairs from Philadelphia. He was involved in decisions regarding land donations to religious societies and other important matters related to the company's operations.

Butler, Colonel John

A British Loyalist who led a group of irregular fighters known as Butler's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War. He was known for his role in leading raids against American frontier settlements.

Calico

A type of inexpensive, printed cotton fabric that was widely used for clothing and household items in the 19th century.

Campaign on the Niagara Frontier

Refers to the military actions that took place along the Niagara River during the War of 1812 between the United States and Britain. Many settlers in Western New York volunteered to defend the region.

Canada West

Refers to the region of Canada that is now Ontario.

Canal Appraiser

A position responsible for assessing and valuing properties and lands impacted by the construction of the Erie Canal. This role was crucial in the development and expansion of the canal system in New York.

Canal Village

A village located along a canal, which often grew due to the commerce and transportation the canal provided.

Caravan

A group of people, especially traders or settlers, traveling together across a region, often for safety. In

this context, it refers to groups of emigrants moving westward.

Cast

To form a material, such as metal, into a specific shape by pouring it into a mold and allowing it to harden. This process was used to create tools, parts, and other items.

Cattle Law

Local regulations that governed the grazing and movement of cattle. In early settlements, such laws were important for preventing livestock from straying and damaging crops.

Cauldron Kettles

Large iron pots used for boiling substances, in this case, brine to make salt. These kettles were essential for the salt production industry.

Causeway

Raised roads or paths, often constructed over wet or low-lying ground. In early settlements, causeways were important for making roads passable in areas prone to flooding or marshy conditions.

Cemetery Association

An organized group responsible for managing and maintaining a cemetery. Many of the old rural burial places in Orleans County were placed under the care of Cemetery Associations, which were incorporated under general law.

Cemetery Lot

A specific parcel of land within a cemetery where an individual or family can be buried. Cemetery lots in places like Hillside Cemetery are carefully numbered and mapped, with ownership transferred through deeds.

Champlain Canal

A canal in New York State that connects the southern end of Lake Champlain to the Hudson River. It was constructed concurrently with the Erie Canal and allowed boats to travel between Lake Champlain and Albany.

Chattel

Personal property or belongings. In this text, it refers to the few possessions, like an ax, that a pioneer might own.

Chest Cover

The flat top of a storage chest, which could be used as a makeshift table by early settlers. Chests were multifunctional, providing storage and serving as furniture.

Chinked

The process of filling gaps between the logs in a log house with materials such as clay, splints, or moss to insulate the structure and keep out wind and rain.

Chorister

A person who leads the singing in a church or congregation, often responsible for selecting hymns and setting the pitch.

Classical scholar

A person who has extensively studied the languages, literature, and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Reuben Bryant, being described as a classical scholar, indicates his deep knowledge of Greek and Latin, which he enjoyed discussing and quoting.

Clearing

The process of removing trees and underbrush from land to prepare it for cultivation. The term also refers to the area of land that has been cleared of trees.

Clever

Clever refers to being skillful or ingenious in one's actions. One might rely on wit and natural ability to navigate challenges rather than formal education.

Clothier

A person or business that makes, sells, or deals in clothes. In the 19th century, this often involved the processing of wool and other fabrics, as well as the tailoring of garments.

Cold Season

A reference to the "Year Without a Summer" in 1816, when volcanic activity led to severe climate anomalies, including frost and snow in summer months which devastated crops, leading to widespread food shortages. This event significantly impacted early settlers and delayed settlement in many areas.

Collector of Canal Revenue

An official responsible for collecting tolls and other revenues from canal users.

Collector of Taxes

An official responsible for collecting taxes within a designated area.

Colonial government of New York

Refers to the government established by the British in the New York Colony prior to American independence. The colonial government was responsible for managing relations with Native American tribes and defending the colony from external threats.

Commissary of Subsistence

A role or responsibility typically involving the provision and distribution of food and supplies, especially in a military or pioneer context.

Commission

Commissions were formalized orders given by a governing authority or military command.

Commissioners

Officials appointed by the government or a company to oversee specific projects, such as the surveying, laying out, and maintaining of public highways.

Common School Education

A basic education typically provided by local schools in early American settlements. This term reflects the emphasis on fundamental literacy and numeracy skills, often taught in one-room schoolhouses.

Competence of this World's Goods

A phrase used to describe having enough material wealth or resources to live comfortably.

Comptroller of the State of New York

A high-ranking official responsible for overseeing financial operations, including audits and financial management of the state.

Condensed

To reduce something in size, volume, or extent, often while retaining essential elements. In this context, the author has condensed the histories to focus on what would be most interesting to the general reader.

Congregational Church

A Protestant Christian denomination where each congregation independently and autonomously runs its own affairs.

Connexional

Refers to a church organization that is structured as a connection of congregations under one administration, a term often used by Wesleyan and Methodist groups.

Constable

A public officer responsible for maintaining order and enforcing the law in a town or township. In early American communities, constables often handled minor legal matters and served as the primary law enforcement officer.

Corduroy Road

A road made by placing logs transversely side by side to create a stable surface over muddy or swampy ground. These roads were labor-intensive but essential for travel in areas with poor drainage and were common in early American settlements.

Cordwood

Wood cut and stacked for use as firewood, traditionally measured in cords, where a cord is a stack of wood 4 feet high, 4 feet wide, and 8 feet long. Cutting and stacking cordwood was a common task for settlers.

Corn

A staple crop planted by early settlers, often among the felled logs of a newly cleared field. In this context, “corn” refers to maize, a key food source for the pioneers.

Cornstalks

The stalks of corn plants, used as feed for livestock. In the early days of settlement, cornstalks were one of the few sources of fodder available.

Coronal region

The top part of the skull. The term is used here to describe the shape and structure of the ancient skulls found at the archaeological site.

Council

Refers to the local governing body or the New York State Council of Appointment, which appointed officials like Justices of the Peace before certain positions became elected roles.

Court House

A building where legal cases are heard and government functions are carried out. The decision to locate the courthouse in Albion instead of Gaines had a significant impact on the development and prosperity of the surrounding areas.

Court of Chancery

A court with jurisdiction over equity cases, which typically involve matters such as trusts, estates, contracts, and guardianships. This court operated separately from courts of law, which dealt more with criminal and civil cases. The New York Court of Chancery was abolished in 1847, with its duties being absorbed by other courts.

Court of Common Pleas

A local court in the 19th century United States that handled civil cases, such as disputes over contracts, land, and other non-criminal matters. Judges in this court often had more practical experience than formal legal training.

Cranberry Marsh

A wetland area that was once flooded by beaver dams, later becoming a marsh suitable for cranberry growth after the water receded. These marshes were found in places like the head of Otter Creek in Barre.

Credit System

A method of purchasing goods where payment is deferred to a later date. This system was common among early settlers, who often bought goods on credit and paid when they were able to sell crops or other products.

Crotches of Trees

The forked or Y-shaped part of a tree, often used as posts or supports in primitive structures, such as sheds or temporary shelters.

Cultivation

The preparation of land for growing crops. In the context of early settlers, cultivation involved clearing land of trees and stumps, followed by planting and tending crops.

Currier

A craftsman who finishes leather after it has been tanned, preparing it for use in making goods like shoes, saddles, and belts.

Cutter

A lightweight, open, horse-drawn sleigh, typically used in winter. It was a common means of transportation in rural areas during the 19th century.

Deacon

An ordained minister in a Christian church, particularly within Baptist, Congregational, and other Protestant denominations, who assists the pastor with the ministry's duties and serves the congregation in various capacities.

Dedication

The formal ceremony marking the opening or consecration of a cemetery or other significant site. For example, Mount Albion Cemetery was dedicated on September 7, 1843.

Deeds

Legal documents that convey ownership of property from one person to another. As settlers paid off their land, they received deeds from the Holland Land Company, confirming their ownership.

Denomination

A recognized autonomous branch of the Christian Church. Early settlers in Orleans County came from various denominations, including Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, but initially did not maintain strict denominational distinctions.

Diffident

A term meaning modest or shy because of a lack of self-confidence. Reuben Bryant being described as diffident in himself suggests that despite his legal knowledge and skills, he was hesitant or lacked confidence in his abilities as an advocate in court.

Digging In

A method of planting seeds by digging small holes or furrows in the soil, often with a hoe, and placing the seeds inside. This technique was used when plowing was not possible due to tree stumps or other obstacles.

Distillery

A facility where alcoholic beverages, such as whiskey or rum, are produced by fermenting and distilling grain, fruit, or other materials. Distilling was a common practice in early American settlements, both for personal use and for trade.

Dipped Tallow Candle

A homemade candle made by repeatedly dipping a wick (usually a piece of string) into melted tallow (animal fat) until the desired thickness is achieved. These candles were commonly used for lighting in early log houses.

Divine Injunction

A religious or moral command believed to be given by God. Asa Sanford refers to the Biblical commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself,” highlighting the cooperative spirit among early settlers.

Doctress

A now-archaic term used to refer to a female practitioner of medicine. In the 19th century, this term might have been used to describe a

woman who provided medical care, especially in rural or frontier areas where formally trained doctors were scarce.

Double Log House

A type of log cabin construction with two separate sections, typically connected by a central chimney. These were common in early American frontier settlements and served as both homes and, in some cases, a tavern.

Drag (Triangular Harrow)

A simple agricultural tool used to break up and smooth out the soil after sowing seeds. The triangular harrow or drag was pulled over the field to cover the seeds with soil.

Draymen

Laborers who transport goods using a dray, a low, strong cart without sides. Draymen played an essential role in early transportation and commerce.

Dry Goods

Merchandise such as textiles, clothing, and other products that are not considered groceries or hardware. Dry goods stores were a key part of trade in early American villages.

Dutch Fireplace

A type of open fireplace, commonly used in early American homes, particularly those with Dutch influence.

Dutch Wagons

Likely refers to the Conestoga wagon which were heavy, covered wagons used by settlers during the 18th and 19th century to move their families and belongings across long distances.

Dyspepsia

A term for indigestion or an upset stomach. It was used commonly in the 19th century to describe digestive discomfort.

Earthenware

Pottery made from clay that is fired at a relatively low temperature, often used for making plates, dishes, and other items.

Embargo

A government order restricting commerce, particularly with foreign nations. In this context, it refers to the U.S. Embargo Act of 1807, which prohibited American ships from trading with foreign ports, including Great Britain, during the Napoleonic Wars.

Edifice

A large or imposing building or structure, often referring to a church. The word is also used somewhat humorously to describe the small and simple log houses built by early settlers.

Elder

A title used in some Christian denominations, particularly among Baptists, to refer to a church leader or minister. Early Baptist elders like Irons, Dutcher, and Carpenter were instrumental in establishing churches in Orleans County.

Ellicott, Joseph

The principal surveyor for the Holland Land Company, responsible for surveying the Holland Purchase. He later became the local agent overseeing the company's business in Western New York.

Embankment

This likely refers to an embankment, which is a raised structure typically used to support roads, railways, or canals. In the context of the Erie Canal, it would be an artificial bank of earth constructed to contain the canal or its adjacent waterways.

Embarkment

The act of passengers and crew getting aboard a ship.

Embark

The process of starting a journey or project.

Emigration

The act of leaving one's own country or area to settle in another. In this context, it refers to the movement of people into the northern parts of New York State.

Empire State

A nickname for the state of New York, reflecting its wealth, resources, and influence, particularly during the 19th century.

Encroachment

The act of gradually taking over or trespassing on someone's territory or rights. In this context, it refers to the English building a fort in territory claimed by the French, leading to conflict.

Engraft

To establish or incorporate one thing into another. In this context, settlers from New England sought to "engraft" their educational and social institutions into their new communities in Western New York.

Ensign

A junior rank in the military, often the lowest commissioned officer in the militia during this period. It was typically responsible for carrying the colors (flag) of the regiment.

Erie Canal

A man-made waterway completed in 1825, linking the Hudson River with Lake Erie. The canal transformed New York State's economy, shifting the focus of commerce away from areas like Gaines to towns along the canal. It was a significant route for trade and transportation.

Esquire (Esq.)

A title used in the United States to denote a man of social rank or one holding an office of authority, such as a Justice of the Peace.

Evangelical Truth

A term associated with the teachings and beliefs of evangelical Christianity, emphasizing the importance of the gospel and personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Excelsior

A Latin word meaning ever upward or higher. It is the motto of the state of New York and symbolizes striving for progress and improvement.

Exhumed

To dig up something buried, especially a body. In this text, it refers to the skeletons that were dug up from the ground in various states of preservation.

Extreme North

Refers to the northernmost regions of early European exploration and settlement in North America, particularly in what is now Canada.

Fallow

Land that has been cleared and left unplanted for a period to restore its fertility. In the early days of settlement, fallow land often referred to fields that were in the process of being cleared or prepared for future planting.

Farmers Bank of Orleans

A local bank established in Gaines, likely to support the agricultural community by providing loans and other financial services.

Feeder Canal

A canal built to direct water from a larger waterway into another, such as from Tonawanda Creek into Oak Orchard Creek, to help supply water to the Erie Canal.

Felled Trees

Trees that have been cut down.

Fever and Ague

A term used to describe the recurrent malarial-like symptoms of fever, chills, and sweating that afflicted many pioneers. It was a common condition in areas where the land was swampy or newly cleared. It was a significant cause of early deaths among settlers.

See the “Pioneer Handbook” for more detail.

Finishing School

A private school for girls that emphasizes cultural studies and prepares them for society.

Fire Sill

The bottom part of the opening for a fireplace or chimney.

Five Corners

A notable intersection in Gaines, about a mile north of Albion. It was a key point for settlers and a location where important decisions and actions took place. The Oak Orchard Road was surveyed from this point to the south, marking one of the first public highways in Barre.

Fir Tree Memorial

A fir tree planted in the Medina burial grounds by John Parsons in 1860 as a lasting memorial. Under the tree, a glass jar enclosed in lead was buried, containing mementos of the time.

Flagging Stone

A type of flat stone used for paving sidewalks, floors, or as flagstones. The discovery of flagging stone in Medina was significant for construction and infrastructure in the area.

Flail

A manual tool used to thresh grain, separating the edible part from the chaff. It consists of a long wooden handle attached to a shorter, free-swinging stick. Threshing machines eventually replaced the flail as a more efficient method.

Flank Leather

A type of leather that comes from the flank or side of an animal, typically of lower quality and used for less durable goods, such as the poor coarse shoes mentioned by Jacob A. Zimmerman.

Flintlock Gun

A type of firearm that uses flint striking steel to ignite the gunpowder.

Flouring Mill

A mill where grain is ground into flour. Flouring mills were central to the agricultural economy, turning locally grown wheat into flour for local use and export.

Fodder

Food for livestock, particularly during the winter months when fresh grass was not available. Fodder typically included hay, cornstalks, and other plant materials.

Foray

A sudden attack or incursion into enemy territory, especially to obtain something; mentioned in the context of hostile actions during the War of 1812.

Forehanded

An old term meaning financially secure or well-off.

Fort Erie

A fort in Canada that was the site of significant military action during the War of 1812.

Fort George

A fort at the mouth of the Niagara River in Canada, captured by American forces during the War of 1812.

Fortifications

Military constructions or buildings designed for defense in warfare. In this chapter, it refers to the ancient defensive structures found in Orleans County, which were likely used by the earlier inhabitants of the region.

Foundry

A workshop or factory where metal is melted and cast into shapes, such as tools, machinery parts, or decorative items. Foundries were critical for the industrial development of early towns.

Fowling Piece

A type of light shotgun used primarily for hunting birds but also effective for small game and, at times, larger animals like deer. It was a common tool among settlers for providing food.

Framed House

A house built with a wooden frame structure, as opposed to log houses. Framed houses were more durable and considered a step up in comfort and quality for early settlers.

Freeholders

Landowners who held their land outright, rather than leasing it. In early American towns, certain public offices required the holder to be a freeholder.

Freeman Settlement

A community founded by Gideon Freeman in the town of Gaines, named after him. This area was known for its early agricultural development, although it faced severe hardships, such as the crop failure in 1816.

Freemasons

A fraternal organization with roots in the medieval stonemasons' guilds. Freemasonry was widespread in early America and played a significant role in social and civic life.

Free thinker

A person who forms their own opinions rather than accepting those commonly accepted or promoted by others. This term often describes someone who challenges societal norms or traditional beliefs.

French's Gazetteer of New York

A geographical dictionary or directory that provides detailed information about places, typically including statistics and descriptions of their history. French's Gazetteer would have been a key reference work for understanding New York State's geography and history at the time.

Frying Pan

A basic cooking utensil with a long handle, used for frying food over an open fire. The long handle allowed the cook to hold the pan over the fire without getting too close to the heat.

Furnace

In this context, a furnace is a facility used for smelting or casting metal. Early furnaces were essential for producing tools, implements, and machinery, such as plows.

Gaines Academy

The first incorporated literary institution in Orleans County, established in 1821. It initially thrived but declined after rival academies were established in nearby towns.

General Muster

A military term for a full assembly of troops, often for training or inspection, which settlers were required to attend.

General Sullivan's Expedition

A military campaign led by General John Sullivan in 1779 during the American Revolutionary War. The campaign targeted the Iroquois Confederacy, who had sided with the British, and involved burning their villages and crops to weaken their support for the British forces.

General Winfield Scott

A United States Army general who played a major role in the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the early stages of the American Civil War. He was also involved in maintaining peace during the Patriot War.

Genesee and Niagara Counties

Regions in Western New York where the Seneca tribe had their villages. These areas were part of the broader territory traditionally occupied by the Seneca people.

Genesee County

A county in Western New York. It was part of the territory inhabited by the Seneca tribe, and they had their villages there.

Genesee Country

A region in Western New York that was a popular destination for settlers moving westward in the early 19th

century. It was known for its fertile land and opportunities for farming and settlement.

Genesee Flats

A fertile agricultural area in the Genesee River Valley, New York. It was known for its productive farmland and was a source of food for settlers.

Genesee River

A major river in Western New York that served as a key geographical and cultural boundary during the early settlement of the region. It was central to the history and development of the Genesee Country and the Holland Purchase.

German Flats

A region in central New York State where American General Philip Schuyler met with Iroquois leaders during the Revolutionary War to negotiate neutrality. Schuyler met some Six Nations chiefs in council at German Flats to promise protection of Oneida lands against encroaching settlers. He pledged that the United States would honor the boundary line established by the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix. In return, the attending chiefs renewed a friendly neutrality that endorsed Schuyler's military plans to defend the valley.

Gideon Hard

A prominent figure in Orleans County history, known for his service as a Congressman, State Senator, and County Judge. His contributions to law and governance in the area were significant.

Gill (as a unit of measure)

A unit of liquid measure, equal to one-fourth of a pint. In the context of this text, it refers to the amount of whiskey rationed to workers each day.

Gospel Land/Lot

A parcel of land, often reserved by land companies like the Holland Land Company, to support religious institutions and encourage settlement in a new area. The distribution of these lands was often contentious and managed carefully by company agents like Joseph Ellicott.

Gotham

A reference to a major city, used here to describe Batavia as the expected commercial hub of the Holland Purchase, an area in Western New York.

Gravelly Ridge

A naturally elevated area composed of gravel. The Ridge Road, an important highway in Orleans County, was built along such a ridge, which extended from the Genesee River to the Niagara River.

Great Eclipse (1806)

A significant solar eclipse that occurred on June 16, 1806. It was observed by Asa Sanford and others, and it caused a temporary darkening of the sky.

Great Rebellion

Another term for the American Civil War (1861–1865).

Greek and Latin lore

This refers to the body of knowledge, stories, myths, and literary works from ancient Greece and Rome. The use of lore suggests not just the languages but also the cultural and historical knowledge that comes with studying these classical civilizations.

Green Mountain Origin

Refers to the region of the Green Mountains in Vermont and the people from that area. The term is often associated with hardy, resilient individuals, reflecting the rugged terrain and self-reliant culture of the region.

Grindstone

A tool used for sharpening or grinding, typically in the context of agricultural or manual labor.

Grist

Grain that has been ground into flour or meal. The term can also refer to the quantity of grain taken to a mill for grinding.

Grist Mill

A mill where grains such as wheat, corn, or rye are ground into flour. Gristmills were essential in early American communities as they provided a means for settlers to process their crops into usable food products.

Half Rations

A term used to describe a reduced food allowance, often implemented during times of scarcity to make limited supplies last longer.

Half Worn Out (in reference to shoes)

A colloquial expression used to describe shoes that are already in poor condition. In the context provided by Jacob A. Zimmerman, it highlights the difficulty settlers faced in obtaining new footwear.

Halifax

The capital city of Nova Scotia, Canada. During the War of 1812, it served as a British military stronghold where American prisoners of war were held.

Halcyon Days

A term referring to a peaceful and happy period in the past. It is often used nostalgically to describe a time that seems idyllic compared to the present.

Handsled

A small sled used for transporting goods by hand, typically over snow or ice.

Handspike

A wooden lever used for lifting or prying heavy objects.

Hardscrabble

A term used to describe a rough or difficult area, often used to describe places with harsh living conditions.

Harrow

An agricultural tool used to break up and level soil, often used after sowing seeds to cover them with earth. The triangular harrow mentioned in the text was a basic version of this tool.

Hatchet

A small axe. The term “take up the hatchet” refers to engaging in warfare, often used in the context of Native American tribes.

Hemlock Boughs

Branches from hemlock trees, used as bedding by early settlers. They were spread on the floor and covered with blankets to create a makeshift bed.

Hewed

The process of shaping logs or wood by cutting with an axe. Hewed logs were often used to create flat surfaces for floors, doors, or other structural elements in a log house.

Hieroglyphics

Here, it refers humorously to the system of marks and symbols Oliver Booth used to keep track of his tavern accounts on the walls.

High-spirited horses

This refers to horses that are very lively or easily excited. Such horses can be difficult to control, especially when driving a carriage, and may cause accidents.

Highway

In the context of early settlement, a highway referred to any main road used for public travel. These were often simple dirt roads or paths cleared through forests and were critical for connecting communities.

Hillside Cemetery

A cemetery located south of Holley Village, established by The Holley Cemetery Association in 1866. The cemetery was formally dedicated on August 17, 1867, and has been carefully maintained and improved by the association.

Hoe

A hand tool used for digging, weeding, and planting. In the context of early farming, a hoe was often used to plant seeds among the stumps and logs left after clearing the land. It was a basic but essential implement for early settlers.

Hoe Cake

A type of simple bread made from cornmeal, water, and salt, traditionally baked on a flat surface, such as the blade of a hoe. This was a common food among early settlers.

Holland Purchase

A large tract of land in Western New York purchased by a group of Dutch investors, known as the Holland Land Company, in the late 18th century. This area was a significant part of the early settlement and development of New York State.

Homestead

A family's residence, typically including the house and surrounding land.

Honorary A.M. Degree

A Master of Arts degree awarded as an honor, without the usual academic requirements.

Hovel House

A small, simple dwelling often built from logs and other readily available materials. Bailey describes building a hovel house from logs to serve as his first home.

Hulled Corn/Wheat

Corn or wheat that has had its outer husk or hull removed, often by boiling. It was often boiled and eaten as a simple meal by early settlers when other food was scarce.

Hunger-driven foraging

During times of food scarcity settlers would eat whatever wild animals they could catch, regardless of the type of meat.

Hunter's Lodges

Secret societies formed by American sympathizers during the Patriot War in Canada (1837–1838). These lodges supported Canadian rebels fighting against British rule.

Hurons

A Native American tribe originally from the region surrounding the Great Lakes, particularly in what is now Ontario, Canada. The Hurons were allies of the French during their conflicts with the Iroquois.

Incorporated

The legal process of forming a corporation or association, giving it a separate legal identity and granting it certain legal rights and responsibilities.

Indian Agent

A government-appointed official responsible for managing interactions between Native American tribes and the U.S. government.

Indian Mill

A primitive milling method used by early settlers, involving a hollowed-out tree stump (mortar) and a heavy pestle attached to a springy sapling, used to grind corn or other grains into coarse meal.

Indian Road

A specific trail used by Native Americans, running from the Genesee River to Niagara County, and intersecting with other trails. It was later used by settlers and became part of the early road system in the area.

Indian Trail

Pathways originally used by Native Americans, later utilized by settlers for travel and trade.

Indomitable

Spirit A spirit that cannot be defeated or subdued, highlighting the determination and resilience of the pioneers.

Inn

A place offering lodging, food, and drink to travelers often serving as a social and commercial hub for the community.

Infinitesimal

A term used to describe something extremely small or minute. In

the context of medicine, it refers to the very small doses used in homeopathic treatment, which contrasts with the larger doses used in allopathic medicine.

Intellect

Refers to the capacity for thinking and reasoning, especially to a high degree. In this context, it highlights the natural intelligence of an individual who may not have had much formal schooling.

Iron Trammel

An adjustable iron bar with holes, hung over a fireplace. Kettles could be hung from it at different heights, allowing the cook to control the heat by raising or lowering the kettle.

Iroquois

A powerful confederation of six Native American nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora) in what is now New York State. They played a significant role in the colonial history of North America, often allying with the British against the French and later the Americans.

Insolvency

Refers to the inability of a business or individual to meet their financial obligations, often leading to bankruptcy. In the context given, it indicates that some merchants were unable to continue their operations.

Inventory

A detailed list of possessions or property. Here, it refers to taking stock of the achievements and

resources inherited from the pioneers.

Jack (“make his Jack”)

A slang term for money or profit.

Jews Harp

A small musical instrument that produces a twanging sound when plucked. It was sometimes used as a substitute for more formal instruments like violins in early American settlements for entertainment.

Johnson’s Creek

A creek in Orleans County, New York, named by Sir William Johnson during a military expedition. It was a significant waterway for early settlers and was used historically as a fishing site by Native Americans. It remains an important geographical feature.

Johnson, Sir William

A British colonial administrator who played a significant role in managing relations between the British and Native American tribes, particularly the Iroquois. He was influential in securing Iroquois support for the British during various conflicts.

Johnson, Sir John

A Loyalist leader during the American Revolutionary War who was the son of Sir William Johnson. He led Loyalist forces, including Native American allies, in raids against American settlers and American revolutionary forces.

Judge Advocate

A legal officer in the military responsible for overseeing legal proceedings, including courts-martial and other military justice matters.

Justice of the Peace

An official appointed to act as a judge in minor legal matters, such as small claims, minor criminal offenses, and performing marriages. This role was important in rural areas where more formal courts were not easily accessible.

Kettles

Large metal pots used for boiling liquid. In this text, kettles are used to boil brine to evaporate the water and leave behind the salt.

Knapsack

A type of bag or backpack used by early travelers to carry provisions and personal items.

Lake Ontario

One of the Great Lakes of North America. It forms part of the boundary between the United States and Canada and is mentioned in the context of the waterways that connect to the creeks in Orleans County.

Land Office

The office established by the Holland Land Company in Batavia (and other locations) to manage the sale and administration of lands within the Holland Purchase.

Latch-String

A string used to lift a latch from the outside of a door, symbolizing hospitality and openness. The phrase “latch-string was always out” indicates a welcoming home.

Leaching

The process of washing ashes with water to extract soluble substances, such as potash, which could be used for making soap or traded. Leaching was an important activity for early settlers in clearing land and making use of wood ashes.

Leather Stocking (Cooper's Hero)

A reference to a character in James Fenimore Cooper's series of novels known as the Leatherstocking Tales, which depict the life of a frontiersman. The term symbolizes the adventurous and rugged spirit of early pioneers.

Leeks

A type of wild onion that grows in the forest and can give a strong flavor to milk when cows graze on them. The settlers sometimes consumed fresh leeks to get accustomed to the taste.

Liberty Party

A political party in the United States during the 1840s that was primarily focused on the abolition of slavery.

Lieutenant's Commission

An official document granting a person the rank of lieutenant in

the military. Commissions were formalized orders given by a governing authority or military command.

Limpid

Clear, transparent. In this text, it describes the appearance of the water when first pumped from the spring before it was boiled to produce salt.

Livery Stable

A stable where horses and vehicles are kept for hire.

Log Causeway

A type of causeway constructed by laying logs side by side across a wet or swampy area to create a passable road. This method was commonly used in areas with abundant timber.

Logging Bees

Social gatherings in which neighbors helped each other clear land by cutting down trees and preparing logs.

Log House

A type of house built from logs, common among early settlers in Western New York. The log house was simple and sturdy, providing basic shelter in the wilderness.

Log Schoolhouse

A simple, rustic school building made of logs, similar in construction to the log houses in which early settlers lived. These early schoolhouses were often uncomfortable and lacked modern

amenities but were crucial to the education of pioneer children.

Log Sled

A sled made from logs, used for transporting goods or people over snow-covered ground. In winter, log sleds were often the primary means of transportation in rural areas.

Loom

A device used to weave cloth. In pioneer settlements, women often wove cloth at home for clothing and other necessities, making the loom an essential household tool.

Lot

A parcel of land designated by surveyors for sale or settlement, often referenced by number, town, and range in historical records.

Lot and Range System

A method used in the surveying of land, particularly in the early 19th century. Lot refers to a specific parcel of land within a township, and Range refers to a specific row or line of townships. For example, lot three, township fifteen, range three is a specific location within a surveyed area.

Lower courts

Courts of limited jurisdiction that handle less serious criminal cases and smaller civil disputes. Success as a lawyer in these courts would have involved dealing with minor legal issues.

Lumbering Business

The industry of harvesting, processing, and selling timber. This was a common occupation in heavily forested areas.

Lundy's Lane

A significant battle of the War of 1812. It took place near Niagara Falls and was one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Lye

A strong alkaline solution obtained by leaching wood ashes. Lye was commonly used in soap-making and other household tasks by early settlers.

Magic of Aladdin

A reference to the story of Aladdin and his magic lamp, from One Thousand and One Nights, where the lamp grants wishes and performs miracles. It is used metaphorically to describe the seemingly miraculous transformation of the land.

Mail Contractor

A person or company responsible for delivering mail along a specific route. In the early 19th century, mail contractors often also ran stagecoach services.

Main Street

The principal street of a village or town, often where most businesses, stores, and important buildings are located.

Malady

A disease or ailment. It sometimes refers to a chronic illness or condition that troubles the afflicted throughout their life, affecting their work and personal comfort.

Manuscript

A handwritten or typed document, especially one that contains an author's work before it is published. In this case, it refers to the original local histories written by members of the Orleans County Pioneer Association.

Marked Trees

Trees that were marked, often by notching or blazing, to guide travelers through the forest. Before formal roads were established, these markers helped people navigate through undeveloped areas.

Mason

A skilled craftsman who builds with stone, brick, or similar materials.

Mason Business

The trade of building structures with stone, brick, or concrete, such as walls, buildings, or chimneys. Masons are skilled craftsmen who work with these materials.

Massacre

Refers to the killing of settlers or soldiers, often used in the context of border warfare or conflicts with Native Americans during the early settlement period.

Master in Chancery

A judicial officer appointed to assist in equity cases, often dealing with complex legal matters, such as the administration of estates or the partition of land. This position would have involved duties beyond those of a typical judge.

Master in Chancery

A judicial officer in a court of equity, particularly under the old English legal system and the American legal systems that followed it. The Master in Chancery would oversee certain aspects of equity cases, such as conducting inquiries and managing the administration of justice in complex cases. The office was largely abolished in the U.S. with the adoption of new legal frameworks, such as the Constitution of 1846 in New York.

Mayflower

The ship that brought the Pilgrims from England to the New World in 1620, landing at Plymouth Rock. It is often referenced in discussions of early American history.

Medina Herald

The first newspaper published in Medina, established in 1832. Newspapers were vital for communication and spreading information in early American communities.

Merchandising

Refers to the buying and selling of goods, often in a general store or

trading post. In rural or frontier areas, merchandising was an essential service, providing settlers with necessary supplies.

Mechanics

In this historical context, mechanics refers to skilled workers who worked with machinery or tools, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, and other tradespeople essential to village life.

Mechanic Shops

Workshops where skilled laborers, or mechanics, produced and repaired tools, machines, and other goods. These shops were essential to the economic development of early settlements.

Medina and Darien Railroad Company

A company incorporated in 1834 to build a railroad from Medina to Akron. The railroad was operated using horse-drawn cars but was ultimately unsuccessful and discontinued.

Medina and Ontario Railroad Company

A company incorporated in 1836 with the intent to build a railroad from Medina to Lake Ontario at the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek. However, the project never progressed beyond incorporation.

Meeting House

A building used for public worship. The first meeting house in Orleans County, built in Gaines, was shared by the Congregational and Baptist societies.

Melodeon

A small reed organ or harmonium, commonly used in the 19th century for musical performances.

Member of Assembly

A representative elected to the New York State Assembly, the lower house of the state legislature. Arba Chubb served as a Member of Assembly for Orleans County in 1848.

Methodist

A member of a Protestant Christian denomination known for its emphasis on personal faith, social justice, and methodical worship practices. The Methodist Church was one of the early religious influences in Orleans County, with preachers like Rev. Mr. Steele playing a key role in ministering to the settlers.

Militia

A military force composed of ordinary citizens to provide defense, emergency law enforcement, or service during times of crisis.

Militia Company

A military force composed of ordinary citizens to provide defense, emergency law enforcement, or paramilitary service. In early America, militias were essential for local defense and were organized at the state or local level.

Millerites/Second Adventists

Followers of William Miller, a preacher who predicted the Second Coming of Christ in the 1840s. Captain Miller, who commanded

Samuel C. Lewis during the War of 1812, later became a founder of this religious movement.

Mill Boy

A term referring to someone who was responsible for taking grain to a mill to be ground into flour. This task was essential in pioneer communities where families relied on local mills for their food supply.

Mill pond

A body of water created by damming a stream to power a mill. The water stored in the pond would be used to drive the mill's machinery, which could be used for various purposes, including sawing wood or grinding grain.

Mill Stream

A stream of water used to power mills, such as sawmills and gristmills.

Millville Academy

A local educational institution where the children of Newman Curtis received their education. Academies were common in the 19th century as a higher level of schooling beyond the basic district schools.

Millwright

A craftsman who designs, constructs, and maintains mills, particularly those that involve moving parts such as gears and belts.

Missionaries

Religious individuals sent on a religious mission, particularly to promote Christianity in foreign or remote regions. French missionaries were allowed to stay in Iroquois territory to spread Christianity. Rev. Mr. Steele served as a missionary in Orleans County, preaching to the settlers in Carlton.

Mohawk Valley

A region in New York State along the Mohawk River, historically significant as a center of trade and conflict during the colonial period and the American Revolutionary War.

Morass

A swamp or bog; in this context, it refers to a swampy area that was difficult to traverse, possibly an ancient lake or impassable marshland.

Morgan Affair

A reference to the abduction and presumed murder of William Morgan in 1826, which led to widespread anti-Masonic sentiment. Timothy C. Strong's newspaper was influenced by this event, leading him to change its name.

Morris Reserve

A tract of land in Western New York, named after Robert Morris, a financier of the American Revolution, who owned extensive lands in the region. The Morris Reserve was part of the larger land deals that shaped the settlement of Western New York.

Morris, Robert

An American financier who played a key role in funding the American Revolution. He later acquired large tracts of land in Western New York, including the land that became the Holland Purchase, before selling it to the Dutch investors.

Mortar and Pestle

A simple tool used to crush or grind substances. In the early settlement days, a large mortar could be made from a hollowed-out stump, with a heavy pestle used to pound corn into meal.

Mosquitoes

Insects that were a significant nuisance to early settlers, especially in areas with standing water. The clearing of forests and draining of swamps reduced mosquito populations, improving living conditions.

Motive Machinery

Refers to machinery driven by a power source, such as steam, used to move or operate mechanical systems.

Mount Albion Cemetery

The largest cemetery in Orleans County, located southeast of the village of Albion. Established in 1843, it is known for its natural beauty and has become the primary burial ground for the area.

Moveable Ladder

A simple ladder that could be moved from place to place, used to access the upper chamber or loft of a log house.

Nominal Price A price that is very low and often not reflective of the actual value of the goods.

Nasal Twang

A distinctive singing style, especially in early American religious music, characterized by a nasal resonance. This style was often used in hymns and spirituals of the time.

Necromancy

The practice of magic or sorcery, especially to communicate with the dead. It is often associated with legends and stories of supernatural events.

Neutrality

The state of not taking sides in a conflict. The Iroquois initially agreed to remain neutral in the American Revolutionary War, though this neutrality was later compromised.

New York Central Railroad

A major railroad company that absorbed the Rochester, Lockport, and Niagara Falls Railroad, providing significant transportation infrastructure in New York State, including Orleans County.

Niagara River

The river that connects Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, forming part of the U.S.–Canada border. Samuel Salsbury crossed the frozen Niagara

River, a risky endeavor given the river's strong currents and the precarious ice.

Nine Mile Woods

A term referring to a heavily forested area in early Gaines, where settlers like John Proctor cleared land and built their first homes.

Norton, Zebulon

An early settler in Western New York who was known as a “backwoods doctor.” He utilized natural remedies, such as rattlesnake oil and gall, to treat various ailments.

Notching

The technique of cutting notches in the ends of logs so they interlock at the corners of a log house, providing stability to the structure.

Norwegians

Refers to a group of settlers from Norway who established a community in Kendall in the mid-1820s. These settlers were part of a broader wave of Scandinavian immigration to the United States in the 19th century, and they initially settled in Kendall before moving on to Illinois.

Oak Orchard and Johnson's Creeks

These are specific waterways in Western New York that were important fishing grounds for both Native Americans and early settlers.

Oak Orchard Harbor

A reference to a location on Lake Ontario in New York, which early settlers believed would become a significant commercial port.

Oak Orchard Road

A significant early road in Orleans County, running from the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek. The road was originally an Indian trail and later improved by the Holland Land Company.

Oblivion

The state of being forgotten or unknown. In this context, the author expresses a desire to save historical facts and stories from being lost to oblivion.

Onondaga salt

Salt produced in the Onondaga region of New York State, known for its rich salt springs. The availability of cheaper Onondaga salt led to the decline of local salt production in places like Orleans County.

Ordained

The process by which someone is formally invested with the responsibilities and duties of a religious leader, such as a minister or elder.

O'Reilly's sketches of Rochester

Refers to historical sketches or descriptions of the city of Rochester, New York, written by Henry O'Reilly. This work was likely used as a reference for information about the region.

Orleans County

A county located in Western New York, where much of the historical context of this text is set. It was home to various Native American tribes and later to early European settlers.

Orleans County Pioneer Association

Orleans County Pioneer Association
An organization established in June 1859, composed of individuals who lived in Western New York before January 1825. Its purpose was to preserve the history and memories of the early settlers of Orleans County.

Ornamental Branches

Subjects of study considered decorative or non-essential, often including the arts, music, and languages. These were often part of the curriculum in academies and seminaries, especially for girls.

Ornamenting

The process of enhancing a cemetery with decorative elements such as trees, shrubs, and other landscaping features. Ornamenting was a common practice in the development of cemeteries like Hillside Cemetery.

Oswego

A city in New York State located on the shore of Lake Ontario. It was the site of important forts and trading posts during the colonial period and was contested by both the French and English.

Otter Creek

A waterway in the Gaines area of Orleans County, New York, that was historically significant for its association with beaver dams and early settlements.

Outer Lines of the Road

Refers to the boundaries of a road or highway as defined by the land survey. When the Holland Company sold land adjacent to roads like Ridge Road, they often included the land up to the outer lines of the road, effectively donating the road space to the public.

Overseer of the Poor

A local official responsible for the care and relief of the poor in a town or parish. The role that involved managing poor relief and possibly administering local workhouses or distributing aid to the needy.

Oxen

Domesticated cattle used as draft animals for plowing fields, hauling loads, and other heavy work. Oxen were essential to early settlers, especially in areas where horses were scarce or the terrain was rough.

Ox Sled

A simple sled pulled by oxen, used by early settlers for transportation and hauling goods, especially in the absence of roads.

Ox Team

A pair of oxen used together to pull a plow, wagon, or other heavy loads. Oxen were commonly used by settlers for heavy labor due to their strength and endurance.

Pail Kettles

Metal containers used for cooking or carrying liquids.

Pastures

In this context, refers to the wild, often uncleared lands where settlers grazed their cattle. These areas were not like modern fenced pastures but rather open, forested lands.

Paternal homestead

Refers to the original family home or farm, usually inherited by the eldest son or another family member, where the family has lived for generations.

Patrimony Property or inheritance passed down from one's ancestors. In this context, it refers to the land and resources inherited from the pioneers.

Patriot War

A series of skirmishes in 1837–1838 involving American sympathizers who supported Canadian rebels in their fight against British colonial government.

Peace Establishment

Refers to the U.S. military organization after the War of 1812, when many officers were retained for peacetime service.

Pedestrian

A term that refers to frequent and long-distance walking.

Pension

A regular payment made by the government to veterans, the elderly, or the disabled. Moses Bacon received a pension from the United States government for his service and the injuries he sustained during the War of 1812.

Pettifogger

A derogatory term for a lawyer who engages in unethical or underhanded legal practices, particularly one who quibbles over insignificant details. Being known as a successful pettifogger might indicate they were a shrewd and often crafty lawyer in local legal matters.

Perlash

A refined form of potash, obtained by further processing black salts. Perlash was used in the production of glass, soap, and other industrial goods.

Pewter

A metal alloy primarily composed of tin, often used to make utensils, mugs, and plates in the 18th and 19th centuries. Pewter items were common in households before the widespread use of more durable materials.

Phelps and Gorham Purchase

A large tract of land in Western New York that was purchased in the late 18th century by Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham. This area was among the first to be sold to settlers, marking the beginning of the region's development. It is significant in the early settlement of the region and is often mentioned in historical texts about Western New York.

Phipps Union Seminary

A boarding and day school for girls in Albion, established in the early 1830s and incorporated in 1840. It offered a broad curriculum, including both academic and ornamental subjects, and was highly regarded in the region.

Pioneer Association

Refers to the Orleans County Pioneer Association, a group formed to preserve and document the history of the early settlers in the region. This association collected histories from its members, which formed the basis of the book.

Pioneer

A person who is among the first to settle in a new area, playing a significant role in its development. In this text the term refers to the early European settlers who moved into the area now known as Orleans County, New York, during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Pioneer Life

The lifestyle and experiences of early settlers who moved into undeveloped areas, often involving significant hardships, labor, and isolation.

Pioneer Lines of Stages

Early stagecoach routes used for transportation and mail delivery across regions before the widespread use of railroads. They were often operated by private companies or partnerships.

Pittsburgh

A city in Pennsylvania, originally founded as a French settlement known as Fort Duquesne. It played a strategic role in the French and Indian War.

Plank Road

A road constructed with wooden planks, commonly used in the 19th century.

Plat

A map or plan of a piece of land showing the divisions into lots.

Plausible Address

Refers to a person's demeanor or manner of speaking that is persuasive, credible, and acceptable to others. This quality was particularly valued in public figures and those holding office.

Pleurisy

An inflammation of the tissues that line the lungs and chest cavity, often causing sharp chest pain.

Plow (Plough)

An agricultural implement used to turn over and break up the soil, making it ready for planting. In the early days, plowing was difficult due to the presence of tree stumps, which had to rot away before the land could be fully plowed. The invention of the cast iron plow was a significant advancement in agricultural technology, making it easier for farmers to work the land.

Pocket Knife

A small folding knife with one or more blades that fit inside the handle. In this context, it was used by the settlers for hunting deer, showcasing their resourcefulness with limited tools.

Posterity

Future generations. This term is used to emphasize the lasting impact of the pioneers' efforts on those who come after them.

Post Coaches

Horse-drawn vehicles used to transport mail and passengers. They were a common sight along Ridge Road before the Erie Canal shifted much of the travel and trade to waterways.

Postmaster

The person in charge of a post office, responsible for managing the operations and ensuring mail is handled and delivered efficiently. Being a postmaster in the 19th century was often a significant community role.

Post Office

A place where mail was received, sorted, and distributed. Early post offices were few and far between, making communication difficult for settlers in remote areas.

Potash

A substance derived from wood ashes, used in making soap, glass, and other products. It was a valuable commodity in the early settlement period and was often produced from the ashes left after clearing land.

Pounding Corn

A process used by early settlers to grind corn into meal using a pestle driven by a water wheel. This method was slow but provided a way for settlers to produce meal before gristmills were established.

Practical Surveyor

A person who is trained in the techniques of surveying land, which involves measuring and mapping out plots of land. This was an important skill in the early days of settlement as land was divided and sold.

Prairie

A large, open, grassland area, especially in the Midwest of the United States, which was more easily settled by later pioneers due to its lack of dense forests.

Preaching Station

A designated place within a community where ministers would regularly come to preach, especially

important in rural or newly settled areas without a permanent church building.

Presbyterian Church

A Protestant Christian denomination governed by elders and characterized by a tradition of Reformed theology. Although many early settlers were Presbyterian, formal denominational distinctions developed later.

Presbytery

A governing body in Presbyterian churches made up of ministers and elders from multiple congregations within a specific area.

Primitive

A term describing the basic, unrefined methods and materials used by early settlers to build homes and furniture. This included log cabins, rough-hewn furniture, and other handmade necessities of frontier life.

Printing Press

A machine used to produce printed material, such as newspapers and books. The establishment of a printing press in Gaines signified the community's ambition to become a center of trade and information.

Privations

Hardships or lack of basic necessities. The early settlers of Orleans County faced numerous privations, including food scarcity, disease, and isolation.

Produce Trade

The buying and selling of agricultural products, such as grains, fruits, and vegetables. This trade was essential to the economy of villages which were surrounded by farmland.

Promissory Notes

Legal instruments involving a written promise to pay a certain amount of money at a specified future date.

Provincial Americans

Colonists from the American colonies who participated in military campaigns under British command, particularly during the French and Indian War.

Public Conveyance

A vehicle or mode of transportation available for public use, such as a stagecoach or covered wagon, often used to transport passengers and mail.

Public House

Another term for an inn or tavern, a place where travelers could find food, drink, and lodging. These establishments were important social centers in early American communities.

Public Library Association

A group formed by early settlers in Kendall to establish a shared collection of books. This was an early example of community efforts to improve access to education and information in remote or newly settled areas.

Public Highway

A road or pathway that is open for use by the general public. Public highways were critical for transportation and communication in the early settlement period.

Public Work (in the context of construction)

Government-funded construction projects, such as roads, canals, and other infrastructure.

Public Worship

The act of religious worship performed by a community in a public setting, such as a church or meeting house. In the early days of Orleans County, public worship was held in log cabins and later in schoolhouses and dedicated church buildings.

Pulteney Estate

A landholding in Western New York named after Sir William Pulteney, a British investor who purchased large tracts of land in the area during the late 18th century. The estate's land was surveyed, then managed by agents who sold parcels to settlers beginning around 1821.

Quagmire Swamp

A type of swamp characterized by soft, muddy ground that can be difficult to traverse.

Quaker

A member of the Religious Society of Friends, known for their pacifist beliefs and simple living.

Quaker Training

A reference to the religious and ethical upbringing associated with the Quakers, a Christian group known for their principles of simplicity, pacifism, and integrity.

Quartermaster

A military officer responsible for providing supplies, transportation, and other logistical support to troops.

Quebec

A major city in Canada founded by the French. It was the center of French power in North America until it was captured by the British in 1759 during the French and Indian War.

Quilting Frolics

Social gatherings where women would come together to work on quilting projects. These events were also important social occasions, providing opportunities for community bonding.

Quinine

A medication derived from the bark of the cinchona tree, used to treat malaria and other fevers. It was commonly prescribed by doctors in the early 19th century to treat “fever and ague.”

Raceway

A channel were built to harness water for mills and other enterprises, often used to generate power.

Rafters

The sloping beams that support the roof of a structure. In a log house,

the rafters would hold up the bark or wooden shingles that formed the roof.

Ration (in the context of alcohol)

A fixed amount of alcohol, in this case, whiskey, provided to workers as part of their daily compensation. This was a common practice in the early 19th century, especially in labor-intensive jobs like canal construction.

Rattlesnake Oil

An oil extracted from rattlesnakes, believed by early settlers to have medicinal properties, particularly for treating stiff joints and bruises.

Rattlesnake Point

A location near the lower falls of the Genesee River, known for being a habitat for rattlesnakes. It was a notorious spot for these reptiles during the early settlement of the area.

Red Jacket

A prominent Seneca chief known for his oratory skills and efforts to preserve the rights of his people. His counsel was highly respected, and he played a significant role during the War of 1812.

Reformed Dutch Church

A Christian denomination that originated in the Netherlands and was brought to America by Dutch settlers.

Regents of the University

A governing body responsible for overseeing education in New York State, including the incorporation of educational institutions like academies and seminaries.

Reminiscence

A memory or the act of recalling past experiences. The author sought to collect personal reminiscences from the older inhabitants of Orleans County to include in the book.

Reservations

Tracts of land set aside for Native American tribes as part of treaties with the U.S. government. These areas were meant to be sovereign territories where tribes could maintain some autonomy.

Revolutionary Mothers

A term of honor given to women like Ray Marsh's widow, who supported the war effort during the American Civil War by providing essential supplies, such as knitted stockings for soldiers. It reflects the patriotic contributions of women during times of conflict.

Revolutionary Soldier

A person who served in the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), which led to the independence of the United States from Great Britain.

Ridge Pole

The horizontal beam at the top of a roof that supports the rafters on either side. It is a key structural component in the roof of a log house.

Ridge Road

A historic road running along the Niagara Escarpment in Western New York, parallel to Lake Ontario. This road provided a dry and reliable route for settlers traveling to and from the old states. It was one of the earliest routes established and used by both Native Americans and early settlers. The Ridge Road became a key route for early settlers, leading to the establishment of many farms along its path.

Rochester

A city in Western New York that was an important center of commerce and settlement in the 19th century. The history of Rochester is closely tied to the broader history of the region.

Rochester, Lockport, and Niagara Falls Railroad Company

A railroad company organized in 1850, which built a railroad passing through Orleans County near the Erie Canal. The company was later consolidated into the New York Central Railroad.

Rod

A unit of length equal to 16.5 feet (5.03 meters). In this context, the Land Company cleared a path four rods wide (about 66 feet) along the Transit Line to serve as a guide for settlers.

Ruffle Shirt

A dress shirt with decorative ruffles along the front, popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Ruling Elder

A lay member of a Presbyterian church who is elected to a governing body responsible for the spiritual and administrative oversight of the congregation. The position is one of significant respect and responsibility within the church community.

Running the Gauntlet

A form of punishment or trial by ordeal used by Native American tribes, where prisoners were forced to run between two rows of people who would strike them with clubs, stones, and other weapons.

Rust

A plant disease that affects crops like flax, which was a problem for early settlers attempting to grow flax for clothing.

Rye

A type of grain similar to wheat, often used in breadmaking. During hard times, settlers often relied on rye as a cheaper and more readily available grain.

Saddlebags

Bags draped over the back of a horse or carried by someone traveling on horseback, used to carry personal items, supplies, or, in the case of doctors, medical equipment and medicines.

Sagacity

The quality of being wise or having good judgment. It refers to the ability of the pioneers to make sound decisions despite difficult circumstances.

Salts of Lye (Black Salts)

A crude form of potash, derived from the ashes of burned hardwood. Settlers would trade these salts to obtain money or goods.

Saltwater (Brine)

Refers to water that contains a high concentration of salt, found naturally in some wells. The water was boiled down to produce salt, a valuable commodity before the Erie Canal made imported salt more accessible.

Salt Works Road

A road created by the Holland Land Company to provide access to salt works near Medina. Salt production was an important industry, and roads were built to facilitate transportation of the product.

Samp

A coarse ground meal made from corn, often boiled and eaten with milk. It was a staple food for many early settlers and Native Americans.

Sand hill

A natural elevation of sand, which in this context refers to a location near the ancient fortifications where many human skeletons were exhumed.

Sanguine

Optimistic or hopeful, especially in the face of adversity. The early settlers often felt sanguine about their prospects despite the hardships they faced.

Sap Troughs

Wooden containers used to collect sap from maple trees, which would then be boiled down to produce maple syrup or sugar. This was a common activity among settlers who had access to maple trees.

Saw Mill

A mill where logs are cut into lumber. The first sawmill in Barre was built by Dr. William White in 1816.

Sawyer

A person who operates a sawmill or is responsible for cutting timber into lumber. Sawmills were crucial in converting the abundant trees of the frontier into usable wood for building homes, barns, and other structures.

School District

A geographical area served by a particular public school system. Early school districts were often small, reflecting the scattered and rural nature of early settlements. School districts were often one of the first community services established in a new town.

Sea Biscuit (Hardtack)

A type of hard, dry bread that was commonly used as rations by soldiers and sailors due to its long shelf life.

Sectarian

Sectarian refers to something related to or characteristic of a sect, which is a subgroup within a larger religious, political, or ideological group.

Sectarianism often implies a focus on the specific beliefs, practices, or interests of that subgroup, sometimes leading to conflict, division, or prejudice against other groups. The term is often used in the context of religious or political conflicts where different sects within the same religion or political movement are in opposition to each other.

Seines

Large fishing nets that hang vertically in the water, with weights on the bottom edge and floats on the top. They are used to encircle and capture fish.

Seminary

An educational institution, often for advanced studies. In this context, it refers to Phipps Union Seminary, a girls' school in Albion known for its rigorous academic and ornamental education.

Senecas

One of the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, historically located in what is now New York State. The Senecas were known as the "Keepers of the Western Door," being the westernmost of the Iroquois tribes.

Shade Trees

Trees planted to provide shade and enhance the landscape. The planting of shade trees was a common practice in cemeteries, parks and other landscapes to create a peaceful and pleasant environment.

Shakes

Roughly split wooden shingles used for roofing in early log cabins. Levi Atwell's cabin had a roof made of shakes, held in place by poles.

Shanty

A small, roughly built shelter or dwelling, often made from simple materials like wood and used as a temporary residence by settlers or workers.

Sheriff

The chief law enforcement officer in a county, responsible for maintaining peace, serving court papers, and overseeing the county jail. In this context, the Sheriff was also involved in the sale of properties when owners defaulted on their debts.

Shillings

A former British coin and monetary unit that was used in the British Empire. In the context of early American settlements, it often referred to an amount of money equal to 1/20th of a pound. The use of shillings in the narrative reflects the period before the widespread adoption of the U.S. dollar.

Sickle

A hand-held agricultural tool with a curved blade, used for cutting wheat or other crops. It was commonly used by early settlers before more advanced harvesting tools were available.

Singing School

An early American institution where people learned to sing, particularly hymns and religious songs.

Six Nations

Refers to the Iroquois Confederacy, originally composed of five Native American nations the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. The Tuscarora joined later, making it the Six Nations. They were a powerful and influential group in the northeastern part of what is now the United States.

Skeletons

The internal framework of bones in a body. The term is used to describe the remains of ancient people found in the region, including some of unusually large stature.

Slashing

A field where trees have been cut down and left to lie on the ground. This term describes the initial stage of clearing land, where the felled trees were left to dry before being burned.

Sled

A vehicle mounted on runners, used for transporting goods over snow or rough terrain. In the absence of roads, settlers often used sleds drawn by oxen to transport grain or other supplies.

Sleigh

A type of vehicle used for traveling over snow, typically drawn by horses. In the context of early 19th-century America, sleighs were crucial for transportation during winter months, especially in rural areas.

Slips

Refers to pews or benches in a church that were sold or rented to individuals or families. The sale of slips in the first church building in Gaines helped fund the construction of the meeting house and contributed to Gaines Academy.

Sluiceways

Channels or drains constructed to manage water flow under or across a road. Sluiceways were necessary to prevent roads from flooding, especially in areas with poor drainage.

Smuggling

The illegal transportation of goods across borders.

Snow Shoes

Footwear designed to enable walking on snow without sinking. They distribute the wearer's weight over a larger area. In the 1800s, snowshoes were often homemade, as described by

Social Intercourse

Interaction and communication between individuals during their meetings and gatherings.

Soft Water

Water that is free from minerals, particularly calcium and magnesium. Soft water was often preferred for washing clothes and other household tasks, but it was difficult to obtain in areas where only hard, mineral-rich water was available.

Solemn Seasons

A phrase used to describe deeply meaningful or sacred religious gatherings. Early settlers often recalled these solemn seasons of worship held in their simple log cabins.

Solid Branches

Academic subjects considered essential or fundamental, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and the sciences. These were the core focus of education in both common schools and academies.

Sound judgment

The ability to make sensible and well-thought-out decisions based on experience and practical knowledge, even if the individual has not had extensive formal education.

Sortie

A military term for an attack made by troops coming out from a position of defense. John Proctor participated in a sortie from Fort Erie, successfully repelling British forces.

Span of Horses

Refers to a pair of horses used together for pulling a wagon, sleigh, or other vehicles. The term span indicates that the horses are matched in size and strength.

Speculators

Individuals or companies who bought large tracts of land with the intention of selling them later at a profit, often without developing the land themselves. Speculators were common during the early settlement of the United States.

Special Pleading

A legal term referring to a detailed and specific form of argument in court, involving multiple responses and counter-responses between the plaintiff and defendant.

Spinning Wheels

Devices used to spin fibers into thread or yarn.

Split Plank Floor

A simple and rough-hewn wooden floor made from split logs. Such flooring was common in the early log cabins of settlers.

Snow Shoes

Footwear designed to enable walking on snow without sinking. They distribute the wearer's weight over a larger area. In the 1800s, snowshoes were often homemade.

St. Lawrence River

A major river in North America that flows from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. It was a key route for French exploration and settlement in Canada.

Stagecoach

Horse-drawn vehicle used for passenger travel and mail delivery before the advent of railroads and automobiles.

Stalled Ox

A well-fed, fattened ox. The phrase better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith is a Biblical proverb (Proverbs 15:17) implying that simple meals in a loving home are better than feasts where there is conflict.

Staves

Wooden planks or strips, typically used in making barrels or casks. Stave production was an important trade in areas with access to good timber and waterways for shipping.

State Road

A public highway established by the state, often with specific legislation and appointed commissioners. The State Road referenced in this chapter ran from Rochester to Lockport along or near the Erie Canal.

Steady, well-directed industry

Consistent and purposeful hard work.

Steeple

A tall, tower-like structure on top of a church, often containing a bell. The steeple of a church was often the tallest structure in early towns, serving as a landmark and a source of civic pride.

Stick Chimney

A chimney constructed of sticks and coated with clay, used in early log houses. It was a simple and affordable method for creating a vent for smoke in houses where stone or brick was not available.

Stillwater

A term referring to a part of a river or stream with very little current, often making it a good spot for fishing.

Stoga Boots

Sturdy, practical boots worn by settlers and frontiersmen. They were more affordable and durable compared to other types of footwear at the time.

Stools

Simple seating made from wood, often homemade, used in early log houses. Stools were usually small and had no backrest, making them easy to move and store.

Stump

The base of a tree that remains after the tree has been cut down. In early pioneer life, stumps were often left in fields and pastures because removing them was labor-intensive. They were sometimes used as tables or benches.

Stupendous

Extremely impressive or large.

Superintendent of Repairs

An official responsible for maintaining and overseeing repairs on a particular section of the canal. In this case, Jacob Hinds was responsible for repairs on the western section of the Erie Canal.

Sunday School Superintendent

An individual responsible for overseeing the operation of a Sunday School, which is a religious education program typically held on Sundays for children and sometimes adults. The superintendent would manage the curriculum, teachers, and other aspects of the program.

Supervisor

An elected official responsible for overseeing the administration of a town or township. The position involved managing public affairs, such as the maintenance of roads, the allocation of funds, and other local governance tasks.

Supreme Court Commissioner

A judicial officer with the authority to hear certain types of cases and make decisions in the state's Supreme Court system. This role indicates involvement in higher-level legal proceedings in New York State.

Surgeon

A medical officer in the military responsible for the health and

medical treatment of soldiers. Surgeons were vital for treating injuries sustained in battle or during military operations.

Surrogate

A judicial officer who deals with matters of probate, including the validation of wills and the administration of estates.

Survey

The process of measuring and mapping land, often for the purpose of establishing roads or dividing land into lots.

Surveyor

A professional responsible for measuring and mapping land, often to establish property boundaries or to plan out a village, including the layout of roads and highways. Surveyors played a critical role in the development of transportation infrastructure in early America.

Susquehanna River

A river that flows through New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. It was a key area of conflict during the American Revolutionary War, particularly during raids by Loyalist and Native American forces.

Sycamore (Cotton Ball) Tree

A large deciduous tree known for its broad leaves and distinctive bark. In the text, it is referred to as a common tree in low areas of Orleans County during the early settlement period.

Swamp

A wetland area that is often forested. In this context, it refers to a swamp near the ancient fortifications in Orleans County.

Take up the hatchet

An expression meaning to engage in warfare. The phrase is derived from Native American customs, where burying the hatchet symbolized peace, and taking it up again meant a return to war.

Taking of Ticonderoga

A reference to the capture of Fort Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775, during the American Revolutionary War.

Tanner

A craftsman who processes animal hides into leather.

Tanning and Currying

The process of treating animal hides to produce leather (tanning) and then dressing, finishing, or coloring the leather (currying).

Tanyard

A place where animal hides are tanned to make leather.

Tavern

An establishment where travelers could eat, drink, and sleep. Taverns were important social and economic centers in early settlements. Taverns were central to social life in early American communities, serving as gathering places for news, business, and leisure.

Tavern Keeper

An owner or operator of a tavern, where travelers could get food, drink, and lodging.

Telegraph

An early communication system that used electrical signals to transmit messages over long distances via telegraph wires. The introduction of the telegraph was a major technological advancement in the 19th century, revolutionizing communication

Temperance

A social movement that promoted abstinence from alcoholic beverages. In the 19th century, temperance organizations were common, and many settlers were actively involved in them.

Temperance Hotel

A hotel that abstains from serving alcoholic beverages. The temperance movement was strong in the 19th century, and some establishments chose to align with its principles.

Temperance Organizations

Groups or movements that promoted abstinence from alcohol, which were popular in the 19th century.

The Creature

A colloquial term often used in the 19th century to refer to alcoholic beverages, especially whiskey or rum.

Theological Seminary

An institution for training ministers or clergy.

The Triangle

A tract of land in Western New York, located between the Holland Purchase and the 100,000 Acre Tract. It was another key area during the early settlement of the region.

The Union Company

A group of eight young men from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, who formed a cooperative company in 1810 to establish a settlement on the Holland Purchase in Carlton. They agreed to pool resources and labor to help each member clear land, and build a house and barn on their respective farms.

Threshing

The process of separating grain from the husks or straw. In the early 19th century, this was often done by hand, using tools like flails, or by animals trampling on the grain.

Tinder Box

A small container holding materials such as flint, steel, and tinder, used to start a fire. Before the invention of friction matches, a tinder box was essential for lighting fires in early settler homes.

Tinned Iron Spoons

Spoons made from iron that had been coated with a thin layer of tin to prevent rusting. These were common in households that could not afford more expensive silverware.

Tonawanda Swamp

A large wetland area covering parts of Genesee and Orleans Counties. It was a significant geographical feature that posed challenges for settlement and development, requiring extensive efforts to drain and manage.

Tories

American colonists who remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolutionary War. They often allied with British forces and Native American tribes against the American revolutionaries.

Tow Cloth

A coarse, strong cloth made from the rougher parts of flax or hemp fibers. It was commonly used for making work clothes in early American settlements.

Towing Path

A path alongside a canal where horses, mules, or oxen walked while towing boats through the canal. These paths were essential for the movement of goods before the advent of steam-powered boats.

Town Clerk

An official responsible for maintaining the public records and documents of the town, including minutes of town meetings, vital statistics, and other important municipal records.

Town Clock

A large, publicly visible clock, usually installed in a church steeple or town hall. Town clocks were important for regulating daily life in the community before the widespread availability of personal timepieces.

Town Meeting

A form of direct democratic rule where members of a town come together to legislate policy and budgets for local government. In early American towns, town meetings were crucial for making decisions on community issues.

Track

The rails on which trains run. In the early days of railroads, tracks could be built for horse-drawn cars or steam-powered trains.

Trailblazer

A term used to describe someone who is a pioneer or first to explore and settle in a new area.

Train as Soldiers

Refers to the requirement for able-bodied men to participate in militia training, a common practice in early America.

Transit Instrument

A precision instrument used by surveyors to measure angles in the horizontal and vertical planes. It was crucial in establishing accurate land boundaries, such as those in the Transit Line.

Transit Line

A boundary line that runs from Pennsylvania north to Lake Ontario along the eastern edge of the Holland Purchase. It was named "Transit" because it was originally surveyed with the aid of a transit instrument, which is a type of surveying tool.

Treading (Trod)

A method of threshing grain by having animals, such as oxen or horses, walk over it to separate the grain from the chaff. This was a common practice before the development of mechanical threshers.

Treaty

A formal agreement between two or more states or groups. The text mentions treaties between Native American tribes and the U.S. government regarding land rights.

Trenchers

Wooden plates or platters used for serving food. Trenchers were common in early settler households and were often made by hand.

Trite

Something that is overused and lacks originality, often used to describe stories or themes that have been extensively covered.

Trod

Previously defined, this refers to the method of threshing grain by having animals walk over it to separate the grain from the chaff.

Trustees

Individuals responsible for managing the affairs of a cemetery association or other organization. Trustees oversee the maintenance, improvement, and financial management of cemeteries.

Turner's History

Refers to the historical works by Orsamus Turner, particularly his histories of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase and the Holland Purchase which provide descriptions of ancient fortifications and historical events in Western New York. Turner's works were important sources for the author of *Pioneer History of Orleans County*.

Turning Shop

A workshop where wood was shaped and turned into products like chairs and bowls.

Tuscaroras

The sixth nation to join the Iroquois Confederacy. Originally from North Carolina they migrated to New York in the early 18th century. During the War of 1812, they were allied with the United States against the British and their Native American allies.

Union Schoolhouse

A type of public school that served multiple communities or religious denominations.

Universalist

Refers to someone who believes in universal salvation, the idea that all people will eventually be saved and that there is no eternal damnation.

It was a significant religious perspective at the time.

Universalist Society

A religious organization that follows Universalism, a Christian theological perspective that emphasizes universal salvation and the belief that all people will eventually be reconciled with God.

Valley Forge

A military camp in Pennsylvania where General George Washington's Continental Army spent the winter of 1777-1778 during the American Revolutionary War. It is known for the severe hardships the soldiers faced, including cold, hunger, and disease.

Variety Store

A type of retail store that sold a wide range of goods, including groceries and other essentials, to both local residents and travelers on the Erie Canal.

Vats

Large containers used for holding liquids. In salt production, brine would be placed in vats to allow impurities to settle before the clear liquid was boiled to extract the salt.

Venerable

Worthy of respect due to age, wisdom, or character.

Venison

Meat from deer, which was a common source of food for early settlers.

Vicissitude

A change or variation, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant.

In this text, it refers to the unpredictable challenges and hardships faced by pioneers.

Victuals

An old term for food or provisions, especially as prepared for consumption.

Wagon Load

The amount of goods that could be carried in a single trip by a wagon. In the early settlement days, a wagon load of supplies from a distant city was a significant event.

Warehouse

A building used for storing goods. In the context of early American villages like Hindsburgh, warehouses were essential for storing farm produce, goods for trade, and supplies before they were shipped via canal or other means.

War with England (War of 1812)

A conflict fought between the United States and the United Kingdom from 1812 to 1815. It was caused by trade restrictions, impressment of American sailors, and British support of Native American attacks on American settlers.

Water Lime

A type of hydraulic lime used to make water-resistant cement or mortar. It was produced by burning limestone and was essential in construction, especially for projects near water like the Erie Canal.

Waterport

A location in Orleans County, New York, connected to the Ridge Road by a highway cleared by local settlers. Waterport served as an important hub for transportation and trade.

Water Power

The use of water flow to drive machinery, particularly mills. In the early 19th century, water power was crucial for operating sawmills and gristmills, which were essential for processing lumber and grain in new settlements.

Wedding the Waters

A symbolic ceremony performed by Governor Dewitt Clinton at the completion of the Erie Canal, in which water from Lake Erie was poured into New York Harbor to symbolize the connection between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean.

Weevil (Wheat Midge)

An insect pest that attacks wheat crops, causing significant damage. Its presence in Orleans County led to a decline in wheat cultivation and a shift to other crops like beans.

Wesleyan Methodist Connexion

A branch of the Methodist Church formed in the United States in the 19th century. This group emphasized abolitionism and social reforms.

Western fever

A term used to describe the strong desire many people had in the early 19th century to move westward into newly available lands in the United States, often referred to as the Genesee country or other frontier areas.

Western Possessions

Refers to the territories in North America west of the Appalachian Mountains that were claimed by European powers, particularly the French and British, during the colonial period.

Wheat

A key crop planted by early settlers, often sown in the fall to be harvested the following season. Wheat was a staple food and a primary focus of agricultural efforts in newly cleared land.

Whip in Hand

An expression used to describe someone actively driving a team of animals, such as oxen or horses.

Whisky

A distilled alcoholic beverage.

Whitewood

Also known as tulip tree or poplar, a type of tree commonly found in New York. Its wood was used for lumber in early construction projects, particularly for floors and finishing.

Whittier

Refers to John Greenleaf Whittier, an American Quaker poet and advocate of the abolition of slavery. The quoted lines at the end of the Preface are from Whittier's poetry, reflecting on the passage of time and the importance of remembering history.

Wigwam

A traditional dome-shaped dwelling used by Native American tribes, particularly the Algonquins and Iroquois. The log houses of early settlers were somewhat inspired by the wigwam in their use of bark for roofing and other construction methods.

Wild Land

Unsettled, undeveloped land that was often purchased from the government by early settlers or speculators.

Wild Plum Tree

A type of tree bearing small, tough, and often sour plums. These trees were sometimes found by early settlers in the forests of Orleans County.

Wild oats

A phrase used metaphorically to describe youthful misbehavior or reckless activities, typically before settling down into a more responsible lifestyle.

Withees

Flexible branches or twigs used to bind or fasten parts of a structure together. In log houses, withees might be used in place of nails to secure different elements.

Wool carding and cloth dressing

The process of preparing wool for spinning by untangling and cleaning the fibers (carding) and then treating the woven cloth to improve its appearance and durability (cloth dressing).

Wolves

A common predator in early Orleans County, wolves posed a threat to livestock, particularly sheep and young cattle and sometimes to settlers themselves, symbolizing the dangers of the untamed frontier. They were eventually hunted out as the area became more settled.

Wooden Latch

A simple wooden device used to secure a door. The latch could be lifted from the outside by a string, a common feature in early log houses.

Wrought Nails

Hand-forged nails used in construction before the advent of machine-made nails.

Yoke of Oxen

A pair of oxen harnessed together for plowing or pulling heavy loads.

Young America

A political and cultural movement in the mid-19th century that celebrated American nationalism, territorial expansion, and technological progress.