GLIMPSES OF WESTERN NEW YORK AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

NOTE. — [The author at this point, to connect the chain of events as nearly as possible in chronological order, will avail himself of the preceding portion of narratives he has had from some of the earliest adventurers to the regions of Western New York; reserving for their order of time, the remainder. Since he commenced the preparation of this work, he has had interviews with a large number, who yet survive to tell the story of their wilderness advents. As far as consistent with a brevity which it is necessary to observe, he will endeavor to preserve that interest in the narratives, which the relators in their own language and manner, could alone impart to them.]

SILAS HOPKINS, of Lewiston, Niagara county, started from New Jersey, in the summer of 1787, to assist his father in driving a drove of cattle to Niagara. Twelve or thirteen other young men came along, to assist in driving the cattle, and to see the country. Party came to Newton Point, thence to Horse Heads, Catherine's Town at the head of Seneca lake, Kanadesaega, Canandaigua, and from thence upon the Indian trail via Canawagus, the "Great Bend of the Tonewanta," Tonawanda Indian village, to Niagara. Route up the Susquehannah, to Tioga, was principally in the track of Sullivan's army; after that almost wholly upon Indian trails. Saw the last white inhabitant at Newtown Point. There were a few Indians at Catherine's Town, and among them the old squaw that is named in accounts of Sullivan's expedition. At this period, nine tenths of the settlers upon the frontiers in Canada, were Butler's Rangers. They had all got lands from the British government, two years supply of provisions, and were otherwise favored. The New Jersey drovers sold their cattle principally to them, and to the garrisons at Queenston and Niagara.

"I came out twice the next summer with my father upon the same business. Upon one of these occasions, I went with my father to the residence of Col. Butler near Newark, (Niagara.) He was then about fifty five or sixty years old; had a large, pretty well cultivated farm; was living a quiet farmer's life. He was hospitable and agreeable, and I could hardly realize that he had been the leader of the Rangers.

"In all our journeyings in those early days, we were well treated by the Indians. They had a custom of levying a tribute upon all drovers, by selecting a beeve from each drove as they passed through their principal towns. This they regarded as an equivalent for a passage through their territories; and the drovers found it the best way to submit without murmuring. At Geneva,

there was an Indian trader named Poudrey, and another by the name of La Berge. There were several other whites there; they were *talking of putting up a building.* We happened to be at Canandaigua at a treaty. Phelps and Gorham bought several head of cattle of my father, to butcher for the Indians. When I went to Canada the first time, Gov. Simcoe was residing at 'Navy Hall,' near old Fort George. He was esteemed as a good Governor, and good man.

"In 1789, on one of our droving excursions there was an unusual number of drovers collected at Lewiston. We clubbed together and paid the expenses of a treat to the Indians,—gave a benefit. They were collected there from Tonawanda, Buffalo, Tuscarora, and some from Canada. There were two or three hundred of them; they gave a war-dance for our amusement. We had as guests, officers from Fort Niagara. The Indians were very civil. After the dance, rum was served out to them, upon which they became very merry, but committed no outrage. We had a jolly time of it, and I remember that among our number was a minister, who enjoyed the thing as well as any of us.

"In 1790, after I had sold a drove of cattle at Lewiston, (to go over the river, and at Fort Niagara,) I met with John Street, the father of the late Samuel Street, of Chippewa, C. W. He then kept a trading establishment at Fort Niagara. He was going to Massachusetts, and said he should like my company through the wilderness, as far as Geneva. Waiting a few days, and he not getting ready, I started without him. He followed in a few days, and was murdered at a spring, near the Ridge Road, a mile west of Warren's. The murderers were supposed to be Gale and Hammond. Gale lived near Goshen, in this State. I knew his father, a Col. Gale. Hammond had been living on the Delaware river. They were arrested in Canada, by authority of the commanding officer at Fort Niagara; sent to Quebec for trial; Hammond turned King's evidence, divulged the whole affair, charging the offence principally upon Gale, but made his escape. Gale was afterwards discharged. When I came up the next season, I camped at the spring. Some fragments of Mr. Street's clothes were hanging upon the bushes. His body had been discovered by some travelers, stopping at the spring; their dog brought to them a leg with a boot upon it. His friends in Canada, gathered up fragments of the body, and carried them home for burial. He was robbed of a considerable sum of money."

Judge Hopkins remarked at this point in his narrative, that the fact having become generally known that drovers with considerable sums of money, and emigrants to Canada, were every few days passing on the "Great Trail from the Susquehannah to Niagara," robbers had been attracted to it. It was soon enough after the

close of the border wars, to have remaining upon the outskirts of civilization, men fitted to prowl around the wilderness path, and solitary camp of the traveler.

"My father being at Niagara, on one occasion, a letter was sent to him by Col. Hollenbeck who was on the Susquehannah, warning him against starting on his return journey alone, as he was satisfied that a couple of desperadoes, in his neighborhood were intending to waylay him somewhere on the trail. He handed the letter to the commandant at Fort Niagara; a couple of men soon made their appearance in the neighborhood answering the description of Col. Hollenbeck. They were arrested and detained at the garrison until my father had time to reach the settlements on the Susquehannah.

"When but sixteen years of age, my father had some business in Canada that made it necessary to send me there from N. Jersey. I came through on horseback, the then usual route. I encamped the last night of my journey, on Millard's branch of the Eighteen-milecreek, about a mile above where it crosses the Chestnut Ridge, five miles east of Lockport. In the morning, my hoppled horse having gone a short distance off, I went for him, and on my way stumbled upon a silver mounted saddle and bridle, and a little farther on lay a dead horse that had been killed by a blow on the head with a tomahawk. I carried the saddle and bridle to Queenston, where they were recognized as those of a traveler who had a few days before come down from Detroit, on his way to New York. Nothing more was ever known of the matter."

In narrating this, the Judge remarks that the howling of the wolves in the Tonawanda swamp, all night, deprived him of sleep. A boy, sixteen years old, alone far away from civilization; the howling of the wolves, his forest lullaby; the relics of a murdered traveler, presented to him in the morning! He acknowledges that he left his camping ground with less delay than usual.

"I spent most of the summer of 1788, at Lewiston, purchasing furs. I bought principally, beaver, otter, muskrat, mink. The Indian hunting grounds for these animals, were the marshes along the Ridge Road, the bays of the Eighteen, Twelve, and Fourmile-creeks. The marsh where I now live, (six miles east of Lewiston,) was then, most of the year a pond, or small lake. The only white inhabitant at Lewiston, then was Middaugh. He kept a tavern—his customers, the Indians, and travelers on their way to Canada. I carried back to New Jersey, about four hundred dollars worth of furs, on pack horses. At that period, furs were plenty. I paid for beaver, from four to six shillings; for otter, about the

same; for mink and muskrat, four cents. There were a good many bears, wolves, and wild-cats; but a few deer.

"Immediately after the defeat of St. Clair, the Indians were very insolent and manifested much hostility to the whites.

"In 1778, or '9, I was returning from Niagara, to New Jersey, in company with a dozen or fifteen men. When we arrived upon the Genesee river, we found a white settler there—Gilbert Berry;*—he had arrived but a few days before with his wife and wife's sister; had made a temporary shelter, and had the body of a log house partly raised. He had tried to raise it with the help of Indians, and failed. We stopped and put it up for him. The next day, we found at the outlet of the Honeoye, a settler just arrived by the name of Thayer. He had logs ready for a house, but had no neighbors to help him. We stopped and raised his house."

The narrator of these early events is now seventy-five years old; his once vigorous and hardy constitution, is somewhat broken by age, but his mental faculties are unimpaired. In the war of 1812, he was early upon the frontier, as a Colonel of militia, and has well filled many public stations. He was the first Judge of Niagara, after Erie was set off.

John Gould, Esq. of Cambria, Niagara county, came from New Jersey in 1788, as a drover; came by Newton, Painted Post, Little Beard's village, Great Bend of Tonawanda, &c.—stopped with drove at Little Beard's village over night. In the morning, Little Beard pointed out a fine ox, and an Indian boy shot him down with a bow and arrow. This was the usual tribute, mentioned by Judge Hopkins. "The Great Bend of the Tonnewanta," was a well known camping ground for Butler's Rangers, in their border war excursions, and after emigration to Canada; for early drovers, and other travellers.

"Col. Hunter, was then in command at Fort Niagara. Our cattle and pack horses were ferried across to Newark in batteaux and Schenectady boats. Nothing then at Newark, (Niagara village,) but an old ferry house and the barracks that had been occupied by Butler's Rangers. The Massaguea Indians were numerous then in Canada. They had no fixed habitations; migrated from camping ground to camping ground, in large parties; their principal camping grounds Niagara and Queenston. There were their fishing grounds. Sometimes there would be five or six hundred encamped at

* Gilbert Berry was an Indian trader. After his death, his widow kept a public house, early, and long known, as "Mrs. Berry's," at Avon. His two daughters are Mrs. George Hosmer of Avon, and Mrs. E. C. Hickox, of Buffalo.

Niagara. They were small in stature, gay, lively, filthy; and much addicted to drunkenness.

"We sold our cattle principally to Butler's Rangers. They were located mostly at the Falls, along the Four and Twelve Mile Creeks. Oxen brought as high as £50, cows £20.

"In June, after I arrived, I was at Fort Niagara, and witnessed the celebration of King George's birth day:—there was firing of cannon, horse racing, &c. The Tuscarora Indians were there, in high glee. It was upon this occasion that I first saw Benjamin Barton, sen.

"Butler's Rangers had taken a sister of my mother's captive, upon the Susquehannah. She afterwards became the wife of Capt. Fry, of the Mohawk, who had gone to Canada during the Revolution. She had induced my mother and step father, to emigrate to Canada in 1787. I found them located upon the Six Mile creek. At the time my aunt was taken prisoner, there were taken with her several children of another sister: their names were Vanderlip.

"When I came through in '88, I saw no white inhabitant after leaving Newton, till I arrived at Fort Niagara. At Newton there was one unfinished log house. 'Painted Post' was at the junction of Indian trails. It was a post, striped red and white.

"Along in '88, '90, eagles were plenty on Niagara river and shores of lake Ontario. Ravens were plenty; when they left, the crows came in. Black birds were a pest to the early settlers; they seemed to give way to the crows. The crows are great pirates. I think they robbed the nests of the black birds. There used to be myriads of the caween duck upon the river. In the breaking up of the ice in the spring, they would gather upon large cakes of ice, at Queenston, and sailing down to the lake, return upon the wing, to repeat the sport; their noise at times would be almost deafening."

"In '99, on my return to New Jersey, I went by Avon, Canandaigua, &c. Widow Berry was keeping tavern at Avon; settlers were getting in between there and Canandaigua; there were a few buildings in Canandaigua; a few log buildings at Geneva. On my return the next year, emigration was brisk; the military tract, near Seneca lake was settling rapidly."

Mr. Gould is now 78 years old; vigorous; but little broken by age; relaxing but slightly in an enterprise and industry, that has been crowned with a competency, which he is enjoying in the midst of his children, grand children, and great grand children.

John Mountpleasant, a native of Tuscarora, is now sixty-eight years old. His father was Captain Mountpleasant, of the