

The Book:

STORIES OF EARLY SETTLERS IN THE WILDERNESS

BY
JOSIAH PRIEST
1788 - 1851

It is a pleasure to present to you a wonderful story about a family coming to Delaware County many years ago. It embraces the history of the times and the many hardships that these brave settlers had to endure after the turn of the American Revolution.

What makes this story so special to me is it's about my fourth great grandfather's family, Timothy Beach, a retired seaman captain who turned to farming in Connecticut before the Revolution broke out. The next course of events would forever mold my heritage by the tragedy to Timothy some years later.

This book sheds light to some of these happenings. What is also special is that the author was the grandson to Timothy and much of the information supplied in his writings was by his mother, Deborah Beach Priest, Timothy's eldest child. Deborah, being the eldest child of the family, would have been a very reliable observer of the family's events following the Revolution, making her contributions to the contents of Josiah Priest's book very credible.

Josiah was born the year after Timothy's sudden death and I am sure additional sources to his book came from his grandmother and Deborah's sibling, many of whom lived in Franklin, New York. This Beach family story is in several parts. One illustrates the early scouting for their new farmland by Timothy and his eldest son, Richard who was about 10 years old at the time. They set out in the Spring of 1784 and headed to an area near Catskill, New York. This is where Timothy's brother, Ebenezer, was living since 1778 in Roundtop near Cairo, New York. Ebenezer made his home here after General Washington's Army had secured the North River area, now known as the Hudson River Region of the Catskills.

He was looking for a way to locate Wattles Ferry at the Susquehanna River where he would then travel down river to look for lands of Colonel Harper near the Indian village at Oquago, New York. Traveling uncharted land was not easy in the wilds of the Catskills and so Timothy hired an Indian half-breed to assist him and his son. This book illustrates many hair-raising events that finally force this scouting party to return to the Unadilla area at Wattles Ferry.

Timothy acquires land near Wattles Ferry, which is within the confluence of the Susquehanna River and the Ouleout Creek. In early 1784 this was in Tryon County, but became Montgomery County later that year. Some years later it became Otsego County before finally becoming Delaware County. This farm was part of the Unadilla region that stretched for some miles along both sides of the river. This is from where Sidney is today and up river to just below Wells Bridge. Soon the village of Unadilla was settled on the other side of the river. The opposite side of the river later became known as East Sidney. Timothy's farm later became the land of the Honorable John M. Betts and today is the Johnson Dairy Farm on Covered Bridge Rd.



We have tried everything possible to locate a deed for this land of Timothy's but found nothing. We believe he may have received a quick deed from Sluman Wattles, the only other settler in the area at the time. Sluman was conducting surveys in the area for newly formed land companies. Some of the land was that of the confiscated land of the Alexander Wallace Patent. Timothy and his son returned to his home in Weston Conn. to ready his family for the long trip to their new home.

His family included his wife Abigail Bennett and the following children; Deborah, Richard, William, Daniel¹, Esther and baby Timothy. The family would again travel to Catskill, New York, starting out on the 11th of November, 1784. They again possibly stopped off at brother Ebenezer's home, but the route from here would have to be different since the Indian trail they took though the Catskills earlier would not accommodate the wagon with their belongings. This old trail was only a horse wide, too narrow to get a wagon through. Some 16 years later this trail would become a very busy stage coach route called the Susquehanna / Catskills Turnpike running between Wattles Ferry and Catskill, New York.

The Beaches traveled along the Hudson to Albany and then West over the military roads to Cherry Valley and onward to the Otsego Lake and then down to the headwaters of the Susquehanna at the location where Cooperstown is today. From here they would float down river to their new home. This home was really one of the burned out cabins destroyed by Chief Brant² and British Tories during the early part of the Revolution. It is believed to have belonged to one of the five families that settled in the Rev. William Johnson Settlement back in 1771, which stretched along the river's edge.

The book has other interesting stories; one of Timothy in Weston, Conn. during the Revolution where he was tied probably unjustly for treason when he set out to find and free a neighbor's lad who was enticed into joining the British Army at a very young age. It was possible that he could have been abducted and thrown in the British Army at a very young age by those seeking rewards in a recruitment scheme. Priest also tells about his father's bad experience with his military career going wrong.

Deborah tells of the early family hardships on their new farmland and how she had to leave as a young teen to go and seek employment to help make ends meet at home. Her parents had another child, Benjamin, after they settled on the farm. From here began a string of very tragic events for Deborah, all linked to the Susquehanna River. She first loses her father to drowning in 1787 when he was ferrying a blacksmith friend down river. His wife was pregnant with a son, Jesse Mansfield Beach, born in the beginning of 1788. Jesse was my third great grandfather. She then loses her first husband, Joseph Priest, in 1792 when he was attempting to rescue neighbors who fell through the ice in the river. And in 1829 she loses her second husband, Joseph Lull, to drowning in the same river. This left her with 6 children, although at this time the youngest was 18. Her mother remarried in 1799 and moved to Bradford County, Pa. and died six years since. Several years later she moved to Ohio to be with her daughter, Esther Lull, and nearby to her son Francis Asbury Priest.

This book also has small vignettes of other stories of people and events during the Revolution that he covers in more detail in some of his other books. He often makes references to these other writings, a clever

¹This is the Daniel that owned an inn and tavern in Franklin in 1835. It has recently been restored as a private home.



http://www.dcnhistory.org/inn_beach.html

² Chief Joseph Brant was said to be a full-blooded Mohawk Indian from Ohio, but some say he was only a half-breed. Was schooled in the Wheelock Moor's Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Conn. with the Harper brothers. Brant banded the Six Nations and was a principle in the Treaty with the British under the Providence of NY at Fort Stanwix (the site later to be known as Rome) this was known as the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1768. Brant also fought in the French and Indian War and the American Revolution War. He was looked upon as a very educated and intellectual man, but he soon began to terrorize the Colonials alongside British Tories and soldiers. He even attacked other Indian tribes that did not support the British, but soon he began to killed Tories to gain more payments with scalps and was then chased by both the British and Colonial armies and later entered into Canada where he died.

scheme of advertising, even back then.

What I found unique about this story of Timothy's pilgrimage, was that other historians wrote about early settlers and duplicated this same story almost word for word. Jay Gould³, W. W. Munsell⁴ and Francis Whiting Halsey⁵ all quoted the same Priest story, but in some cases made slight changes to place names and the later ownership of the land that Timothy first acquired. This made me want to find the original book by Priest to compare the differences and try to piece together the reasons for this. Many of the old place names changed over time and thus the later writers updated these names and also some writers were more familiar with the later owners of this property and made light of it.

It took a while to locate a copy of this book. Despite publishing over 15,000 copies of this book in 1837 by Joel Munsell of Albany, New York at a price of about 15 cents a copy, there is hardly a copy to be found anywhere today. I was able to locate one on, film, at the Albany library. This was from the original pages, but they did not copy the 4 illustrations that were typical of Priest's books. The missing etched block engravings were of illustrations to the added vignettes in this book and were not about any of the Beach stories. This book was actually called a 40 page pamphlet or booklet in those days and was part of the method dictated by the publishers. So the stories and illustrations had to be edited to fit this format. Priest tried to add three other stories to the end of the book, but the publisher had to drop the last stories and even changed the size of the type to squeeze in the last story.

I have tried to duplicate the format of the front cover and inside cover as it was published, but the balance of the book has been formatted the best way possible with the word processor, thus the balance of the 40 page book is not presented exactly as written. In respect to the author and publisher, I have left the spelling and sentence structure exactly as it was written to show the writing style of that period. Throughout the book I have added page footnotes to add further comments and explanations to some of the author's words and or statements to better inform you of what he meant. At the end of the book I will give more background to the author, Josiah Priest.

Enjoy the book!

Kind regards,

John H. Beach
Yonkers, New York

*My Beach Lineage: John ~1620 - 1677; Nathaniel 1662 - 1747; Ephriam 1687 - ~1717; Joseph 1717 - ~1756; **Timothy 1748 - 1787**; Jesse Mansfield 1788 - 1871; Ebenezer 1810 - 1848; James Mansfield 1842 - 1916; Howard 1871 - 1944; Charles Thompson 1904 - 1969; John Howard (Me); David John and Todd Henry.*

³ Jay Gould, NYS historian and surveyor. The History of Delaware Co. Chapter V111 <http://www.dcnhistory.org/book/gould8.html> .

⁴ W. W. Munsell, NYS historical writer. The History of Delaware Co. "Pioneers by way of Wattles Ferry".
<http://www.dcnhistory.org/books/munsid.html> .

⁵ Francis Whiting Halsey, NYS historian, The old New York Pioneers 1917 pp. 347-353 "Pioneers by way of Wattles Ferry".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend thanks to the following wonderful people that made the transcription of this book with all the embellishments and comments possible.

First, I wish to thank **Joyce Riedindger** for allowing me to add this book to the Delaware County web site: <http://www.dcnhistory.org/index.html>. Also many thanks to **Joyce Tice** to also allow me to add this book to her website, TriCounty <http://www.rootsweb.com/~srgp/jmtindex.htm> . And to all the great folks associated with these two great sites, I appreciate your help during my research.

Second, this would not have been possible if the book had not been found by **Sylvia Hasenkopf** of Green Co., NY. She located it on microfilm at the Albany State Library on the 7th floor in August 2001. She said they have quite a few of his works on film.

It would not be possible to find all the great things about Josiah Priest and others within his heritage lines without **Jay Priest** who has been researching this line for years. He gave me valuable information that helped lead to the book about Priest's literary works.

The assistance that **Charlie Barrett** of Ceres, NY gave me also added more to the background of Priest including finding his gravesite.

Many thanks to **William Bauer, Polly Judd** and **Nancy Burnett** historians of Unadilla for supplying excellent information about the early settlers of their village.

To all the great folks at the **Delaware, Otsego** and **Montgomery County Record Offices**, I want to thank you for your patience in helping me look for many elusive records.

To all of the many Historical Societies and Libraries in **Delhi, Sidney, Franklin** and **Unadilla** that supplied their valuable data, you are the best.

A very special thanks to my cousin, **Gary Lull** for transcribing the text from the copied book pages to the word processor. Gary is a direct descendant of Deborah Beach Lull.

To all the wonderful comments from another cousin, **Eugene H. Beach, Jr.** made about this book in his Beach Family Journal, I thank you so much. Eugene is the master Beach genealogist who has worked so hard for many years in tracking down the thousands of Beaches. <http://www.beachfamilyjournal.com> .

And I have to give thanks to my other **Beach Cousins**, too numerous to mention, but helped supply valuable information about the Beaches in Delaware County.

And lastly to my wife, **Elaine Beach**, who unselfishly gave her time and encouragement to make this all happen.

My sincere thanks.....

STORES
OF
EARLY SETTLERS IN THE WILDERNESS:
EMBRACING THE
LIFE OF MRS. PRIEST⁶
LATE OF OTSEGO COUNTY N.Y., WITH VARIOUS AND
INTERESTING ACCOUNTS OF OTHERS:
THE
FIRST RAFTSMEN OF THE SUSQUEHANNAH
A SHORT ACCOUNT OF
BRANT, THE BRITISH INDIAN CHIEF:
AND OF THE
MASSACRE OF WYOMING.
EMBELLISHED WITH LARGE AND BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS

BY JOSIAH PRIEST⁷
Author of several Books, Pamphlets, & c.

What is a fictitious tale, compared with *truth* ?
Though horrors, chill the blood, and phantoms
Start to sight, tis not *real*.
For *truth* has romance in't has novelty,
With fights of fancy, and pangs, that cannot
Be forgotten, *because* 'tis *truth*.

The sounding axe, the falling tree
Have notes of forest harmony.
The burning fallow, smoke and fire,
Are things the ploughmen much admire.
The stout log fence, some eight feet high,
Inclosing fields of wheat and rye,
Are viewed by all men with delight,
And held a glorious rural sight.

All trees, the elm, the ash, and pines,
All shrubs and flowers, with creeping vines,
Adorn the wilds of Nature's round,
With chaplet wreath and glory crowned

A L B A N Y:
Printed By J. MUNSELL, NO. 58 STATE STREET.
1837

⁶ Deborah (Beach) Priest / Lull 1768 - 1851; eldest child to Timothy Beach and Abigail Bennett

⁷ Josiah Priest 1788 - 1851; eldest son to Joseph Priest and Deborah (Beach) Priest

BRIEF ALLUSIONS TO THE SUBJECTS OF THE PAMPHLET

The Heroine of the story, where born, and when.
Her father becomes involved in a dangerous affair at the beginning of the Revolution.
His journey through the woods of the state of Maine with three others in depth
of the snows.
Becomes lost in the wilderness -- death of one of their number by starvation.
Loss of their raft on the falls of the Androscoggin, with that of baggage, guns,
ammunition, & c.
Revolution ends -- her father's journey to the west -- employs an Indian guide.
Adventure with the Panther -- howling of wolves.
Explores the wild lands, forty miles from inhabitants.
A singular dream two nights in succession, in the woods.
Danger of assassination by his guide when asleep.
Danger of being robbed and murdered by a company of Delaware Indians - his
guide being at their head.
Lost of his horse by an Indian - its recovery.
Removes to the wilds of the Susquehannah, with some particulars of the journey -
hardships thereafter, & c.
Hunters - Indians - sufferings - hard winter, & c.
Discovery, of hidden property in the woods, with the skeleton of a man - particu-
lars, & c.
Learn of the Indians how to catch fish with a hook - great flood-breaking up of the ice of
the Susquehannah-its grandeur, & c.
Sketch of the life of **Brant**, chief of the Mohawks-see the plate for likeness.
Some particulars of the Massacre of Wyoming-the horrid cruelties of *Queen*
Catrine Montour-see the plate.
Dispersion of the family by misfortune-their restoration.
Arrival of a stranger in that wilderness-his marriage with the heroine of the story
--of his desertion from the army-his reasons for so doing-his capture-
his escape-crosses the Green Mountains, being several days and nights in
the woods-curious dream, while sleeping in the top of a high tree-howling
of wolves-they kill a deer beneath his tree in the night.
Story of the Livermore family, in the woods-their sufferings from hunger.
Story of the White Man' s Tree.
Story of a boy and the first mill of the Susquehannah.
Catching or shad with a bush net by the early settlers.
Fire in the woods-its grandeur by night-fire fighting, & c.
The Misanthrope and his Tree.
Meeting a wolf by a woman-the horrible dream-the cheating miller.
Adventure of the author when a child, with a bear in the woods.
Account or game-roots and berries in the woods-food of the first settlers-forest
flowers, & c.
Carousal of a hunter with a deer.
Curious adventure of the Indians, on a treaty occasion.
First rafts men of the, Susquehannah-its falls and dangerous navigation-with
some curious particulars.
Story of Thomson's escape from being frozen in the woods in winter.
Story of the orphan-the cruel uncle-and the orphan' s revenge.
Stratagem of Pontiac, the Miami chief, in the time of the French war-with other
curious matters, not alluded to.

STORIES OF EARLY SETTLEMENTS.

The Life of Mrs. Priest in the Woods of the Susquehannah.

Stratford in the state of Connecticut was the place where the subject of this part of this book was born, in 1768. She was the eldest child of her parents, TIMOTHY and ABIGAIL BEACH. These and her immediate ancestors were of English origin, who in their day enjoyed character and wealth, such as was of common to the middling class of society. Her father was a seafaring man, having the command of a West-India trader, who till the time of the commencement of the Revolutionary war, had followed the seas; but having been shipwrecked several times, with the loss of all he had, and suffering exceedingly in various ways, among pirates, & c., he forsook the pursuit for others of a more safe character on dry land.

The subject of the story had scarcely entered her eighth year, when the clangor of conflicting armies was heard afar, and from the field of battle there went up the smoke of *blood*, the *price* of liberty; renewing with augmented horrors the recent scenes of the French war⁸; it was the *Revolution*. The Colonies were roused, the foe must be repelled; the flag of the country must be sustained; the eagle that fluttered in its silken folds must be cherished, as it had but newly spread forth its wings, its eye had scarcely shot across these climes, the talons of its strength were now unfolding their incipient terrors, its scream of victory, destined to be heard in all lands, was then but feeble-it *should not die*.

A year and a half of this war had passed away, when her father⁹ became involved in an affair which had nearly forfeited his life, and ruined the prospects and happiness of his family. Of this occurrence we now proceed to give an account.

At the time when General Montgomery went to Canada, to give aid in the reduction and capture of Quebec, a young lad whose parents lived in the neighborhood of her father, fled from his home and enlisted as a soldier in the army. The lad was wholly unused to hardship, having been tenderly brought up, and could not therefore, with any probability, be expected to sustain the toils of soldiery without prejudice to his health, if not to his life. At this juncture the bereaved parents, with lamentation and grief, besought Beach to follow after, and if possible to bring him back to his home. To this request he could but not object, for if he should become an instrument of the boy's desertion, he would make himself liable to the vengeance of the military law of the country. But, when he beheld the vehement earnestness of these parents, that he should undertake the recovery of their son, his prudence gave way, when he consented, though perils and dangers were to be the sure attendants of the enterprize.¹⁰

After a wearisome journey of several days, through deep snow, as it was in the month of March¹¹, and the way, a great part of it, through new country, passing up the Connecticut river, through Vermont, New-Hampshire and a part of Maine he came up with the army at a place where it had encamped in the edge of Canada, not far from Quebec. Here he soon found the boy but, worn down with fatigue, discouraged and forlorn, longing to return to his parents,-deeply deploring his folly in leaving his home. At a convenient opportunity, Beach acquainted the lad with the purpose of his journey, who embraced it with joy unfeigned. They had waited but for a short time after their measures were concerted, when an opportunity to escape

⁸ This refers to the French and Indian War. Also known as the Seven Years War in Europe.

⁹ This would be Deborah's father, Timothy Beach.

¹⁰ Eugene H. Beach, Jr., master Genealogist for Beach heritage, commented in his Beach Family Journal when he reprinted this story. "As well be seen, Priest betrays no embarrassment or hesitation about describing what might fairly be called "unpatriotic" behavior on the part of Timothy Beach aiding an American soldier to desert. He is equally nonchalant when, in another part of the same book, he tells how his own father, Joseph Priest, likewise came to desert. While this does not seem particularly "shocking" today one wonders how such behavior was viewed in 1837, when the Revolution was still an event within the memory of many. Compare the way in which many Vietnam veterans today still regret Jane Fonda or other anti-war activists. While familiar affections undoubtedly played a part of Priest's attitude toward such matters, we wonder if it also reflects the fact the Revolution was not as "popular as it is so often now portrayed. In reality, only one-third of the colonists were active "Patriots" one-third remained sympathetic to British [including a number of Beach "Torys], and one-third were largely indifferent."

¹¹ Eugene H. Beach "to be later noted as EHB," comments: "Montgomery's campaign began in the fall of 1775, so this dates Timothy's adventure as taking place in the early 1776."

presented. There were two others who had also determined to desert, making in all four in number. The now, under the cover of night, committed themselves to the deep bosom of an unknown wilderness, for the purpose of eluding pursuit. They took with them their guns, ammunition, some provisions in their packs, a camp kettle for cooking purposes, hatchets, blankets, & c. The course they wished to pursue, was that track which Arnold, of infamous memory, and his gallant band of about one thousand men had made through the wilds of a part of the state of Maine, leading to Canada, the autumn before, from Boston, to aid in the reduction of Canada. This was the route Beach meant to have followed, so far as should suit the course he wished to pursue. But in this he failed, as the way of the of Arnold had by that time become obscured by fallen trees, and the depth of the snow; so that they were soon lost in the boundless woods. They however, were compelled to pursue the horrid journey, as they dared not return to the army; on which account, they plunged father and still farther into the interminable forest. without a guide or compass, not knowing what would become of them, or where they should finally arrive. But notwithstanding, they felt a tolerable assurance that they should not perish with hunger; as they had with them guns, they could procure food from the wild game of the woods, the deer, partridges and hares, which might fall in their way, till they should come out at some inhabited place¹².

It was early in April when they entered the unknown forests of the northern part of the state of Maine. The snow was deep, especially there among those northern mountains, where it lies sometimes; till late in the month of May. At that season of the year they were liable to another difficulty besides the depth of the snow, which they would not have been exposed to if it had been in the heart of February, or the month of August; which was, the thaws of that season of the year, occasioned by frequent rains; softening the snow to that degree that it could not bear them; consequently at almost every step they sunk to the knees and waist in its depths. Besides this, the small brooks and rills which are very numerous in that mountainous country. forming the head waters of many a stream passing down through the state of Main to the sea, began to swell and rush from the mountains to the lower grounds. These however deep and rapid. they were compelled wad, while the ice and snow thickened the water. Consequently, they were continually wet, both night and day. In this situation they were compelled to sleep, where ever night overtook them. Scraping away the snow in, the midst of some thicket of hemlocks, spreading beneath them the boughs of the trees. when they had built a fire of such dry wood as the surrounding wilderness afforded. At length they hit upon a stream, which however was too large to be waded, and empties into the Andriscoggin river, near its head, in now county of Oxford, a wild and still unsettled region in its northern parts. This creek they followed down till it united with the Andriscoggin; judging very property, that if they should follow the course of the river, they should ere long arrive at some settlement before they reached they reached sea¹³.

At sight of this stream they instantly hit upon the expedient of building a raft, sufficiently large to bear themselves and baggage. This they soon constructed of dry logs, which they found in abundance along the shore, laying them side by side fastened together by poles, passing crosswise, tied down with withs made of the beach and hickory saplins. Thus prepared, they launched away upon the unknown stream, highly gratified with a mode traveling which promised both a spedier and easier way than to wade through deep snows, brooks and perpetual forest. It proved a rapid stream, which hurried them on at great rate. They had not, however, proceeded many hours, steering the craft with poles, when they perceived themselves swept along at an increased velocity, the cause of which they were not then able to ascertain. But it was not long before they could distinctly hear the roar of a cataract below them; but whether it proceeded from water rushing down the mountains, or from falls in the Andriscoggin, they knew not. But this subject was soon cleared up, for on coming round a point of woods, occasioned by a short bend in the stream, they saw in full view, and not many

¹² EHB; While we do not question Priest's veracity, we find it hard to understand how a former sea captain, surely familiar with navigation by sun, moon and stars could become "lost." Rather, we suggest Timothy Beach was forced to take a more or difficult route home to avoid detection.

¹³ EHB "Readers may find it interesting to use these and other references to trace Timothy Beach's journey on a modern map. As noted previously, he found the army camped "in the edge of Canada, not far from Quebec" and from thence appears to have headed due south, across the Blue Mountains into Oxford County, Maine, Despite Priest's description of this as "the northern part of the State of Maine," the route described appears to run through the southwest part of that state, more or less parallel to the New Hampshire border."

rods distant, that the Andriscoggin, in which they were, was precipitated down a ledge or rocks¹⁴. They saw themselves already in the awful suck of the falls, the water furious in its descent, rejoicing in its own uproar and confusion. No possible way of escape presented itself, till just when eternity was about to open to their view its dreaded mysteries, a tree which grew on the bank had fallen exactly out into the stream, maintaining its position by the strong hold its roots still had of the bank. Into the top of this tree they all instantly sprang, holding fast to its boughs with all the energy that mingled hope and despair could inspire, while the current in its fury straightened out their legs on its surface, as if anxious to hurl them down to the abyss below. But they succeeded in maintaining their hold, and of finally reaching the shore, by crawling along on the body of the tree; rejoicing, though wet, and terribly frightened. They were happy for a moment that they had escaped death, which but an instant before was ready to destroy them in its dreary cave. The raft, upon which had been placed all their provisions, arms and amunition, tools and clothing, went down the cataract. One gun, a powderhorn. and the great coat of her father, which he had on, was all that was saved. The gun and powderhorn he had thrown on shore a moment before springing into the top of the tree. This gun and the amunition, with. the bullets which they had in their pockets, was now their all of earthly support and dependance. Though the powder had been a little wet by throwing it ashore. yet this evil they soon contrived to remedy, by spreading it on the crown of a hat, so as to dry it in the sun. This expedient would have succeeded in preventing many a pang of sorrow and of anguish, had not one of their number unluckily. in snapping the gun too near the hat, set fire to a grain of the powder, when the whole instantly flashed, and with it disappeared their last hope.

To construct another raft was now impossible, as their hatchets lay at the bottom of the gulf. But her father being naturally of a cheerful spirit, encouraged his companions in trouble, by telling them, that to give themselves up to despair could bring them no relief, and that the best way was, while strength yet remained, to pursue the course of the Andriscoggin, and if possible reach some settlement before starvation should finish its work. Hope, that seldom forsakes the human breast, now quickened them to new exertions. They set forward with hasty steps, over vales and mountains, untrodden, by the foot of man; but hunger and weariness at length began to paralyse their progress. But as they went on toward night on a certain day, they had just as it became dark. scrambled up a steep, ascent, and on coming to its top concluded to encamp, as it was now too dark to proceed further. But in the morning, what was their surprise to find that two or three rods more in the direction they were going, would have precipitated them down a ledge of rocks of several hundred feet, which overhung the small river, whose stream they were pursuing.

The buds and barks of trees, as those of the birch and basswood, with the wintergreen, which they sometimes found on the sunny side of the hills, furnished their only relief, but afforded a small defence against the all conquering power of unsatisfied appetite. The lad who had been the cause of this disastrous adventure, more than the others, began to fail of his strength, as several days had now transpired. His limbs soon became no longer able to perform their offices, he wept and complained of dizziness in his head; his eyes wandered, the symptoms of starvation were upon him. and appeared to be the vortex toward which they were rapidly hastening. They were now compelled to uphold the young man by walking one on either side of him, as he could no longer stand alone. His feeble wailings were grievous to hear, while the images of loved objects at home, parents, brothers, sisters, and the blest comforts of life, danced before his confused imagination, but never more to be tasted, leaving, as they flitted across the naked memory, pangs of unsatisfied desire.

Their situation had now become desperate; but to Beach they looked with intense eagerness, as he was the leader of the party for further counsel. He now proposed that himself and one more, who were the two the least affected by famine, should seek a convenient tree, with a hollow on one side of it, where they could place the boy. and leaving one of their number with him, the two most able were to go on, and if possible find the habitations of man.

They found a tree, such as suited their views, where they placed him, and wrapping the great coat of her father about him, they left him in charge of one of their number, while they consoled him with promises of soon returning with something to eat, and that he should yet see his parents. It was in the morning, after having spent the night in the best manner they could, amid a thicket situated under a large rock, without fire to warm

¹⁴ EHB "There are apparently a number of falls and rapids on the Andriscoggin such that we are not able to tell precisely where the episode occurred, although those better acquainted with Maine's geography may recognize other landmarks to which fix the location."

themselves, that they started out off, considering it the last effort which their strength was capable of performing, to save themselves from perishing in the wilderness. They traveled that day, following the river, with all their might, till the sun went down, but no habitation as yet blest their sight. Yet they still pressed forward ; when soon, to their unspeakable joy, just as the twilight was fading into darkness, a cleared field opened suddenly to their view, at one end of which they perceived a small log barn; but there was no house in sight, nor sound of human voice. Into this barn they gladly made their way, when still more fortunate, they found it filled with rye in the sheaf, upon which they seized with rapacity, rubbing the heads in their hands, and blowing away the chaff from the kernel of the grain, which they ate, till in a measure they found their hunger assuaged.

They now lay down in the straw. which to them was a bed of down, having slept on nothing better than hemlock boughs spread on the ground amid the snow, which served also as their only covering during fourteen days and nights, the time since they had left the camp, where they found the boy. It was the sixth day from their setting out when they lost their raft, at the falls, and eight more had elapsed since that time, during which the barks and buds of the trees and wintergreens had been their only support, as before stated.

But as soon as the day-light appeared, they crawled from their lair in the straw, to look about, not doubting but inhabitants must be near. They were not long, ere they discovered the path which led off from the barn. This they followed. but had proceeded not above half a mile through the woods, when they heard the yelling of dogs, who had scented them. This showed that they had found the dwellings of man. But there was one house only, and no other except at a great distance down the river. The owner of this was a man of considerable property but had removed from the settled parts of the state of Maine near the sea, to avoid having anything to do in the war, and had therefore bidden himself in this sequestered spot, far from the haunts and skirmishing parties of either side of the question.

At this house they were kindly received, their perishing condition redressed, their minds and bodies comforted with food, with fire and sleep. But on coming to this house, they immediately related the fearful situation in which they had left the other two, the poor lad especially. Wherefore it was instantly resolved that every exertion should be made to save them. Accordingly, in a few minutes three stout men, well armed and with provisions set out to rescue them, following the back track of the two who had just come in. They now rushed on with all possible haste, animated in the highest degree with such feelings as benevolence inspired, their dogs following in their track. But they had proceeded about half the distance to where the two had been left, when they met the man with whom the boy had been entrusted, nearly expiring with fatigue and hunger. He could scarcely walk from weakness, and as he groped his way he moaned and cried as a child would have done in a similar situation; This man they now fed sparingly, gave him a small sip of rum, which they had taken with them, and left him to pursue way to the land of the living. They had, however, questioned him in the meantime respecting the boy with whom he had been left, to which he replied that he was alive when he saw him last, and lay where he had been left, by the side of the tree. They now hastened on to save if possible the life of the wretched and forsaken youth. The man who had been left with him, it appeared. had very soon deserted the fainting child in hopes of saving his own life, in which he succeeded, traveling all high as well as he could, following the track of the others in the snow.

In the afternoon of the same day, they reached the place where was, left the object of their solicitude, who they saw at a distance, stretched at full length at the foot of the tree. Their hearts beat with alarm, when they saw he did not move at the noise of their approach among the brush and snow. But on coming quite up to him, and stooping down, they found him dead. His spirit had departed he had finished his journey alone. Here in the horrid shades of an unfrequented wood, beneath the same tree where Beach had left him, with the hope of saving his life, they dug his grave with sticks as well as they could, and buried him there in his clothes as he was, with the great coat for his shroud. This operation took them all night, when they stuck a fire from the flint of one of the guns, and gathered wood from the fallen and dry trees, where they remained till morning.

Thus ends the history of that unfortunate boy, John Hall, whose most miserable end was the result of acting independent of parental advice and authority, the beaten road of thousands to an early grave.

From this place her father, after remaining two weeks to restore in some measure his emaciated frame, returned to Weston, to bear the heavy tidings of the death of the lad to his parents, and to the bosom of his own anxious family.

Imprisonment and Trial of her father by the Wig Court¹⁵

Now commenced a series of troubles of the most alarming and distressing nature, which fell upon her family of her father, arising out of the rescue of John Hall as just related. That he had gone on the business of recovering and restoring the lad to his inconsolable parents, was for a while attempted to be kept a secret. But this was impossible in those searching times, as every man assumed the right to know and inquire after his neighbor's movements and business¹⁶. Accordingly it was soon known to both the Whigs and Tories, that Beach had gone to bring back the boy from the army. On which account an unfavorable impression was made on the minds of the friends of the Revolution respecting his principles—the Tories having no doubts but his mind was congenial with theirs. Wherefore the moment of his return was their signal to sound his mind upon the subject of the war¹⁷. A certain CAPTAIN MALLET, was the leading agent of this nefarious attempt, who had already a considerable company secretly enlisted under him, destined to join the British army, then in possession of Long-Island. But: attempt was fruitless; for on the evening of the same day they had thought to secure his approbation, this same Captain Mallet and his newly enlisted company crossed over to the Island, where he was to receive a stipulated sum for each man's enlistment, from the British General; but the dupes of Mallet this bargaining and speculation upon their heads was unknown.

But the neighboring Whigs had watched the Operations of Mallet that day, and knew the moment of his departure to the Island, but dare not attack him, as their number were unequal. They followed him, however, silently and unseen, as it was night, in a small boat, and watched him till they had ascertained the house where he entered. and managing in such a manner as to get close to a window of the room in which he was, they were enabled to single him out while engaged in a game at cards, and drove a bullet through his body, where he fell, a monument or vengeance to the insulted genius of the liberties of his county. The whigs now fled to their boats safe, and returned to their homes long before morning¹⁸.

But the next day after the death of Mallet, her father was arrested on a suspicion that he was not true to the cause of the Revolution, predicated partly upon the fact that he had instigated the desertion of John Hall, and other *supposed* acts, which they calculated upon as of further evidence of his *active* opposition to that war¹⁹.

The public mind at such a time as that, could not well appreciate those feelings of his heart, which caused him to yield in the very face of perils, to the persuasions of bereaved parents, but commenced a prosecution against him, in which only his character, the well being of his family, but his very *life* was involved, and at stake. At the set time an investigation of his conduct proceeded, but the prosecutors not being able to prove that which had not been done by him, namely, that of having had enlistment orders, and enlisting men from among his countrymen to join the standard of the enemy, they could not touch his life, but he was cast into prison for one year, as a punishment for his interference in their case of the boy. They did not put him in chase confinement, but admitted bail as security for his stay while he had the liberty of the towns, which was Windham, in Connecticut. But confined to the boundaries of the prison, the patriotism and fealty of his heart to the Revolutionary cause was put to the following test.²⁰

A party of loyalists who had made themselves acquainted with his situation, and not doubting but his mind was highly exasperated against the whig party, attempted to seduce him to pass the boundaries of his

¹⁵ EHB "In British political history the "Whig" faction favored limitations on royal power, in opposition to the "Tory" or royalist party. By analogy the word was also formerly used to refer to American patriots who opposed "Tories" loyal to the crown."

¹⁶ EHB "Priest here hints at what he later makes plain, i.e., disapproval of the "excesses" which sometimes marked the Patriot cause."

¹⁷ EHB "Recall that, at the time these events took place (early 1776), the colonies had yet to formally declare Independence. Under the circumstances one's view's about the conflict might not be so clearly defined as would be the case after July 4, 1776, e.g., it was possible to condemn royal excesses, and so sympathize with the Patriot cause."

¹⁸ EHB "We tried to find out more about this Captain Mallett, so far without success."

¹⁹ EHB "Priest's use of italics for "active seems to beg the question whether Timothy Beach was at least "passively" opposed to the Revolution; at least early on."

²⁰ It should be noted that Timothy and Abigail had several children the war period; therefore it is believed that Timothy did have certain liberties applied to this confinement.

confinement, and go to the enemy. They portrayed to him in glowing language, the glory of their royal masters, cause, while they reduced that of the whigs to a thing of infamous rebellion; they magnified the severity of his present confinement, pouring contempt upon the authority which had thus adjudged him. Such arguments as they used, together with an insatiable desire to be liberated from his confinement, with the consideration also that the loss of a year's time, would subject him and his family to wants and sufferings. All of which, crowding at once upon his soul, staggered him with respect to the course he *ought* to pursue.

The Tories perceived the advantage their reasoning had obtained over him, by the hesitancy he manifested, when they redoubled their zeal, and exhibited the *certain* glory and emolument he would acquire in the service of the king, George III., as an officer in the royal army, of no less rank than captain, With the prospect of certain advancement. At length a thrill of joy, consequent on such a proposal, so wrought upon his imagination, and quickened the pulse of pleasure, that under a cursed delusion, the result of arguments raised from false premises, urged home by the clamor of many months at once, *he consented*.

Now the point was gained, the *Rubicon* was passed; an *immediate* departure to the island was insisted upon where the British army lay encamped, with which he readily complied. But now dark and ominous thoughts began their work of gloom upon his soul; an indescribable shuddering deep within, shook the foundation of his spirit; for as soon as he found himself beyond the prescribed limits, to which his *word of honor* was the *only* barrier, he began to feel the overwhelming turpitude of such an act, which, if persisted in, would soon so situate him. That retreat would become impossible, and that he would be compelled to aid in the murder of his own neighbors, kindred and countrymen; a stigma would fasten on his character, as a vulture on its victim; it would be said, BEACH has betrayed the confidence reposed in him, not for the love of personal liberty alone, but for horrible purpose of *treason*. This is *too* much; *it cannot - shall not be*." Such was the language of his heart, though no sound passed between his clenched teeth; while the glory of this county, struggling for liberty, flashed a ruddy beam full upon his heart, when to live or die in the immortal strife, was his full and last resolve. He stopped; "I shall go no further," was his loud and determined cry-" *so help me God.*"²¹

Here the company came to a full halt; and perceiving the die was cast, commenced a torrent of abuse and reproach, mingled with *curses*. But he heeded them no, his return was instantly performed, for he ran as it had been for his life, nor was it known that he had been away, till the story fell from his own lips, long after it had transpired.

This year which had been fraught with events deeply mortifying, made at length its exit behind the curtain of time; but on the entrance of another, a fairer sky presented; he was restored to confidence, and honored with office and trust, among his compatriots of that war.

Her Father passes through the Wilderness; Employs an Indian Guide; in Danger of being Assassinated; Examines the Lands; Returns to his family.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, Mrs. Priest was about fifteen years of age; she had seen the distant hills illuminated, by the burning of Fairchild²²-had felt the chilling horrors inspired by war and

²¹ EHB "While we may be reading more into this paragraph the Priest intended, we nevertheless come away with the sense that Timothy Beach's refusal to actively join the British cause was motivated more by his sense of honor vis-à-vis his previously given oath ("... the *only* barrier...") than by any heartfelt support for the Revolution. Otherwise one would have to expect him to rebuff his Loyalist tempters from the outset."

²² It is not clear if Deborah is referring to places in Fairfield county or the town of Fairfield itself. Hearing the canon roar from the Port of New York might have been heard from the town of Fairfield since it was closer to Long Island sound, yet some 45 miles from New York Harbor. If she were in Weston, that would have been further inland from Fairfield, some 6 miles to the northeast.

bloodshed-had listened to the roar of cannon from the port of New York, with trembling; had marked the strong agonies on the countenance of her mother, while the life of her father hung on the caprice of a moment; how welcome therefore, was the news of peace. From State to State, the joyful tidings flew; shouts were heard from every quarter - young men and maidens, old men and children, hailed with transport, the day which announces our country free, and gave us a name and being among the nations of the earth.

Immediately after the close of that war, a spirit of emigration prevailed among the people of the New-England States, toward the Western wilderness, which, still continues, and will continue, till the Rocky Mountains are passed, and the shore of the great Pacific receives the augmenting tide of human population where thousands of years before Columbus discovered this country, were people, nations and languages, now unknown, but in their stead, are found, spread over the immense regions of the west, their works of warlike defence, their tumuli and pyramid of earth, as are found in all other parts of the globe. Fifty years will scarcely have passed away, when this will be accomplished cities will arise, where now the wild howling or beasts of prey are only heard, and villas, with hamlets, farms, roads, railways, and canals, with the turmoil of a dense population will be seen, where now the wild ranges of the aboriginal hunter spread abroad, over hill and dale. From these boundaries, the living-flood of human population will flow south till the mighty *Oregon* shall be filled with a civilization and religious race; the Indian will be reduced to cultivation and government; the oceans, the Atlantic and Pacific, will be united by a ship canal across the Isthmus of Darien, when China and Europe shall meet in America, as it was immediately after the flood of Noah. The frozen regions of the North, with its ten thousand lakes will become navigable, the Indians civilized, their furs and fisheries more widely useful; roads will be constructed, so that the utmost bounds of the continent will be passed even to Russia, and all mankind become as familiar with each other as are the countries of Christendom at the present time. The bigotry of South America and Mexico will pass away, and the rational rights; of man be known, appreciated and enjoyed by those miserably deceived portions of our continent²³.

Her father²⁴ also partook of this general impulse, sold his farm which he had acquired after abandoning a seafaring life, and prepared to remove to the banks of the wild Susquehanna- the hunting grounds of the Delawares. But before he actually removed his family, he took the precaution to go and explore the lands of that river. On this journey her eldest brother, then a lad²⁵ of about twelve years, accompanied him.

After crossing the broken and wild region or country lying between the North River²⁶ and the sea, they came to a place on the Hudson called Catskill, where a few families had already settled²⁷. At this place he entered the woods, with a view or coming to the Susquehanna at a place then known by the appellation or Wattles ferry²⁸ a distance of nearly one hundred miles. It was however considered dangerous to penetrate the

²³ EHB "While largely irrelevant to the story about Timothy Beach, this paragraph is nonetheless remarkable in several respects. The reference to "...people, nations and languages, now unknown..." is an allusion to Priest's theories (expressed in his other writings) about the pre-Columbian civilizations. Perhaps more interesting is Priest's vision of America's "manifest destiny" - a phrase newspaper editor John L. O'Sullivan would not coin until eight years later, 1845. At the time (i.e. in 1837) when settlement was just starting to advance west of the Mississippi, Priest nevertheless foresaw "cities, ... villas, with hamlets, farms, road, railroad and canals..." crossing the continent all the way to the Pacific. His prediction as to when all this would be accomplished (i.e., "Fifty years") was like uncannily prescient. The Census Bureau in fact proclaimed the frontier "closed" in 1890, prompting Frederick Jackson Turner to write in his famous book, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, in 1853. As an aside, "Darien" is a region in what is now Panama. It was "upon a peak in Darien" that Balboa [not Cortez, as Keat's sonnet erroneously asserts] first viewed the Pacific in 1813. It is also the site where, in 1698, some 1200 Scots tried to establish a colony to capitalize on transoceanic trade. For these and other reasons, "Darien" was frequently used in the early 19th century to refer to Panama as a whole."

²⁴ Deborah is referring to her father, Timothy Beach.

²⁵ Richard Mansfield Beach 1770/4 - 1830/40; This is the eldest son to Timothy Beach and Abigail Bennett. Small vignettes pop up in this book about Richard. It is assumed that the author received information on these vignettes from his Uncle Richard in Richard's later years.

²⁶ The North River was an early name of the Hudson River.

²⁷ The Village of Catskill was near Carlo and Timothy's brother, Ebenezer Beach was living near here in Roundtop in 1778. He is also seen in the 1790 Census for Catskill, NY.

²⁸ Wattles Ferry was a location on the Susquehanna River where Sluman Wattles', Cousin Nathaniel, ran a ferry service and also built an inn there. It crossed between the upper end of the Village of Unadilla and East Sidney where Rte. 357 crosses the bridge is today. This was the starting point of the Susquehanna / Catskill Turnpike that was built in the late 1790's along the route of the old Indian trail used by the earliest explorers, trappers and settlers. Refer to "West Through the Catskills - The Story of the Susquehanna Turnpike" by Dorothy Kubik; ISBN - 1-930098-26-X.

distance without a guide, as there little or no traits of human industry to mark the way, being almost a continued wilderness. Here he was so fortunate as to find a half breed Indian, who knew the way, and was willing to become his conductor, appearing to be a fleet, shrewd and intelligent native.

The land which he wished to examine in particular belonged to COLONEL HARPER²⁹, who had, as is well known, taken an active part in the border warfare with the Indians in Tryon County, on the Susquehanna, and was situated some where near what is still called Ochquaga³⁰ an ancient Indian town. To this place the guide was to accompany him, at a stipulated price.

They left that place on horseback winding their way amid the woods, on their course from Catskill, which now passed through Cairo, in Greene county, where also were a few families scattered along beneath the mountains, who had returned or remained after the war, as all that region had been traversed by the depredating Indians and Tories. From the place now called Cairo, they pursued the Patawa³¹ route, which lay through a wilderness of the most hideous description; passing over rugged and mountainous world-but is now thickly settled with enterprising farmers, mechanics and merchants.

The first day after leaving the Catskill they advanced to somewhere near the place which is called Osbornville³², and as near as can be calculated a distance of about twenty-five miles. Here they encamped for the night, having gathered grass for the horses on the margin of the head waters of the Schoharie creek. Along this stream from thence, even down to a place called Breakabin³³, or the place of GENERAL PATCHIN, the same whose captivity among the Indians, we have sometime since published, there runs a gloomy gulf, the haunt of wolves, bears and panthers, at that time, as well as of deer and some few elk. Beneath a huge clump of hemlocks near the creek, they scraped away the brush, built a fire refreshing themselves from their sacks of provisions and from a small green glass bottle, which had been filled with the true West India Jamaica³⁴, an article altogether, at that time. superior to the same article now in use, They now address themselves to rest, beneath heaven's canopy, so much of it as could be seen bending over the narrow space between the hill, which embrace the head of the Schoharie Creek. The hour of midnight had nearly arrived, the fire had waned to a few coals amid the ashes; when the shrill but loud and terrifying scream of some animal awoke the slumbers from their dreams. They now listened when again it struck the ear from another quarter, but somewhat nearer. The guide, being an Indian knew instantly what kind of animal it was, and whispered "A Painter ---a Painter" meaning panther. With its habits, and the best manner of encountering this animal, he was perfectly acquainted, and therefore seizing his rifle, examined the load and the priming, bid his companions be silent, but to cover the fire. During this time the screams of the creature continued at short intervals, but still nearer. It was, he said, calling its mate, on account of the scented game-themselves and horses with the view of all attack by a leap from some tree, or from some favorite position of the ground. The agility of this creature is not exceeded by any other animal of the whole earth, it being able to spring, when hard pushed, or frightened, nearly forty feet on a level³⁵. Their strength is amazing, as well as their ferocity, and untamableness of nature.

The Indian had directed Beach to have his rifle in order, as he might have use for it, although not much acquainted with its powers as a hunter. He did so, when they remained silent, not even breathing as loud as was natural, listening with the expectation of more yells. But in this they were disappointed, as no sound of the animal could be heard. As to this the Indian said, in a whisper, that so much the more was their danger, and that the animal was creeping on its belly towards them for a leap, unless it had gone entirely off. They waited

²⁹ Colonel Harper and other brothers bought a large tract of land from Chief Brant after the Treaty of Nations with the British. He was schooled in Conn. with Brant. The town of Harpersfield, NY was named after this Harper.

³⁰ Ochquaga was a large Indian camp along the Susquehanna near where Windsor, NY is today.

³¹ The Patawa Trail was pronounced Patawva by the Indians which was a Dutch word "Batavia" named for a flat fertile pleasant valley. This trail ran through the mountain pass between Windham and Ashland along the Batavia Kill stream. Oddly enough, there was another Batavia Kill running east of Roxbury, but they never connect even though they came within a few miles of another. This river, near Roxbury, also ran through a fertile valley and was named about the same time. Ashland was once called Scienceville.

³² Osbornville is now called Windham, Greene Co., NY. It was originally called Batavia until the name was taken for the Dutch settlement in Genesee Co., NY in 1802. It also had the name of Windham Center.

³³ Breakabin is in Schoharie Co. and was the place of a very large Indian camp during the period of the Revolution.

³⁴ This was another name for good rum.

³⁵ EHB "This figure seems exaggerated, According to several web sites, *Felis concolor* - variously called the mountain lion cougar, panther, catamount or puma - can leap somewhere in the range of 15 to 25 feet."

however but about fifteen minutes, when there came suddenly on the darkness of night, the continued *bleat* of a deer, together with the suppressed yells of some creature which had the mastery of it, and was rendering it to the death. Now was the time for Indian, who instantly, while the animal was destroying the deer, bent low down and glided off in that direction as silent as a specter of darkness; while Beach in the same manner, and as near as he could follow after, rather shyly however, feeling inwardly a strong reluctance to this venture very near the scene of action.

It was now but a few moments, while the feeble cry of the deer, still struggling with its enemy, was heard, when flash the report of the Indian's shot gave notice that the crisis has arrived. All was now still except the rustling of some creature on the leaves and dry brush, which showed that a change had passed over the parties of the conflict. The Indian stirred not till all was still, when he gave a yell, such as Indians do when the battle is won, and at the same time returned to fire and reloaded.

They now gathered from the shaggy trunk of a yellow birch growing near, as armful of its dry and pendant bark, of which they made several torches, and lighting one, ventured boldly to the spot, being assured by the Indian that all danger was over; for, he added, he had put a bullet between the eyes of the creature. But this proved not exactly correct, as on coming to the place, there lay stretched beside the deer, which was, still breathing faintly, a *panther* of the largest description, having a shot exactly opposite the heart, which, on examination, was found to have pierced the lungs.

The deer they now put out of its pain, by dispatching it in as quick a manner as possible. They then dragged the animal to the fire, but delayed to skin it the morning. During the residue of the night they kept up the fire, feeling no desire to sleep, being thoroughly roused by the incident which we have just related, keeping up the spirits by now and then a draught from the green bottle of Jamaica.

In the morning they skinned the panther, which measured eight feet from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail³⁶. Its hide they carried with them, as a trophy of the adventure. But the deer they left as it was, except that they cut a steak from it hunches, for their breakfast, which they easily cooked over the coals.

But after the panther was killed, the residue of the night was passed by no means in silence; for the wolves had scented the blood of the conflict, and ran howling about till nearly daylight. Also the scream or another panther was heard, several times, but at a greater distance. These noises were but sport for the Indian, which he often imitated at the top of his voice, but effectually prevented their too near approach by the violence of the fire and the frequent shots of their guns.

Thus passed the first night of their journey in the woods. No other incident worthy of record took place during the residue of their wilderness trip, although out several nights, except the sight of plenty of deer, and the howling of wolves, where they very much abounded in those early times.

When they first were awakened by the screams of the animal, they could easily have frightened away, by firing of their guns and the rousing of their fire; but the Indian wished an encounter, as he had no fears about its issue.

They at length came out at the desired place on the Susquehannah, where the river is now crossed by the Unadilla bridge, which place at first was called Wattles' Ferry, as before mentioned.

From this place, after a day's halt, they pursued their way down the river, having no other road than the path of the Indians, to the lands of Harper. About sunset they encamped for the night at a place which appeared convenient, on a little eminence, near the bank of the river, not far from Bainbridge³⁷. At this spot, while preparing a place to sleep among the leaves and brush, they heard below a splash in the water, which somewhat alarmed them, not knowing from what cause it might proceed. But presently a small batteau made its appearance, owned and manned by Mr. Herrick, who had been down the river on an exploring tour. Here they all encamped for the rest of the night; but before they parted in the morning, an exchange of one of Beach's horses for Herrick's boat and provisions took place. Herrick paying the difference. The next morning her father directed the guide to take the remaining horse and proceed to the place known and described by the Indian, as he was acquainted through all that country of woods, as a place where they were again to encamp, when night should overtake them, while Beach and his little son glided down the gloomy river in the bateau. In many

³⁶ EHB "If true, this would be a large specimen, since the average modern adult male mountain lion measures approximately 7.5 feet in length, of which the tail comprises a third or more.

³⁷ Bainbridge was first called Jericho.

places, while passing along its rapid current, it appeared as if the river had come to an end, on the account of some sudden bend in the stream. At other places the mountains, clothed to their summits with dark and dismal forests, came abruptly down to the very brink of the water, while on the opposite side lay large tracts of alluvial flats, which for ages had been the home and hunting grounds of the red men of the woods, when arrows and hatchets of stone were their only arms.

They arrived at the place appointed; their guide was there; the sun was setting in silent majesty, kissing the tops of the lone mountains, with his red and level beams; twilight, the harbinger of both night and day, was bringing darkness to an end. Again their bed of brush was laid beneath the boughs of the thick leaved forest, their fire built, their supper taken, and each being weary laid him down to rest.

At this place Beach had reason to suspect that himself and little son were the objects of assignation; as laying down he observed the guide more than usually particular in the choice of the spot where he intended to compose himself to sleep, and that he kept his hatchet close to his side, a thing which he had not been as careful to do at any other time. Accordingly, during the whole of that night, her father dared not indulge in sleep for a moment; only *pretending* to do so, while with half closed eyes he watched the motions of the Indian by light of the fire. Several times he saw him move his hand toward the tomahawk, when her father would rouse a little, as if he happened to wake just it time, when the perfidious Indian would seem to sleep again.

Morning at length came rushing from the east, whose orient beams of light broke and scattered the hated spell, which had conjured up fears and terrors in sad reality, amid the dreary darkness of that fearful night. At this place they again fixed on a spot known and described by the Indian, at which they were again to meet, but at noon instead of night. Here they parted from their guide, the Indian following on horseback, while Beach descended the river in his boat.

At noon, as agreed, he found the spot, knowing it by some certain mark described; but the guide did not appear. Fears were now entertained that the Indian was about to prove treacherous, and that he had gone to someplace where he knew that he could find villains like himself and his own nation, to aid in the murder and robbery of her father, seeing he had not been able to effect it during the past night. In all these conjectures he was the more confirmed, on examining his little son, whether the guide had questioned him at any time about money; when to his surprise this was the case, and also that the boy had innocently told him that his father possessed a thousand dollars in gold, and that it was with him; but how to escape the danger was unknown.

From this place, during the afternoon, he as silently as possible dropped down the stream to where the land was which he intended to view; where finding a convenient place, he ran the canoe in among some thick willows, so as to hide it from the Indians, if they were about there³⁸. By this time it was night, when he again sought out a place not far from where he had the canoe, to sleep; scraping away the leaves, but not daring to strike a fire, lest if there were Indians, they might the more easily find him.

During this night, he was greatly disturbed in his sleep by a dream, in which he saw his father, who had been dead many years, standing by him, looking very earnest upon his face, and saying in an earnest, impressive and commanding manner, "*Timothy go back, go back!*" twice repeating it, so that on awaking, he found the impression strong on his mind, as it had been in reality³⁹.

The next day he examined the land, wading through nettles, brambles and vines, along the margin of the river, the evidences of a good soil; but notwithstanding it had cost him so much pains to visit this spot, he did not fancy it. It is likely from the behaviour of his guide, and from the impression of the dream, that his mind was unfit for observation, as he spent but a short time in looking about, but returned to the place where he had lodged the night before. Here he again encamped beneath the open heavens, with no other covering than the tops of the trees, and without a fire, for the same reasons as before. At this place, as the night previous, his

³⁸ EHB "This was the first suggestion that Timothy Beach was traveling by "canoe." Recall that Priest previously says Beach traded with Herrick for a "batteau," a name generally applied to a larger vessel of European design."

³⁹ EHB "Surprising as it may now seem, a belief in prophetic dreams was widespread among the Puritans well into the 18th century. While some critics condemned the practice as "occult," others defended it on the grounds that prophetic dreams figure prominently in Scripture, e.g., Matthew 1:20; 2:12; 2:14 and 2:19. Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* cites with the approval with several stories of prophetic dreams experienced by ministers which subsequent events appeared to prove true. Samuel Sewell's diary likewise records a number of such dreams, along with what he took to be their fulfillment. For an excellent discussion of the role such "signs and portent" played in Puritan society, See: David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement; Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England*, Harvard University Press, 1990."

father came a second time in a dream, and angrily repeated the former injuncture "*Timothy go back, go back!*" which he now, on awaking in the morning, considered as a warning from the spirit of his father; on which account he determined not to settle so far down the river, which was at least forty miles from any inhabitants.

He now hastened back again as fast as he possible, still wondering what had become of his guide and horse⁴⁰. The second day had nearly worn away, in toiling up the rapid river, by means of a settling pole⁴¹, when coming near the shore, in order to take advantage of the shallowness of the water - the bushes being very thick in that place, so that a person could not be discovered at ten feet distance; - here all at once, without any warning, the guide announced himself by a loud and horrid yell, which reverberated up and down the shores of the river, with repeated echoes, the most dismal. But no Indians appeared with him. It was desirable, however, to ascertain whether he had seen any since he had been absent. To ask the question direct, he knew would be of no use; he therefore requested to know if he were not hungry, as he must be or necessity, having been gone nearly two days, unless he had been with Indians, at some place where they dwelt. But to his dismay, when he said to him, in a friendly tone of voice: *Are you not hungry?*, will you not have something to eat? -his answer was, NO, in a very gruff and peevish manner. Beach then wished to know where he had been, and the reasons why he had deserted him⁴²; but to these questions he made no answer nor appeared to notice them, but immediately proposed that, the boy should come on shore, and ride the horse, while himself would get into the boat and help to push it up the river. To this her father agreed as he very much needed help, the water in many places being very rapid⁴³.

But in a very short time. the child not knowing how to find the way, wandered quite out of hearing; being misled by the paths of the wild beast, or of the Indians. On this account, he was compelled to run the boat ashore, and to go in search of his son or he might be entirely lost, wondering further and further in the unknown wilderness; besides it was nearly sun down, and the boy if not recovered, would have to pass the night along, and lost in the woods.

This was the exact effect of the Indian's previous calculation; not doubting but in the absence of his; father, he should be able to find and seize upon the gold, and then to disappear. But the money as it happened, was too securely hidden among the baggage, to be discovered before his return; by hallooing soon found the boy, and came back, to the boat. He now tied the horse to a tree, and came with the boy into the batteau again, intending that the Indian should go on shore and take charge of it, as soon as he should have helped him up the rift.

They now pushed on together, up the rift, but while about in the middle of it, where the water was the most rapid, while struggling hard against the current, the Indian gave a loud *yell*, which Beach knew to be a signal of some kind, according to the manners of the Indians. In a minute or two, there appeared no less than six Indians, rushing from the woods with their drawn knives, who leaped in the water, and come wading toward the boat, as it not more than waist deep, nor that in many places.

At this occurrence, his guide pretended to be frightened, and urged Beach to take up his gun and fire among them, well knowing that one shot could not kill them all, and that the survivors would make short work with him, when the money, sooner or later would be found by *himself*, as it is not likely he had told the Indians of *this* part of the booty. But there was his horse, his gun, with the ammunition, his clothes and provisions, and a keg of rum, which he had bought of Herrick with the boat. These commodities were inducements or sufficient magnitude to inspire the other Indians to commit the robbery, if not a murder, while the guide his eye on the money alone. But Beach perceiving all this at a glance, instead of firing at them, met them at the side of the

⁴⁰ EHB "Of course, it seems probable the Indian guide entertained similar thought, since it was Timothy Beach who "silently as possible" abandoned their appointed rendezvous."

⁴¹ EHB "One does not generally "pole" a canoe since, given their light weight and shallow draft, they can generally be paddled satisfactorily even against the current. A bateau, however, would often be poled upstream, and Priest again refers to the vessel as a "bateau" in subsequent parts of his narrative."

⁴² EHB "Once more Priest seems to forget that Timothy Beach and his guide had "fixed on a spot... at which they were again to meet,;" and that"... at noon, as agreed, he [Beach] found the spot....," only to leave it before the guide arrived."

⁴³ EHB "While the guide might indeed be better able to help pole the boat upstream, it seems odd Timothy Beach would take him aboard the boat and put his son ashore. One would think the boat to be the best "defense" position for Timothy and his son; keeping the guide at a distance while allowing for escape by crossing to the opposite shore or floating downstream. So too, Timothy must have foreseen his son might become lost (as in fact proved true) or else fall into the hands of the guide's cohorts."

boat, with an bottle of rum in his band, saying in the most *conciliating* manner he could assume, "the war is now over, we will all be brothers: we not fight but be friends." "So me will," shouted one of the number, while the others appeared bent on mischief. He now instantly proposed that they should help push the boat up the swift water, without getting into it, then be would on shore with them, and would have a good frolic all night. He however was inwardly much terrified, not knowing how to escape. He tied the batteau to a straddle⁴⁴, filled a kettle with rum, and gave it to the Indians to carry to a convenient spot, who marched off with the prize, the rest followed after him, guide and all, the boy excepted, who curled down in the boat and kept to himself still, and as much as possible out of sight.

The guide now, no doubt, considered his victim and money safe enough, as that during the night, his purpose could be easily effected, either by his own hand, or that of some of the others. They now sat down in a ring on the ground, while the tin kettle went rapidly around, as they took deep and long draughts of the rum; the effect of which, soon began to show itself, by their yells, and their leaping about. At this moment. when they appeared to be wholly occupied with themselves and their freaks, he stepped to the boat us if to fasten it better, when he gave it a violent push out into the river, and leaping into it as he did so, shot over to the opposite side.

It was now nearly dark, as the whole transaction had taken place between sun set and the end of the twilight; and during the whole time a dense black cloud had been corning up from the south, which just at the moment of his leaping into the boat, burst forth in a tremendous thunder shower, producing almost instantly a total darkness. This, it is likely, was the only opportunity in which he could have made his escape, for in the uproar of their drunkenness, and the thunder of the coming storm they did not perceive his intentions soon enough to prevent him, as they had no guns, or at least. none had been brought to view as yet.

The storm increased, the lightnings flashed around, the thunder rattled terribly among the mountains, the darkness was palpable, while the rain poured down in torrents, all of which aided him in his flight exceedingly. They however, soon perceived that he had escaped, and as soon attempted to follow ; this they did a mile or two along the shore, which he knew by their yells, heard between the claps of thunder, but soon died away, overcome by the rain and the rum. All night he pursued his course up the river, not regarding the fury of the tempest, pushing the boat up the frequent rapids, sometimes wading to the arm pits, ere he was aware of the depth of the water, meaning thereby to get along faster than he could shove it with his setting pole. At day light, he found himself at the mouth of *Carr's Creek*^{*45}, having run during the night about ten miles as the place where the Indians came upon him was about five miles above Bainbridge, on the Susquehannah.

At the mouth or the creek they stepped on shore, and fastened the boat, when in order to get a little out of the pelting of the rain, which yet continued with all its fury, they hastened to the shelter of a thick clump of trees, where they had not stood many minutes, when a flash of lightning struck a large pine tree but a few rods from them, and tore it to atoms, scattering it in fragments about the wilderness. From this place they travelled through the wet and dripping woods to the place where the Unadilla bridge now is, where at *first* a Mr. Wattles⁴⁶ had made a settlement. Of this man he obtained help to get his boat up to that place, as the river had now become too strong in its current, from its sudden rise, for the strength of one man, in the management of the boat.

A few days after his arrival at this place, where he sold his batteau, the Indian who had gave him so much trouble, was taken up in the woods, in the possession of the horse, by two persons who had been out on a tour or hunting and exploration, by Richard and Daniel Ogden, brothers. These men knew the horse, having seen it when Beach was at the Ferry, a few days before, compelled to fellow to come with then to give on account of his behavior. But Indian - like he answered nothing to the charges of which he was guilty, and here the matter ended, as no further measures were taken against him.

Near this place, called Wattles-Ferry, even to this day so called by the oldest inhabitants on the

⁴⁴ EHB " Now largely obsolete, the term "saddle" denotes a small tree or sapling."

*Priest described this Creek as: "A small stream coming from the east, on the Delaware side of the river, well known in Delaware and Otsego Counties."

⁴⁵ Carr's Creek was named after a man who settled there in 1772 with the Johnson settlement near Sidney, NY. Carr ran a grist mill. When Chief Brant and the Tories chased out the Patriot families of this settlement, Carr stayed and sold grain to the British.

⁴⁶ Sluman Wattles was doing surveys for newly formed land companies. He first came to the area about 1783 with his, Cousin Nathaniel Wattles, who ran the ferry service and later built an inn here.

Susquehannah, Beach selected a farm⁴⁷ in an entire wild state. It is now known by the name of *Ketchum*⁴⁸ farm, and is in the town of Sidney, Delaware County, N.Y. He then returned through the same woods, carrying his boy on his horse behind him, till he arrived at Weston⁴⁹, his place of residence, in old Connecticut, but then known by the appellation of *Down County*, by all such as had removed from thence to the westward.

Thus ended a journey, replete with hardships, dangers and sufferings. as a prelude to many more, yet to befall him and his family.

Removal of the Family to the West, and the Hardships they were doomed to pass through.

On the 11th of Nov. 1784⁵⁰, Mrs. Priest, then Deborah Beach, in her 15th year, commenced her journey, with her father and family, passing through Albany⁵¹, nearly sixty years ago, at time when that city was surrounded by land which might have been bought for a trifle per acre, where now is thrown out its streets, its parks, and pleasure grounds. They arrived finally at Otsego Lake, which is the head of the waters of the Susquehanna. Here they dismissed their teams, as the road proceeded no farther, put their effects on board a batteau, and glided gently down the lake a distance of nine miles, to its outlet, where for the first time the family encamped for night in open air. This was the spot where now the flourishing and beautiful village of Cooperstown is situated⁵².

In the morning, on awaking in the midst of trees and brush wood, my feelings, says Mrs. Priest were vastly different from any sensation ever before experienced. Here thought I great Nature dwelt, in all her wildness, seated on her own primeval hills. As a queen she reigns, with an infinite retinue, habited in the fading leaves and grass of a thousand autumns. On her right and left silence stood robed in russet livery; while all around fogs and gloom held their place of horror. No sound disturbed her state, save the rush of the winds, the roar or thunder, the wild Brant's scream in her airy flight, the howl of beasts, and the yells of the Indians. The sun in his rising the next morning, did not appear as when viewed from the hills or Weston, in Connecticut, coming in grandeur from the populous East; but seemed now to ascend out of the distant woods, and dreary mountains, as if the earth and sun and sky were but newly made, and that time his young beams were for the

⁴⁷ Timothy's deed has never been found, but it is believed he may have received a Quick Deed from Sluman who was a partner in one of the land companies he was surveying at the time. The land along both sides of the river, where the ferry was, was that of the Alexander Wallace Patent, which was confiscated by General Washington and Wallace was imprisoned in Long Island. This land was turned over to Goldsborough Baynar by the state. He turned it over to a land company to be surveyed and divided up for sale to the new settlers.

⁴⁸ There has been no name of Ketchum ever found to own land here. Other historians said it was the farm of the Honorable John Munson Betts. The Beers 1869 map clearly shows the Betts Farm and the Betts deed gives a description close to what Priest gives for the location of Timothy's farm. We traced the deed back through two other owners to 1804 where it seemed to stop. Timothy's land was at the confluence of the Susquehanna River and the Ouleout Creek on the Delaware Co. side of the river. This was next to the ferry which was on the other side of the creek.

⁴⁹ This appears to be a typographical error. It should read Weston, Conn. Recall that at an earlier event Timothy "returned to Weston" after his unsuccessful attempt to retrieve John Hall from the army.

⁵⁰ EHB "It may seem odd that Timothy Beach would move his family west in the late fall, Assuming adequate food and supplies to survive the winter, however, the decision makes sense, giving him time to clear and prepare his land for planting in the following spring. Compare the experience of his neighbors, described later, whose arrival earlier in the year afforded them little chance of putting in an adequate crop ready for harvest by fall."

⁵¹ Timothy did not take the same route he and his son took earlier that year, because the old Indian trail was only a horse wide and could not accommodate their possessions which was possibly on a wagon. Most likely they first visited Timothy's brother Ebenezer.

⁵² EHB "As with his prior journeys, described earlier, it is interesting to trace Timothy Beach's route on a modern map. Note that while his first exploratory trip was made by way of Catskill, thence overland to the Susquehanna, his return journey with his family was through Albany to Otsego Lake and Cooperstown."

first time darting their radiance athwart the jagged mountains as the pioneers of day⁵³. On passing out of the lake they entered a narrow stream scarcely more than two rods wide, and for some distance nearly filled up with drift wood, rendering it extremely difficult to get along at all; this was the mighty Susquehannah at its head, whose waters mingle with the ocean in the Chesapeake. But the headlong stream soon drove through all impediments, and by evening had wafted them down to the mouth of a small creek, now called Cherry Valley creek, where they went on shore, having discovered at this place a small deserted log hut, which offered a shelter for the night.

Here for the first time she had a sight of the native Indians, a company of whom had also stopped at this place to encamp, as they were on their way farther down the river to their ancient winter hunting grounds. They had built themselves a monstrous fire, around which they were merrily preparing their supper of a buck which they had shot that afternoon, every now and then giving a yell of joy, which reverberated horribly among the woods⁵⁴.

On the second day after leaving this spot, about noon they were shown by the father, while descending the speed of arrow, the last rift, or rapid, previous to the ending of their journey, on the east side of the river, the place of their future home. Here a small clearing presented itself, with a log house in the center, surrounded on all sides by a lofty forest of the sugar maple, whose umbrageous⁵⁵ tops waved in the bleak winds of November, with a sullen roar, impressing the mind with a pleasing and pensive grandeur of the forest while from the ten thousand branches of the deep woods, smitten by the whistling winds, there came forth a sound - the music of the wilderness.

Exactly opposite this situation stood a lofty mountain, exceeding steep and thickly timbered with the evergreens pine, the haunts of panthers, bears and wolves, while at its base, meandered the Susquehannah, the noise of the whose rapids above and below, were heard with gentle yet ceaseless fray. It was now late in the autumn, whose winds had stripped the rest of the trees of their faded habiliments, and scattered them over the surrounding earth, forming a bed of red and yellow leaves, as soft to the tread of as Persian carpets.

On entering this house they found signs of occupants, a half a loaf of bread made pounded corn lay on the table, which was formed of a split log. Near the door stood a stump, hollowed out at the top; this was their mortar, which answered instead of a mill, to reduce their grain to the flour, for the purpose of food. The occupants soon returned, who proved to be white hunters, and were much surprised to find the house so suddenly filled with strangers, but not displeased. They had brought with them a deer which they had shot: this furnished a welcome repast, of which the family gladly partook, together with the hunters, who were also very weary and hungry.

The next day after their arrival there, I took a ramble, says Mrs. Priest, in the surrounding woods, to become more acquainted with our situation, when I found the remains of several small log houses, or huts, crumbled to ruins, said to have been the habitations of a few Scotch⁵⁶ families, who had penetrated from the Mohawk into this wilderness before the revolution, but at the time when Brant and his Indians scoured the woods of the Susquehannah, from Wyoming to Cherry-Valley, these families went under his protection to the Mohawk again but never returned⁵⁷. In one of those huts was found the skeleton of a man who had been killed by one of Brant's Indians, the cause of which was as follows.

One of these Scotch families was in the possession of a considerable sum of money. A knowledge of

⁵³ EHB " At the risk of sounding cynical, we question whether Deborah (Beach) Priest would have reacted to her first encounter with untamed Nature in the almost mystical way Priest suggests. The Puritans had a much darker view of the "Wilderness," believing it to be just, i.e., wild and wicked harboring dangerous Indians and beasts. Consistent with their theology, the natural world (like human nature itself) was something to be subdued and tamed so that, in the words of Isaiah 40:4 "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain." It was not until Romantic Movement in the early 19th century (e.g. at the time Priest himself wrote) that a more benign view of Nature emerged, as exemplified in the works of James Fenimore Cooper or the paintings of the Hudson River School (Thomas Cole *et al*)

⁵⁴ EHB " It is to Timothy Beach's credit, we suppose, that his prior "bad experience" with Native Americas on his earlier exploratory trip did not prevent him from encamping with his family near this group, not withstanding their "monstrous fires" nor "yells of joy."

⁵⁵ EHB " I.e., forming or affording shade, such as an umbrella."

⁵⁶ This was said to be part of the Rev. William Johnson Settlement; five families that came here in 1771.

⁵⁷ Actually Priest was wrong here. Several families returned along with Rev. William Johnson's wife and some of his children. The reverend died in Mohawk in 1783.

this circumstance was come at by means of the Tories, some of whom knew the condition of all these families before the war, and whether it was the Indians, or the Tories painted like Indians who destroyed the poor Scotchman, was not known; however this might have been, those who knew it had determined to secure the money. The man had sent his family on, up the river, under the protection of the ferocious escort, while himself had remained a little to indulge probably in feelings of regret and sorrow that the fate of war was driving him and his little ones, he knew not where, and perhaps never to return. But fortunately, so far as the money was concerned, it had been given by the man to his wife, who had it with her. But this was unknown to the robbers, who, while he stood musing, rushed in upon him, demanding his money, but not obtaining it, struck him down through rage, who fell, and remained where he fell till after the War, when his bones were taken up and buried. The name of this man was Skillings⁵⁸⁵⁹.

Sketch of the Life of Brant the Mohawk Indian Chief

According to our promise, made in the title page of the pamphlet, we here give a brief account of TA YA DA NA-GA, or AH-YOU-WA EGHS, the Brant, with some traits of his character, never before published in this country. The rest have been placed before the world by Mr. Campbell, of Cherry-Valley, in his History of Tryon County.

Brant was a full blooded native, and a sachem or chief of the Mohawks, of celebrity in the time of the revolution, and in the service of the British. He was educated in Lebanon, Connecticut, in an institution established there by Doct. Wheelock. He was sent to that school at the instigation of Sir William Johnston, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, prior to the revolution, who lived on the Mohawk river. After he had returned from school, and was grown up, Johnston took the young man into his service, and employed him in public business, in his transactions with the Indians-to whom he became extremely active, in advancing the civilization of his aboriginal countrymen. He even translated into the Mohawk tongue, the book of St. Mark, for their use and reading and intend to have written the history of the *Six Nations*, whose history runs back - as I have shown in my work entitled *American Antiquities* - nearly to the time of Christ.

Brant was a handsome Indian, being of a bold and intellectual countenance broad shouldered, heavy limbed, and well calculated to command and endure hardships. In the Canada - whither he retired after the war, he was regarded with honorable distinction, where his progeny now are living in the enjoyment of their father's honor; a son of his having been often elected as a representative to the Provincial Assembly of Canada.

For all the interesting particulars of his doings in the war of the Revolution, see Mr. Campbell's book of *Tryon County*, above noticed. The trait of which we have spoken belonging to his life, never before published in this country, to our knowledge, is as follows.

"Joseph Brant, the celebrated Mohawk warrior, was fostered by Sir William Johnston; he was so named from a Dutch foster father, who took care of the little savage when a child.

When grown up, he became the head of a band of intrepid Mohawks, and the terror of the long-knives - as they call the Americans:-and when at length he was disarmed by the peace, at the end of the French war, he again took the hatchet against the Indians who had joined the hostile side. The late Marquis of Hastings, Earl

⁵⁸ EHB " Notice that Priest does not claim his mother herself found the Skillings bones, only that she came across the cabin where this murder occurred. Read as a whole, one gets the sense Skillings body was discovered and buried by others long before the Beach family settled nearby."

⁵⁹ Priest might have been incorrect in indicating that the name was Skillings. In the History of Delaware Co. by W.W. Munsell he talks about Sidney, NY and the first settlers of the Rev. Johnson Settlement. He names them as Johnson, Sliter, Carr, Woodcock and Dingman. It is possible that this Skillings body was that of Sliter. The name Sliter was spelled several ways, Slouter, Slougher and Tluyter. This person was really of Dutch background, not Scottish. He came from the lineage in New Amsterdam (New York) one of which was Governor Slougher. On the other hand it was known that both Sliter and Johnson were the only families of the settlement that were not loyal to the King and the British Army and fled to the Cherry Valley fort in 1777. I found no evidence that Sliter ever returned to the area of Sidney during or after the war. It is also known that several members of the Sliter family married into the Johnson family and were living in Unadilla after the war. The other three families were Torie supporters, but had to later flee when the Colonial army took control of the area. Carr returned after the war, but it is not know if the other two families did. If Priest was correct about the name Skillings, then it is possible that Skillings was another man who drifted into the area during the War and was caught while occupying one of the abandoned cabins.

Morris, admired the address and courage of Brant, and became his patron. His lordship, more than once brought him over to England, and introduced him to the *beau monde*.

On one occasion he took our Indian to a grand masked ball, *painted, plumed*, armed, and dressed out in all points, in the real costume of an Indian warrior. He far eclipsed the motley group, and became the lion of the rooms. We are told a stately Turk, accompanied by two *houris* wished to ascertain if the sachem *really* wore a mask-one half of the face being painted *black* and the other *red*. He therefore cautiously touched the tip of the nose, with the intent of just raising the mask. Of all people, an American Indian cannot tolerate any personal freedom. Brant took fire at once. and in *good earnest*: he supposed they wanted to make a butt of him, for their buffooneries. He assumed a most frightful aspect, flourished his tomahawk and gave the *war whoop*, with such a terrific yell, that the entire assemblage were seized with a panic, and thrown into great confusion. Turks, Jews and gypsies bear leaders and their bears, Falstaff's friars and fortune tellers, sultans, nuns and Columbians, scudded away, trundling and tumbling over each other, to leave a clear stage for the Mohawk. ”-*British Magazine*.

It is said of. this chief, that he was rather humane than ferocious, and that he was not actually in the massacre at Wyoming, but at a few miles distance, who did not, therefore, partake in the murder of that battle. But whether this is true we cannot tell, and if it were true. we ascribe it to accident rather than to a desire of his not to be there, as he was true hearted in the British cause, and promoted the destruction of the Americans with all his power and cunning; which as a *partizan*, was right, if he was conscientious in the choice of the cause he had chosen.

In the above account as given from the English Magazine, we see in all is majesty and terror, the fierce and unconquerable grandeur of the native savage; manifested at a time and a place much calculated to lower the tone of those high feelings of innate confidence and courage; where the nobles of the realm of England, with the those of other countries, with the softness and beauty of the most accomplished ladies, in the glare and splendor of all that is great and imposing around, stared full upon him; yet in all this presence, in an instant, when he imagined his *honor* was assailed, even by the simple touch of a Turk's finger, he burst as an angry meteor in the heavens, and would have split down the. Turk with the edge of his gleaming tomahawk, had not one of the nobles - at whose instigation he was accoutred as he was, and introduced into that company-stepped in between them and explained the matter to Brant, when he slowly, but thoughtfully returned in his mind to be better state or feelings. The company now retired, but with increased estimation of the character of American Indians, and never to forget the heart-frightening yell of *Tayadnaaga*-the Brant. (See the plate, and the figure in the midst, which is a true likeness of that chief, having been copied from a portrait of his, taken by the celebrated Ames, 1761.⁶⁰) Even the *bears* which were led about the rooms, acknowledged the terror of that rolling dreadful yell and shrank with fright from its sound.

In this place, although a short digression from our narrative, we shall give a sketch of female Indian barbarity, which took place at the massacre of Wyoming, in the time of the Revolution. The fate of that battle is



⁶⁰ Thayendanegea, The Great Captain of the Six Nations

Painted by Ezra Ames (1768-1836).. Hand-colored lithograph, Plate 71. McKenney, Thomas L. & Hall, James. *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*. Philadelphia: F.W. Greenough, Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), 1742-1807 (Mohawk) was painted by Ames in the last year of his life. During his life, he was the subject of many portraits by artists including Paul Kane, Gilbert Stuart, Charles Willson Peale and George Romney. Born in the Ohio country, Brant was raised in the Mohawk Valley of New York. About 1759, his sister Molly became the consort of William Johnson, the wealthy and influential businessman, land speculator, and Indian Superintendent. Johnson became Joseph's mentor and benefactor, even sending him to a Connecticut school. After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, Brant settled in Ontario.

well known to have been disastrous in the *extreme*, in which no less than one hundred and fifty women were made widows, and six hundred children fatherless.

But the particular case alluded to was perpetrated by Esther, the Indian queen, or a female sachem, whose right name was *Catrine Montour*, who besides the deed we are about to relate of her, acted the part of a fury, as after the battle was over, wherever she could find any who were wounded, she would dispatch them, and then plunder the bodies of their clothes and money, or whatever they might have about them. Her tribe I do not know the name of, but lived somewhere in the Genesee region.

The conflict at Wyoming had raged some hours, when: at a certain point or the battle, viz., on the left wing, the savages were too powerful, as they had taken the advantage of a mistake our men had made in misunderstanding the word of command. This point happened to be near the river where about twenty of the Americans plunged into the water with the view of swimming over, and if possible to make their escape. But the Indians and Tories had seen this manoeuvre, and flew to the spot, who instead of firing among them as they could have done, offered them quarters if they would return peaceably to the shore and surrender. Trusting to this promise, fifteen of them did return, and gave themselves up prisoners of war, while the others, five or six in number, made their escape to a wonderful manner, amid the bullets of the enemy.

They now were disarmed, but not tied. Queen Esther being not far distant, a yell of the Indians, of a *peculiar* note, brought her to the spot, when they were immediately led a short distance from the shore into the woods, where there was a clear and open space; here they were requested to sit down in a circle in a circle, not knowing for what purpose, as they trusted to the promise of receiving quarters, did not therefore apprehend immediate danger. They were so disposed of as that they faced each other, while a strong Indian was placed behind everyone of them, with their hands on their shoulders, so as to prevent them, as it appeared, from rising up and making their escape, when they should come to know why they were thus placed in a circle on the ground. But the reason of this arrangement soon appeared, as the ferocious queen came up behind them, and with a war club at a blow commenced knocking out their brains, one by one, in a very leisurely and business like manner, passing around the circle to the right. (See the Plate.)

Among the prisoners was a lad of about fifteen years old, by the name of *William Buck*, who was not held as the others were, on the account of his being a mere boy. But when he saw what the queen was at, and witnessed the blow which broke the skull as it came down, heard the death groan of the victim, and saw the blood spout from the mouth and nose and the ghastly wound of the dying man, as he fell backward and in a brief struggle yielded up his spirit, he was frightened, and springing to his feet he fled with the speed of distraction, crying piteously as he ran, aiming to hide himself somewhere in the woods. This however availed him nothing, as a swift Indian soon overtook him, and commenced to soothe him, saying that as he was but a little white headed boy, they should not hurt him; all the while notwithstanding, was leading him toward the fatal circle, but as they came pretty near it, an Indian crept softly up behind, and sunk the blade of the hatchet to the helve into his devoted head.

During this period the work of slaughter still went on with the others, till there were but two left of the fourteen prisoners. One of these was a man of extraordinary strength and activity, by name *Libeus Hammon*, who seeing now but *one* between himself and eternity, aroused the instinctive love of life, while there rushed by him as the glance of lightning, the images of his wife and children, the blood mounting from his appalled heart to his head, rushed with the violence of a tempest through all his limbs, diffusing strength and desperate resolution, when he sprung forward from under the pressure of the Indian's hands, who stood behind him, and gaining his feet, turned at the same instant and gave the Indian a blow with his fist, as quick as powerful, which laid him prostrate at his feet, he then leaped over *him*, and with the violence and speed of a leopard fled into the woods. But two Indians as swiftly pursued, whom he soon perceived to gain rapidly upon him, from the gripe he knew there could be no escape unless by some stratagem he could elude him. Accordingly just as they were about to pounce upon his back, in full career, he having gained farther side of a thicket, darted suddenly out of a straight line in which he was running, and passing partly around this clump of bushes made his escape, while his pursuers were pitching headlong over each other, having stumbled from the force of the speed, because confused as well as hurt in all probability. Thus they lost sight of him, and gave up the chase.

At this time, (namely, the battle of Wyoming,) among many of the young children which were carried away by the Indians, there was one who when he was grown up, became a chief of one of the tribes, and was

well known by the name *Corn Planter*, on the Allegany reservation. He was noted for his opposition to the introduction of Christianity among the Indians, and of their being educated. It is said he was the child of an Irish family, whose mother having fled into a cornfield was there found and killed, while they saved the lad. From this circumstance, he was named *Corn Planter*, as a substitute for his true name, which was unknown to the Indians of whom it is said, that he was as radical an Indian savage as those who are born such, no way differing from the other Indians in a love of their mode or life.

But to return to the family. The shortness of the time between their arrival here and the setting in of winter, prevented the building a larger and a better log house. During this winter they become experimentally acquainted with cold, hunger, and a variety of sorrows, known only to the pioneers of an entire new country. Money was of but little use, as food was not to be bought where there was none for sale, as scarcely any as yet had been produced. There were but five families in the whole community, who having come in the spring of the same season, had not therefore had time to raise but, little, consequently food of any kind was scarcely to be found among them⁶¹. To procure it from a distance was also extremely difficult, there being no settlement where it could be had, nearer than old Schoharie, a distance of about seventy miles, to which place at that time the road was not much better than none at all.

The dreadful winter at length passed away, and with it, in a measure, their sufferings, as by this time they had learned of the Indians how to catch fish, which abounded in the river, coves and creaks of the country. Without this relief they must have finally perished. But now a new scene of things, such as I had never before witnessed, says Mrs. Priest, were about to captivate our attention. March had begun to yield its rains; the snow to feel its dissolving power; every rill and creek of the mountains to swell and roar, plunging forward over crag and cleft to the vales below. The devious Susquehannah began to put on majesty, drinking largely of its annual libation from earth and sky, swelling the headlong waters, which as they rose lifted and tore away the ice from the shores, and promontories. Loud sounds were heard to moon along the thick rib'd ice, the covering of the waters bursting in ten thousand places with the noise of tempests. But now commenced a more amazing display of the power of the waters. Already its banks were overflowed, and the distant forests of the flats along the river, inundated with the sweeping flood, to the very base of the hills. The broken ice began to move, large islands of it to push upon each other, still breaking more and more, urging its way forward with resistless fury. Now the roar increases, large files of ice plunge into the woods on either shore; the trees bending, groan and snap asunder beneath the overwhelming load, still passing on till thrown in huge heaps along the shores and in the adjacent woods. Still the main channel pursues its way, every moment adds to the enormous weight it bears. As far as the eye can view, from the top of commanding eminences, above, below, all is commotion, plunging onward with a load and steady roar till stayed on some long level in the river. Here it makes a stand, or but slowly moves; as a vast army on the verge of battle, which halts to adjust its prowess, then move again. So the river in its grandeur resumed its course a moment, while from shore to shore the ice stood piled in pyramids, chafing up and down as if anger. But now the level narrows to a defile between the mountains, where all at once the mass for many miles above, with whirling eddies at bay. So halts the embattled host, whose scouts the foe, the council cool in war, debate the safest mode to bring their legions fiercely to the fight. Now suddenly the waters rise and boil and foam through all its heaps and ranks of massive ice; as generals do, inspiring courage in the soldier's breast. The upper floods having gathered head, urge on with augmented power its course; expectation stands aghast; the lowering herds with stupid gaze wonder at the noise, deer from their coverts, scamper to the hills, dogs howl from fear at dismal sounds, horses snort, bounding with staring eyeballs both right and left, when all at once the frozen dam gives way and rushes on with sound of thunder. Fury and desolation mark its progress, trees torn from their roots plunge here and there old timber with fences swept from the fields and woods, mingle in the ruin, onward roars the unconquered deluge, till from Otsego lake to where the frightful Caughnawaga dashes to foam the descending river with the subdued and shivered ice: which ends the scene.

The sun-that grand luminary, whose undiminished flames has not since the fourth day of Creation ceased to rejoice the realms of a wide spread earth. Had gained in his mouth, the month of March, a higher northern altitude, throwing his fiery beams through all the frozen woods by day, while by night the chill of frost

⁶¹ EHB " See my previous note regarding the Beach family's migration in the fall."

resumed its sway, thus alternate between the powers above and the powers below, the juices of the maple were made to flow, when was commenced the curious and arduous work of manufacturing maple sugar.

This curious subject has no less amused the curious in foreign countries, when told that from a certain tree of sixty feet in height, growing abundantly in the forests of North America, sugar, equal in flavor with color with that made in the West Indies abundantly extracted.

It is said of a certain foreigner, who having heard that from the trees of America a sugar might be made in any quantity, having bought a farm in this country and settled on it, forthwith tapped a great number of trees, without any regard to the *kind*, or to the *time* of year. Accordingly without discrimination the maple, the oak, the beech, the pine, and even the hemlock, were propitiated alike to give forth the far famed nectarine juices of the anticipated sugar, but without effect; this mistake however was soon rectified by some neighboring *yankee*, of whom the conceited foreigner was forced to ask information in the matter.

A more pleasing sight than an extensive sugar works, filling up by its various branches of operation, that space of time with profit and pleasure between the ending of winter and the blooming spring, is not witnessed in a new country. To see from a thousand trees or the majestic rock maple, at once the luscious juice streaming as from so many fountains, is highly delightful, especially to the isolated backwoodsman, as well as profitable, for so it proved to the family of Beach, who were want of all things.

But soon this scene had passed away, when May and June with their thousand blossoms decked the earth. Here flourished the mountain laurel in vast profusion, covering in many places entire ranges of the mountains, which in time of spring is thickly set with flowers, entirely covering of the evergreen limbs and leaves of the shrub with an immensity of red and white. This bramble although this bramble a poisonous one become the emblem of honor, and as such, in ancient times encircled the bows of kings and heroes because it is an evergreen. On the plains among the sweet fern, grew a beautiful flower called the *honey suckle*. Among the leaves and blossoms of this bush are found the succulent May apple, a fruit resembling the Indian fig of China. The banks of the river and margins of lesser streams, were in many places adorned with the water pink, a flower of the deepest red that grows on nature's commons. The wild balm of the alluvials, with its scarlet silky head, stood in groups here and there, protected by the warrior nettle, well known to the bare legged and bare footed boys of those early times. The wild lily of the hills, meadows and marshes, bowed here and there its maculated head, which, while it attracts the eye, impresses the mind with a solitary yet tender emotion. This flower has been copied in gold and silver work, wrought to adorn palaces, and to crown with beauty, the spires of populous towns, both in ancient and modern times. On the streamlets in shady, and secluded places, grew in the very water's edge, a sweet scented and beautiful flower, variegated with stripes of white, red and yellow, having in shape a surprising resemblance to a real *lady's slipper*. Here grew in marshy places entire patches, of the golden *cowslip*, the herb of which furnishes a genteel repast, not to be rejected by even the sumptuous tables of luxury.

The box wood, a tree known to ancient and to modern artists as a wood valued for musical instruments, was seen as stranger enlivening the gloom of the mountains, with a redundancy of its large white and aromatic blossoms. The *mountain ash* found only in the dreary swamps of cold and elevated lands, the slender branches of which are beautifully ornamented with thick clusters of scarlet berries, and are in the height of perfection in the depth of winter, forming a delightful contrast with the whiteness of the virgin snows.

Here were various nut bearing trees, such as the butternut, the chestnut, the walnut, and the beech nut, growing on the highland ridges and in the vales, furnishing food and luxury during the evenings of the long winter nights. The grape vine was also found climbing the tallest trees, and winding its tendrils among the branches of the forest, from whence the purple clusters in autumn, in rich and beautiful profusion, hung out to the tempted sight, as tradition says it once did, in the Eden of Adam and Eve, and was the forbidden fruit.

At this time a certain root now almost, if not quite extinct, grew in abundance on the richest soils along the shores of rivers and creeks, which come early in the summer to perfection; this was the *leek*, and for aught we know was the famous *Egyptian* leek, and to the first settlers was of great use, being in no sense inferior to the onion, except in size. Another root, which when roasted was also good for food, was the *ground nut*, about the size of a large musket ball, and grew abundantly in the mellow soil of the river flats, in a wild state. This too is now nearly extinct. In some places were found a few wild plums, brought no doubt from the far west, by the Indians, where they flourish abundantly. Mandrakes, a fruit now but little known, was then exceedingly

abundant, growing on a plant about a foot high, bearing but one apple; but this, when fully ripe, was highly palatable and good, as a transient luxury.

A multitude of berries, of the most delicious flavor, grow here without end. The whortle berry was chief, as to quantity, covering entire tracts of mountains and plain, of a certain description of soil, grew here; furnishing both to me and animals especially the bear, a good and nutritious food. But besides these there was, and still is, the *blackberry*, the raspberry of various kinds, the goose berry, with the wild currant: all of which are delicious and to the first settler were a grateful relief in the hour of hunger, during the season which produce them.

In addition to this, at the opening of the spring, innumerable birds caroled from the budding branches of the woods, while ten thousand came flying from the south, of such kinds as follow the mild temperature, between cold and heat, rioting in the beauties of an endless spring. Of such is the pigeon, countless millions of which came flying on the winds, stretching out their feathery battallions across the whole arch of heaven, in endless flocks, filling the wilderness with cheerful cry of "*tweet, tweet,*" as if they called for wheat, their favorite food. These little innocents, sent of heaven to supply their wants amid the solitudes of the west, after the horrors of such a winter, were received at that time with shouts and gladness. The net, the gun, with every other means which the hungry ingenuity of the inhabitants could invent, were employed to ensure them Ducks of several kinds, flying up and down the river, enlivened the scene; settling now and then in the eddies of the stream, offering their breasts to the shooter's aim. The mountain partridge, the wildest bird among the fowls of the heaven was heard to *drum*, sitting upon its *chosen* log, to cheer its mate during the sober hours of incubation, with beating wings, which quiver in the wind not less rapid than those of the burnished humming-bird, the sound of which is heard afar, the only drummer of the wilds.

At this season of the year, (March and April) large flocks of the wild goose or brant high soaring in the air, passed onward in the forked shape of the farmer's drag, following by families the garnet scream of the parent leader, on their annual jaunt, from the islands of the sea, to the north and western lakes. These sometime by a messenger from the sharp, quick-spoken rifle, were briefly invited to descend from the fields above, laden with flesh and feathers, plump and fair. a dainty good enough for kings.

Even the night was not without its music; as the sweet but lonesome whip-poor-will sung in all directions its three syllable song, of, "*whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will,*" till morning light. There hooted the owl, a bird famous among the Greeks for wisdom, the sounds of whose voice is better far than no noise at all, and bespeaks by its gruff and far sounding tones, a race of feathered giants peopling the tree tops of the highest mountains, as well as the deepest glens, at midnight.

In those early times, before the Susquehannah was interrupted by mill-drama, and its lucid waters beclouded with sawdust, it abounded with shad, from the sea. These in migratory waves sought the still deep waters of Otsego lake, where to hide their *incipient* millions, the *embryo* children of the *shad*, for another year's generation, which the first settlers, without the common seine, contrived to take in the following singular manner.

A whole neighborhood of the inhabitants would join together, and select some island situated near the middle of the river, with a low gravelly beach, extending some way up the stream. At the upper end of this they would drive down into the sand and gravel a row of large stakes, in a circle of sufficient circumference to enclose a rod square of space. At the upper end of this space a door was left open, looking up the stream. Between these stakes, which rose two and three feet above the level of the water, they wove from the bottom to their tops small green bushes close together, so that a shad of the smallest size, could not pass through. Then from both sides of the door was driven a row of stakes extending-quite to both shores of the river, running in a slanting direction up the stream; between these also was woven green bushes, in the same manner as the pound or circle, destined to receive the shad. When the was finished the whole company, consisting of fifteen, twenty or thirty, as the case might be, went all together several miles up the river to a convenient still deep place, where they as quickly as possible constructed a huge bush fence extending quite across the river, made of the green bushes of the woods, fastening it firmly together; this they called a "*bush seine.*" It was then loosened from the shores and drugged down the stream, the water above being filled with canoes, men, boys and dogs, hallooing, barking, yelling and splashing in the water, making as much noise as possible. By this means the shad were frightened, and turned down the river, while on followed the *seine*, with infinite uproar and sport, toward the

winged enclosure. But, in passing over the rifts or shallows, the frightened fishes frequently were seen tumbling over each other, flapping and floundering to get into deeper water ; at which sight a louder clamor still would be set up, magnifying in a tenfold degree the number, vastly beyond reality, even to thousands and millions. Soon the floating win row of woods was driven on between the spreading wings of the weir, as it was called, which caused the waters to rise a foot or two within, doubling as it was forced between the wings, concentrating a mass of brush, canoes, boys, dogs and men, inclosing sometimes several hundred shad in the fatal pen. Here leaping in among them head and ears, the fishes were thrown on the dry beach, where they were placed in as many heaps as there were sharers, when one of the number turned back and cried them off, as it was said of him, "Who shall have this?" and "Who shall have this?" till the whole was disposed of, which ended the fishing expedition, when they dispersed to their several homes to enjoy the fruit of their labor.

By the second year after their arrival at this place, Beach had made considerable improvements on his lands. A variety of the rewards husbandry were springing from the soil, promising in the autumn an abundant recompense for their labor. They had among the variety or the field, of the field, a beautiful plot flax, from which they expected to replenish their clothing, which was now nearly worn out. But there was a difficulty to be surmounted in relation to the enjoyment of the anticipated clothing, for if the flax should come finally to maturity, they had neither loom, wheel, hatchet, nor cards, to manufacture it with. Happily however this embarrassment was removed in the following manner. On a certain day as her father was rambling through the woods of his farm, he found hidden in a thicket of brush, a large chest, filled with various articles, among which were three linen spinning wheels, two flax hatchets, and several pair of hand cards, the very articles they stood in need of⁶². This chest had been hidden by the Scotch, at the time when they left their homes for the Mohawk, in the time of the Revolution, under the protection of BRANT, the British Indian Chief of the Revolution. Doughtless much more of their property thus hidden still undiscovered, for as late as in 1823, there was living in New Baltimore⁶³, on the North river a Scotch woman, a member of one of those families, blind with age, who stated that much of their iron ware was buried just as the upper end of the Unadilla village, in Otsego County NY., very near the waters edge, on the bank somewhat elevated; being herself an eye witness-who was, with the rest of her neighbors, as she related, taken away by Brant, but never returned to take them up again.

The family felt now a tolerable assurance that the period of their privations was near its close, for the time of gathering in the produce, above alluded to, had nearly arrived. But that their wishes should be consummated, was not the will of heaven; their kindling hopes were doomed to be blasted, in an hour all was lost; the season of which was as follows.

On the sixth of October⁶⁴, the winds began to blow from the South indicating rain; the thick vapors scudding rapidly along the angry heavens darkening the whole horizon. Presently the rain began to dash in slanting torrents to the earth. Soon however, the wind which was furious, veered around and blew from the north, when the clouds seemed a little disposed to break and scatter. This was cheering for on the coming up of the storm they had feared all immediate inundation of all their fields which lay on the margin of the river, the bank of which was very low along their whole course. But this respite of their fears proved but of short duration, for soon the whirling clouds resumed their blackness, and again poured down their overwhelming

⁶² EHB " At the risk of sounding cynical, common sense suggests the chest of tool was found first thereby promoting the Beaches to plant flax. Recall that Deborah (Beach) Priest had herself discovered traces of the Scottish settlement during her own walks through the woods soon after the family's arrival, in which case it would be natural to look for anything useful these previous settlers may have left behind. In all events we find it difficult to believe Timothy Beach would invest the time and labor necessary to put in a crop for which he had no foreseeable use (especially in the first year or two of the settlement, when food crops would have more value), only to be saved by the "miraculous" discovery of the tools needed to make linen. This is not to say Priest intentionally embellished his account. Rather, this strikes us as a kind of "family legend" which more or less "embellishes itself with each retelling."

JHB Notes: Eugene does make sense although it was known that these early settlers were frightened off their land by Indians and British soldiers and they hid a lot of their belonging in brush and in pits in hopes that they would return later to again regain use of these articles. Some of the settlers never returned and these articles were found by others. Even William's (son of Timothy) daughter, Emily (Beach) Dewitt wrote about Timothy's last son, Jesse Mansfield Beach, and how they found buried artifacts left by prior settlers. The timeframe was not clear, but believed to be after Timothy died. As far as spinning linen, most families had wheels and looms, but it is conceivable that this family did not bring these items with them from their farm in Conn. They could have anticipated using these items at their neighbor's homes.

⁶³ New Baltimore was a village on the Hudson River above Catskill, NY.

⁶⁴ EHB " The is presumably October 6, 1785, i.e., some eleven months after Timothy Beach and his family had settled."

waters. Soon the small brooks and rills rapidly swelling, came tumbling from the mountains to aid the coming deluge in the Susquehannah. It was now near night, which soon set in, and hid by its terrible darkness the sight of devastation and danger. But sleep, she says, came not to her eyelids that night, not withstanding the down pouring rain and roaring winds, all night long she watched the progress of the rising waters, frequently loosening the bateau and canoe, till by daylight they were moored at the *threshold* of the door, which ascertained at least, a rise of water full ten feet in a few hours. The utmost of their fears was now realized, as they were entirely surrounded by the overflowing river, the house being on the highest ground. Their fields lay whelmed beneath the flood, while the brown deluge passed by with dreadful roaring bearing on its bosom huge trees, drift-wood, stacks of hay which had been gathered on the little meadows above. Wheat and rye in the sheaf, pumpkins and flax turn up by the roots, or swept away in the stack or bundle, all afloat in one promiscuous rain; the rain subsided, the waters fell, the fields soon appeared, again; but *all* was lost.

At the time of this flood there was a man living below them on the banks of the river, by the name of BACON, whose habit was to live entirely alone; such was constitutional make that he could not endure the company of any one, especially that of a woman. During the night the water had risen so rapidly, that it surrounded his hut while he was asleep, and swept away, his canoe. When he awoke he found himself totally isolated rendering it impossible for him to escape, and the waters still rising, while at length involved and swept away his house. But having foreseen this event he had climbed into the top of a large elm which grew close to his hut, where he remained three days before his situation was known, with nothing to subsist on but a raw pumpkin; this happened to drift against the flood wood which had lodged against his tree, and others that stood around. This he contrived to come at by sliding down, holding fast to the small limbs which grow very low on the elm, till his feet touched the flood-wood, when he seized the pumpkin by the stem with one hand, and then re-ascended to devour it. Yet after all he learned nothing from this severe lesson, of the value of human society, but continued a misanthrope to the end of his days. In after years he was known us a miser; but living as a hermit by himself, and being watched, as it is reported, by a knavish fellow, was seen by him to bring a quantity of specie in a very secret manner in the woods, amounting to about four hundred dollars, which at a convenient time, the spy on the movements of the poor old fellow, seized and bore away, giving it once more a free circulation among mortals of a more sociable turn of mind, while Bacon was left to mourn over the empty place, where once reposed the glittering dollars, his only company.

We now, says Mrs. Priest, betook ourselves to gather what we could from among the mud and sand, from the willows and flood-wood along the banks of the river, which was now our *only* hope against another dreadful winter. Alas ! thought I, whither shall we flee for help; reduced as we now are, by this sad providence, to the verge of ruin. As for me, I found myself nearly destitute of clothing, and saw no way but to leave my home in quest of work, to earn among strangers the habiliments of dress and comforts of life.

But whither could I go; there were none living near but were in a similar situation with myself, and had lost their all in the same way, and could not therefore, employ me, either to their own advantage or mine. Accordingly, in company with my father, I went very soon after this occurrence, in a canoe up the river, toward the place now called Cooperstown, in quest of employment. A few miles below this place lived a family with whom my father, was acquainted, whose circumstances in life were independent: where, through his influence, I obtained a temporary home.

From this house he pursued his course up to the place named, from which on the next day he returned to where I was, and tarried all night. But oh!, the parting moment was soon to come, when I must hear the solemn words, farewell "Deborah" from the lips of my father, as I had a few days before from those of my mother, and perhaps never to see *them more*.

This was tearing the untouched ligaments of filial affection, which amid all the sorrows through which I had passed, till now had remained untried. But the moment came, when he presented me with a green waist ribband, saying, "*be a good girl and remember me*" Amid tears fast flowing from my eyes, I saw his solemn face, when he turned away, never again to look upon his child; for I saw him no more.

After awhile I left this place, and went farther toward the Mohawk in quest of another. The day on which I left this family was gloomy one, for it snowed fast, and the distance to where I wished to go was twenty miles the same now known as Cherry Valley. The way was chiefly through woods, where there were no inhabitants on the road. I set out on horseback - but alone. Many were the sad reflections which passed my mind

at this time; I remembered the comforts of former days, in the land of my nativity, old Connecticut, but now was reduced to taste a cup of which I had never dreamed while there.

During these reflections, while descending along the deep snow path down a steep hill into a hemlock gulf, the gloom of which approached nearly to that of night, suddenly a monstrous wolf darted into the road, and stopped just before me. I knew not what to do; terror in an instant had frozen all my powers, so that I was nearly past feeling; it glared upon me a few moments, then slowly retired into the woods, constantly looking back, as if hesitating whether to attack or flee.

At length I came to the little settlement where so much was endured from the knife and tomahawk of the Indians in the Revolution, under Brant, [whose likeness was given in the plate] where I was a total stranger, and where I was to leave the horse on which I had rode, to be returned the first opportunity. Here was an Inn kept by a Mr. Canon; at this house I alighted, it being the most natural stopping place for a stranger. To this family my father was partially known, which was my only introduction.

I told them the story of my misfortunes, and that of the whole settlement, in consequence of which I wished to be employed, to earn for myself a maintenance. My youth-for I was but seventeen-and a knowledge of the sufferings of the settlers down the Susquehannah, occasioned as I have related, interested these people greatly in my favor. They immediately told me there was then a gentleman in the house, who lived on the Mohawk, and that he had made enquiry for some young woman to aid his aged mother in housekeeping. Instantly a thought flashed across my mind, that God had now provided for me, and had sent this person to the very *place*, and at the very *time*, when most I needed help. But notwithstanding this consoling persuasion, I felt extremely embarrassed, my heart trembled, for I knew that I was wholly unacquainted, with the accomplishments I a person of my age ought to be in possession of, and did not know but I might be rejected on that account, as they told me that person was a *Judge*, and that his house and manner of living was the *first* the country afforded. However superior the advantage on this account might be to me, yet I deeply felt I had much rather go and work for some owner or a humble log house, such an one as I had been accustomed to while at home. But instead of experiencing embarrassment and confusion, when introduced, I found a sensation of an entire difference character; so amiable was his countenance, and his voice so conciliating, that confidence came immediately to my relief. He enquired my name and parentage, the reason why I sought employment, so young and so far from home,-when I told him the story of our misfortunes, as I had the family before; to which he gave his earnest attention to the end, and then told me that his mother, he thought, would be suited with such a one as I appeared to be. I now left the Inn, in company with this gentleman, ISAAC PARRIS⁶⁵ by name, who in the course of about two hours ride, brought me to his home⁶⁶. After an introduction to the family which consisted of his mother, a sister, and several laboring men, I entered upon the duties of my station, with a heart as cheerful as a poor unfortunate could be, torn away as I was, by stern necessity, from the home I loved, although that home

⁶⁵ Judge Isaac Paris, Jr. built his house on the Clarke property with some of the wood from Governor Clarke's old house in Ft. Plain, NY on the Mohawk River in 1786 just about a year before Deborah went there to care for Isaac's ailing mother. This house was also the location of his business for trading goods. It later became the Bleecker Home and today it is the Ft. Plain NYSDAR Chapter home and museum.



http://www.mvls.info/ispy/fortplain/ftp_site06.html .

⁶⁶ EHB " We believe this to be Isaac Paris, Jr. ,the son of Isaac Paris/Parris of Montgomery County, New York. The elder Isaac Paris came from Strasburg, Germany, and settled in at Stone Arabia, Montgomery County, New York, c. 1737. He was a successful merchant and an early Patriot during the Revolution. He was taken prisoner at the Battle of Oriskany and subsequently murdered by Indians allied with the British. Col. Isaac Paris had three sons, Daniel, who married Catherine Irving, sister of Washington Irving; Peter and Isaac, Jr. Deborah Beach's description of this man's kindness is by no means unique. Local histories record that in 1789 settlers south of Utica suffered a severe crop failure and forced certain ruin. In response, Paris is said to have proclaimed "No matter about the pay. Your women and children must not be allowed to starve. Take what you need to feed them, and if at anytime in your future you are able to pay for it, it will be well, but your families must not be allowed to starve." In gratitude for such generosity , the settlers named their town Paris in his honor. See: The Fort Klock Historic Reservation web site at <http://www.fortklock.com/paris.htm>

was now a scene of sorrow and wo.

Six months had elapsed since coming to this place, when after the toils of the day, I had retired to rest and fallen asleep, and dreamed that I was engrossed in the cares and business of my calling, when there came running toward me a huge black dog, which instantly seized both my hands in his mouth, and seemed to bite them through and through; but not content with this, he still continued to hold them fast between his dreadful teeth. So great was the terror of my mind that I screamed, and awoke with the fright, trembling and weeping, scarcely persuading myself that the dream was not a reality.

On my relating this to the family, it was immediately interpreted to be an omen of evil which was to befall me⁶⁷, and whether it was an omen or not, an evil *did* befall me of a most calamitous kind, as but a few days after the dream, the morning of which I had passed in uncommon mirth and hilarity, a stranger was seen galloping on horseback, towards the house when on coming opposite to it, he reigned up, and immediately in a hurried manner enquired of Deborah Beach, which was my maiden name, when I lived there.

Instantly my heart beat with violence, forecasting in my mind that some bad intelligence was pending; as soon therefore, as the messenger was directed to me, he imparted the appalling account of my father's death - that he had been drowned in the Susquehannah. Had a clap of thunder from the clouds, burst in peals suddenly around me, the shock could not been more severe than was this annunciation. I cried a loud and bitter cry, which I found impossible to repress; "*Oh my father, my father!*" The family came hastily to know the reason of my trouble, but turned silently away, well knowing that any attempts to comfort me at such a moment as this, would be useless; that dreadful hour will never be lost from my memory. I now resolved to return immediately to my widowed mother, and to my companions in orphanage⁶⁸, well knowing that they were in want of all things, as they were yet suffering the privations, occasioned by the destruction of their field the fall before, and that now their *last* hope was taken from them by death.

After a settlement of my accounts with this worthy family, I took my leave, when they bestowed gratuitously the sum of eight dollars over and above my proper wages, as a token of the interest they took in my afflictions⁶⁹. On my way to the head of Otsego lake, I bought a bushel of wheat, and got it floured there, where I also procured a passage in a batteau down the lake and river, being an unexpected opportunity, which was a distance of fifty miles to where my mother was. On the third day I can came within sight of my home, my heart palpitated with fears lest I should I find my poor dear mother overwhelmed with sorrow and despair. A view of the little log house, with some or the children about it, and the recollection that my father was no more flung over the natural buoyancy of youthful imagination a cheerlessness - a desolation which mocks description.

But soon they landed me they me, and pursued their way, while I hastened, prepared for the worst, to embrace my mother. I entered the door, but instead of my only parent flying to take me to her arms, which I had a right to except, she only gazed with a sort of vacant stare, not seeming to know me. I was shocked exceedingly, being scarcely able to stand upon my feet from agitation, awfully fearing that she was deranged. At length she seem to recollect herself a little, and rose to embrace me, expressing a kind of gloomy joy, but far enough from unmixed parental happiness; the children at the same time gathering round, laughed amid their tears to see me.

I found them as I anticipated. entirely destitute of bread, and therefore hastened to relieve them with the flour which I provided. But on opening the sack, what was my surprise to find that the unprincipled miller had taken one half of it and substituted in its place *indian-meal*, which notwithstanding, made very good bread, yet afforded on that account on apology for the miller, as on his part it was an absolute theft.

⁶⁷ EHB " For a discussion of Puritan belief in the dreams as "signs and portents", see earlier notes. Those involving black dogs have long been regarded as ominous. See, e.g., Orient Eye web site, Symbols & Dreams" at http://www.orienteye.com/english.symbol_03.asp ["... if in the dream of the dog is black or barking, then it' s ill omen..."] For an interesting discussing of the occult symbolism of black dogs generally, See: At The Edge web site, "Black Dogs In Folklore" at <http://www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/bdogf1.htm>. J. K. Rowling makes use of black dogs in her Harry Potter stories, where they are called by their old English names of "grim" and "padfoot."

⁶⁸ EHB " Derived from the Greek *orphanos*, and Late Latin *orphanus*, "orphan" is most commonly used today to describe the loss of both parents, but the word itself is not so limited. The on-line Encyclopaedia Britannica and Merriam - Webster Dictionary both recognize its use to describe the loss of one of both parents."

⁶⁹ EHB " Here is further evidence of Isaac Paris' generosity. Per an "Inflation Calculator" found at <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, \$8.00 in 1800 (the earliest year which can be entered) would be worth \$81.26 in 2002.

They were also nearly destitute of clothes, on which account I lingered not to distribute among them those I had procured during my eight months servitude, two months at the first place, and six at the house of Judge Parris. A few days only passed away after return, when my mother began to be more resigned and cheerful: new hopes sprung up from the encouragement of conversation, and from my exertions to make them more comfortable. However, it was evident that a settled melancholy had seized her for its victim, which never left her till it ended in complete distraction, out of which she finally emerged, not however till her *last* sickness, when the *one* fixed and *direful* thought, which had led her to despair of final salvation, was suddenly extinguished by strong and certain hope of eternal happiness through the great Redeemer.⁷⁰

I now learned more perfectly the manner of my fathers death. He had undertaken to convey a man and his goods, which consisted of the apparatus of a blacksmith's shop, a considerable way down the river, in a canoe, at a time when the river overflowed its banks, called the *June freshet*⁷¹. But in pursuance of the enterprise, he came not far from the spot where he had slept in the woods with his little son, when on their way to view the lands of Harper, two years before - the story of which is already related-at the time when his father came to him in a dream, as the reader may recollect. When not far from this very place⁷², the canoe upset, with all its iron furniture, where he was drowned; almost persuading one to believe, from the coincidence of the *place* where he was warned, and the *place* where he met his fate, that the dream was intended as a prophetic allusion to this catastrophe. He remained in the water for eleven days, when he was found by an Indian, having been carried by the current about twenty miles, and lodged among the flood wood which had accumulated at the head of an island.

From amidst the flooding drift-wood, he was taken and placed, not in a coffin as the custom is, but in the bark of a large hemlock tree, which was peeled on the occasion, in this he was laid, with his cloths on, as they found him, it being impossible to remove him further than merely to shore, on account of the great change which had passed upon him, by having lain so long in the water. Here in the woods they buried him, without a coffin, shroud, or mourners, almost in the same manner that the young man was starved in the woods of the Androscoggin, the story of who we have already told. The place which contains his ashes is marked by two cherry trees standing on the left hand side of the road going South, five miles below the populous village of Binghamton⁷³, near the house known as that of *Colonel Todd*⁷⁴, on the Susquehannah.

Thus ended the life of my beloved father, a man who had visited other climes, had braved the terrors of a stormy sea, whose soul was made of sympathies, feeling for the sorrows of others, enterprising, but of a restless disposition, possessed of great vivacity, conciliating in his manners, beautiful in his person, enjoying the good wishes of all who knew him, but in the end was doomed to die alone, to be crushed and buried among the floating timber of the wayward stream, leaving behind a numerous family of orphan children to grapple with the unavoidable difficulties of an almost helpless condition in a new country.

By this time, which was the year of our settlement there, a considerable increase of population had taken place. Enterprising men were pouring in from the east, miles were erecting in various places, farms clearing up, schools commenced, physicians established, merchants with their goods and wares opening their stores, the gospel preached, society formed, incipient order created on the face of a rugged and savage country. Among those who came as adventurers in quest of new lands, and whatever opportunity might offer to make property, there was *one* who became the husband⁷⁵ of my hand, my *heart* and all its affections: who notwithstanding the

⁷⁰ EHB " We have difficulty, however, squaring this description of protracted despair with the fact Abigail (Bennett) Beach would soon remarry in 1799 to Jehiel Ferris.

⁷¹ A freshet is a heavy downpour.

⁷² This location was thought to be below Bainbridge near Windsor, NY.

⁷³ Back in 1787 Binghamton was a small community settlement of what was then known as Bingham's land or town. This was not as wide as it is today and so it is difficult to estimate exactly where to extend this measurement of 5 miles today, but it is believed to be near where Union was or Vestal is today.

⁷⁴ We hoped to locate this Colonel Todd and the location of his home, but he has alluded us so far. Other accounts state that a tavern proprietor, named Stoddard, helped an Indian buried the body of Timothy Beach. This river has changed its course and banks have been washed away over time which probably has carried away his place of burial.

⁷⁵ This husband refers to Joseph "Josiah" Priest ~1762 - 1791/2 to whom she married about 1787/8. He was considered AWOL from the Colonial Army when they held him beyond his 3 year commitment of service and he fled. He worked in a sawmill for awhile before going on to the Unadilla area. He died of exposure while attempting to save neighbors from high rising waters in the river.

impoverishing consequence of the Revolutionary War to private individuals, but glorious in its results to the nation, in which he had been engaged several years, came possessed of what at *that* time was esteemed quite an acquisition of wealth, consisting of a hundred dollars in silver, a fine horse and its riding equipage: possessed of health, a hardy constitution, youth, manly stature, strength, ingenuity and ability suited to the toils and hardships incidental to the reduction of a new farm, to be redeemed from the face of heavy timbered lands. Thus qualified, he settled among us, being pleased with the prospects of the new county, which abounded with wild game and furs, the rivers with an abundance of fishes, the mountains with inexhaustible forests of pine, as tall as any the globe can furnish, as also the oak and chesnut, and vales with elm, butternut, hickory, beach, maple, and ash, with endless varieties of brambles vines and herbage.

Respecting this young man, I will here relate the reasons of his traveling west to seek his fortune in its wilds rather than in the *new State* of Vermont. The reader however may imagine that we might rather have suppressed this account, as *some* may supposed that a tincture of dishonor is attached to the circumstance. But as it respects myself, it is a happiness to recount and retain in my recollection ant traits of his life, as it was full of adventure and hardships and - because I loved him.

The Revolutionary War had progressed *about* three years, during which period Vermont and furnished many a quota of volunteers, as well as draughted troops. This young man, at that time however, a mere boy of fifteen years old, was persuaded by an older brother⁷⁶ to enlist in the army under *Starkey*. The period for which he enlisted was three years. But this step was much resisted by is mother, as she loved the boy exceedingly, and because he was too young to encounter the hardships of a campaign; besides the constant danger of his being killed in some skirmish with the Indians and tories. Her parting with him was excruciating; her tears fell upon his head in a shower; her cries and sobs were heard for some way after he took his last farewell. This scene could not be forgotten by him; as it would rush upon his memory every time he was hungry, cold and or sick, or was any way misused the rough and hardy soldiers of his mess. During the period of his service, he had seldom an opportunity of seeing his mother, but never of his father, as he had died when the lad was an infant. Each time of his return to see his mother, his departure was but a renewal of the first heart rending scene. The three years at length wore away, when he expected to be honorable discharged, but for some reasons; not understood to the writer, he was with many others retained in the army.

He did not like to leave the army improperly, and without a regular discharge, as it would be disgraceful, and an entire loss of his bounty land, an hundred and sixty acres, some where in the west. Six months of suspense had thus passed away, and no sign of being allowed to return to his home and to his forlorn mother appeared, when he, as well as many others, deserted. But the happiness he had hoped to enjoy was not his lot, for he soon found himself an object of pursuit, and that a reward was offered for his capture. He now was compelled to flee from his home and county, through a fear of being punished severely, if not shot, should he be taken. He was now eighteen years old, and more capable of taking care of himself than when he first entered the army. Accordingly he fled to the wild and more unsettled parts of Vermont, along the foot of the Green Mountains, on the eastern side. He had changed his name for greater security, and worked here and there, for any one would hire him, all the while in dread and consternation of being captured.

His pursuers were vigilant, and traced is steps every where; losing them how ever from time to time, as he by some means contrived to escape. But at length, through the treachery of a certain fellow, who had become his enemy on account of his superior gallantry in company among the ladies of those early back-wood times, he gave information of his place of retreat, having become his confident in the matter of his desertion from the army. On a certain day as he was engaged in the woods alone, cutting timber for his employer, his pursuers came secretly and suddenly upon him, and took him prisoner. He dared not undertake to flee, as he feared their guns, which he did not know but might discharged upon him. They now led him off in a direction which avoided the houses of the settlement where he was living, though a wood of several miles distance, making as rapid a march as possible toward the place where the troops were situated, with a view to the reward. They had

Deborah remarried to Joseph Lull about 1792/3. Joseph was from a long line of Lulls from Vermont, many of which had settled in Otsego around Morris, first called Butternuts. Joseph was born in Ware, Mass. In 1755. He served with Capt. Benjamin Coxe's Company along with Lt. Green at Fort Royalton. Deborah's lost of her father and first husband did not stop with Joseph Lull. He drowned in the same river in 1792 at Unadilla. She was left with 6 children between the two marriages.

⁷⁶ This refers to John Priest, born about 1758, some 4 years before Joseph.

now got onto a road which had been cut through the wilderness, after lying in the woods the first night succeeding his capture. His fears were now greatly heightened, as it was evident that chance of escape was now much lessened. His captors were exceedingly vigilant, who were three in number, two of whom, every night when they lay down to rest, lay beside him, one at either hand, while a third sentry with loaded gun. From this situation he found it impossible to escape. Hope had almost forsaken him, while every step was hurrying him on to shame, contempt, and for aught he knew, to death itself. But being every moment on the look out for some chance to give them the slip, even in despite of their guns, as he could die, but once, and to be killed in a struggle against *injustice* as *he* esteemed his persecution - was far to be preferred to being whipped in the sight of the army, or of being shot as a deserter. Now as they pursued the horrid road which was leading him to his fate, they descended on the third day a gulf, through which their road lay, where they found a spring water of cold water, which invited them to rest and cool themselves, as it was hot in the month of August, and to refresh themselves with a bite from their packs and a drink from their canteen of rum. In order to do this they had taken off their packs and laid them down, as well as their guns, and had drunk freely of the delicious spring, which gushed from beneath the overhanging cliffs, when the young man feigned himself taken with a sudden but severe fit of distress in his stomach, for the purpose of causing a delay in their progress, hoping thereby to gain some further chance of escape. His agony was in appearance very great for a few moments, when it subsided, but directly came again with increasing violence. They now began to fear lest their prisoner might die on their hands, and that all their trouble would go for nothing; plied him therefore heartily with rum from the canteen. In a short time he appeared exhausted, and his pain to cease a little, with a desire to sleep. They thought best to indulge him in this, as sleep might have a beneficial effect: and besides, it appeared impossible to get him along as he then was. Accordingly they spread down their coats, which they had taken off on account of the heat, for him to lie down upon, when he soon seemed to sleep - the sweat pouring from his face, on account of what he had drunk, and from extreme agitation of mind. He had matured no certain plan of escape, but was in a condition of absolute confusion, willing however to embarrass his enemies as much as possible with his feigned illness.

But while he lay in this condition listening to their conversation, fortune appeared to come suddenly to his relief, and to open a way of escape, if he could but dare to pass thought it. Thus was the sight of a deer within fair gun shot, a little way down the gulf, which appeared to be chased by some animal, as it was on a full jump. But having the steep ascent just before him to ascend, and the trees in that place not very thick, tempted the rifles of his captors, so that in an instant they simultaneously sprang to their feet, seized their rifles and all fired at once. The buck fell and tumbled backwards, when they all ran up to the spot in their eagerness, forgetting altogether their prisoner, whom they had not tied, as they had no fears of his escaping while within reach of their guns, and especially now that he lay in prostration from his complaint.

Now the moment of an attempt to escape had come. There was just behind him a large pine tree which had been blown away down by some tempest, the body of which extended up the gulf, having at the end monstrous upturned roots, loaded with earth and stones. Beyond this lay a thicket of pines and spruce, with smaller trees of all sorts, which seemed to offer him their shades of endless continuance if he would but fly to their sanctuary. The resolve was made, and just as his captors had arrived beside the fallen deer, and were looking for the marks of the bullets, he at one bound cleared the tree, and stooping, fled towards its roots, and from thence into the woods out of sight of the enemy. They had not seen this motion, as it was done in an instant; who on their return - which was in a few minutes - found instead of their sick prisoner, nothing but their coats and the place where he had lain. What they did or said is, unknown, as he neither heard nor saw them again, except in about ten minutes he heard the distant ring of several shots, made no doubt to intimidate him, and cause him to return and give himself up through fear, but without effect. It was impossible for them to follow him, as they could not tell in which direction he had run; he was consequently left to pursue his way alone and unmolested.

But now he had other difficulties to encounter, as he dared not to return to any inhabited place on the east side of the Green mountains consequently he resolved to cross this hideous wilderness to the west, and if possible to come out in some place where the inhabitants would not know his condition, and that he was a pursued deserter.

The ravine up which he had fled he found to terminate at the foot of one of the spurs, or branches of that

gloomy range, the Green mountains of Vermont. He had neither gun nor compass, nor any other means by which he could keep his course, or prevent being staved, more than the *sun* in case, and the berries of the woods in the other afford, except a large jackknife. He now cut him a convenient, but powerful staff, both as an aid in disentangling the brush in many places, and as a defense against any wild beast which he might meet with. It was a dreary and a horrible condition to be in; as it was not possible for him to cross this mountain short of several days, not knowing how to guild himself, except by the sun, and endeavoring to go contrary to their general range, which he knew he could but terminate in some inhabited place, after getting across then. He was compelled to lie in the woods two nights, as he was two and a half days before he found inhabitants.

The first night overlooked him while scrambling up the ascent in a dismal forest of hemlocks, the undergrowth of which was laurel, witch-hazel and spruce. The sun had sunk in the west in all his glory full before him, and the twilight had nearly faded into darkness, before he could find a place where he thought he could rest. This was a monstrous hemlock, with limbs grown very low down, or near the ground, and exceedingly branching and thick as the tree ascended. Into this he climbed, and seating himself very high from the earth, on a strong crotch of the tree, composed himself as well as he could, but not to sleep. Soon the mountain was shrouded in darkness, so that its peaks, its cliffs, its ravines, its ledges and its woods were hid, appearing beneath him in the uncertain gleam of the stars, more like a dark ocean of uneven waters, with wind sweeping onward, than like the dry land. He knew that these woods were the home and dwelling place of the wolves, panthers and bears, and also that if any of these should scent his tracks, he might have a visit from them at the foot of his tree, before morning; but it so happened that none of these disturbed him during the night. But in his elevated condition he had a view of the majesty of night and wilderness in harmony, as if the world had been but newly made, while the stars in silent march passed over him. During that night no sound saluted his ears, except the hoot of owls, the crackle of now and then a stick being broken by some animal below, the lonesome sound of the *saw-whet*, a small bird of the cuckoo species, and other night birds unknown. Here he had time to ruminate on that which had passed, his escape from his pursuers, the grief of his mother, and his future destiny; all of which thoughts were as gloomy as his condition could inspire. He was by no means happy, as a continual dread was upon him, not knowing what the darkness might produce, together with his uneasy position, holding on by a limb of the tree. To heighten the terrors of such a condition, several times during the night there shot across the horizon glaring meteors, while far in the south the lightnings were seen to play on the clouds; all signs betokened a raising storm. About midnight this took place, as a thunder storm shower of the most violent description came down from the clouds, accompanied with furious winds, which swept through the woods and over the mountains in terror, as the crash of falling trees were heard on every hand, while the one in which he was perched rocked to and fro, stooping its tall trunk before the blast. At length the light was seen becoming from the east, the harbinger of a rising sun, for the sky had cleared, and the day was ushered in with glory and splendor. He now descended from his uneasy position, dripping with rain, as he had no defense from its fury, and hastened on up the mountain. He now began to feel hungry, as he had nothing with him to eat; but luckily during the day, he fell in with patches of the whortle and black berry, which sustained him, or he must have died in the woods.

He pursued his way over broken ranges of the mountain, and through tracks of the forest, which, from their rocky, cold natured soil, and great elevation, have never from the time of the flood been cultivated, nor ever will be to the end of the world. Another day at length passed away, when night came again. He had recourse to the same expedient this night as the one before, climbing into a tree, such as one as offered to him the safest place of repose. He now endeavored to situate himself in such a manner that if possible, to sleep a little, as he was greatly fatigued, both from traveling and for want of rest the night before. In order to do this, he found a place in the tree where several strong branches dividing off afforded him a place so that he could rest his back against one of them, while he tied himself around his body to another limb, with a handkerchief he had in his pocket. He now soon fell asleep and would have continued in that condition no doubt till morning, had not the following incidents took place. The first was a singular dream he had, in which he thought himself in the midst of a multitude of beings, who seemed to have the power of passing through the air, as easily as men can walk upon the earth. What their employment was he could not make out, yet they seemed majestic, solemn and happy and in some pursuits of a mysterious but dignified kind, altogether of a nature above the pursuits of mortals. Among these he saw his father, who had died when he was but an infant. He seemed to know his son

and immediately to approach him, in a tender, yet awe-inspiring manner, so that he felt as one would feel were they to be approached by a spirit. He now said: "My son, you have fled from the war, continue to do so and flee to the west-flee to the west." He then saw a measureless wilderness before him, through the midst of which there flowed a large river, bordered on each side with majestic trees, and its water seemed to be filled with fishes; deer were bathing in it, and creatures of *fur* species seemed to burrow in its shores. There now passed before him groups of strangers, men, women and children but did not much excite his attention or his sympathies, though they seemed extremely poor. But while he was looking at these, there passed by him *one* group who were more wretched and more miserable than all the rest, as they seemed to be of superior mein, as if they had not always been thus. In this group there were many small children, led on by a female in weeds of mourning; while there smiled by her side a young female of the most enchanting form of countenance. He now sprang forward to speak with her, whose smile of welcome seemed to meet him; but instantly darkness passed between them, and the spirit of his dream was changed. The horrors of war and battle seemed now to be about him. The groans and screams of the wounded and dying sounded in his ear; when there came rushing a monstrous form in human shape, clad in daggers, which struck at him, when he sprang one side and fell with his head against a rock, and instantly awoke; having hit his forehead against the body of the tree upon which he had slept. The din of battle however, which had sounded on his dreaming ear, did not prove *altogether* a fiction; for now there rang through the darkness of the forest, which was about two o'clock in the morning, the yell of a gang of wolves, who seemed to have torn a deer in pieces and were snarling over its carcass but a little way from him. The residue of the night was passed in a sort of horror, although he knew himself safe from their attack, as they were already gorged with their prey. Morning came at last. He now descended from his tree, faint and hungry, having tasted nothing except berries from the time he fled from his captors, which was over forty hours. He had the curiosity however, now that it was daylight, to see the spot from whence he heard the cry of wolves, as he knew the direction it was from his tree. He soon found it. It proved, as he had imagined, to be a deer which they had chased, killed, and but partly devoured, as there still remained several portions of its body yet entire. It now came to his mind that if he could but raise a fire he might have a breakfast of venison, which would be better far than nothing, even though he had no salt to season it with. He soon recollected his jackknife, and that no doubt he could strike fire if he could find a flint stone. This he soon obtained by looking about among the stones of the mountain, when having found some punk in a dead dry beach tree, which he pushed over, as it was nearly ready to fall, affording an abundance of that article. He now soon had a rousing fire, before which he broiled on a sharp stick several pieces of venison, making thereof a hearty meal. He now started off with renewed vigor, carrying some of the venison with him, in a westerly direction, having the sun exactly behind, in hopes of getting out of the woods before another night should overtake him with its horrors. This he accomplished; having come suddenly across two men who were hunting, about four o'clock in the afternoon. By these men he was taken to the settlement at the foot of the mountains, on the western side. He now sought employment, as he had before done, of the farmers and lumbermen of the country. But by the next spring he had found his way as far west as to the now town of Cambridge⁷⁷, in Washington County, in New York State, where he went to work in a sawmill, for two men named Clapp and Bennett. Here he continued till the war was over and peace proclaimed, when all his fears about being apprehended ceased forever. He now had by this time clothed himself in the best manner of the country, and had earned his horse, and the hundred dollars in silver, of which we have before spoken. He now was determined to push his fortunes farther west, as directed in his dream, which he did, and arriving on the Susquehannah found the full and further interpretation of his vision, had on the tree or the Green Mountains; as it was on the Susquehannah that he fell in with the poverty of the groups he had seen that night. It was there also that he round the forlorn widow in the weeds of mourning for her drowned father; and also the girl of his dream, whom he said he knew the first moment he looked upon her. Thus I have related in brief the reason of his coming to the wild regions of the Susquehannah.

The Author's Adventure with a Bear when a Child;Wolves

⁷⁷ This was above Troy, NY. Other Priests were said to be leaving in this area too.

Chase a Deer; The Boy and the Panther.

When a boy⁷⁸ of about ten years old, he had left the house early in the morning to pursue his way to school, which was a distance of full three miles and chiefly through the woods. He had gone scarcely a mile on his way when he saw in the road, a few rods distant before him, a black creature, which he supposed to be a cow, belonging to one of the neighbors, coming towards him. But a moment however had passed away, when it looked up and stopped, for it was walking slowly with its head to the ground, scenting the tracks in the road; but on hearing the sound of the child's feet it looked up. At the same instant when it looked up, the boy also stood still, for he now perceived the creature to be no cow, but a bear, having once before seen one in the fields, when his step-father⁷⁹ was with him, on which account he knew the animal. As he has often related, since grown to a man, his first sensation was of stupefying terror, but gave way in a moment to thoughts of flight; this was as soon as abandoned; from a recollection that his father had told him that if he ever met with a bear in the woods he must by no means run or halloo, as then inevitable death would follow; the bear would pursue and tear him to pieces, but he must stand still - perfectly still and look the animal steadily in the eyes, which would in the end frighten him away. Consequently there was no alternative but to do so; not knowing however, how the matter might turn out. A few seconds now transpired in gazing at each other, when the bear moved slowly but continuously toward the lad a few steps, then stopped, as if to examine the thing more narrowly, but the child as strange as it may appear, kept his position, maintaining a continual gaze, fixed upon the face of the bear. A few seconds more had now passed in this appalling dilemma, during which time several expedients for relief shot across his mind. At one moment he thought he would scream as loud as possible but dare not, lest it might be provoked; at another he thought he would stoop down and feel for a stone or stick to throw at it, not taking his eyes from those of the bear's while he should do so; but finally, from the beginning to the end, he kept his first position, every moment expecting to be devoured. At length however, to his unspeakable joy, the bear turned suddenly from him and fled away, as if a thousand hunters were at his heels; when my poor boy came running home, crying screaming with all the signs of terror such a re-counter-could inspire in the mind of a child.

Hundreds of instances of the like character might be narrated, and even of a more thrilling description than the one above mentioned; two of which we will speak of. A short distance from Tioga Point-the junction of the Chemung and Susquehanna rivers-there runs from between a gorge in the mountains, a small creek, called the Wysoc, the Indian name, the meaning of which is unknown. On this creek an early settler had chosen, and bought a few hundred acres of choice land, where he had erected a house and dwelt with his family, which consisted of several children, sons and daughters, together with his wife. Situated from his house, some two miles or so, was a field of grain. The nearest course to this field, in a straight line, was about two miles, but was a difficult and gloomy road, and not much frequented. There was another way however, much better and easier, but this way was more than twice as far. At a certain time the father of the family and one of his boys, of about fourteen years old, went to this, field for a load of grain. They had returned but a small distance, when they came to the road which led the nearest route home, and intersected the other-the roundabout way; where this son, who was of fearless make, proposed to take the short cut, while his father should pursue the roundabout road. To this request of his son he did not in particular object, as the boy seemed resolute and determined. By this time the sun had set in splendor, the dusk of the evening was coming on; the hum of bugs was heard, and the fire flies were now commencing their nightly revel, with all the wildest beings of the woods. The boy however shot off on his course with nimble feet, heedless altogether of his dangerous path. He ran about half a mile, when on coming to a straight and smooth place in the way, close to a small run of water which crossed the path, he suddenly came almost within the horrid paws of a panther of the largest size; so very near that with a stick of about three feet he could have reached it. Here the lad came to a stand still; knowing it to be a panther from the glare in its eyes, and from its heavy and fearful snarl. He now for an instant stood and looked the animal in the eyes, feeling however, at the same time that his flesh and hair of his head were in motion from pure terror. But not withstanding this he did turn and flee, but continued to brave the glare of the panther. A few

⁷⁸ This was about Josiah Priest, the author of this book and son to Deborah Beach Priest and Joseph Priest. This school could have been in what is Sidney today or even toward Franklin. If it were a school in Unadilla, it would have been closer than three miles.

⁷⁹ The author is referring to his stepfather, Joseph Lull.

seconds passed in this state, each eyeing the other, when the boy from a desire to do something to relieve himself, struck his club with all his might on the ground, just down before the animal, which stood vibrating his tail, in the attitude of springing on a victim, and at this same time gave forth a terrible yell, not moving his eyes, which frightened the panther so much that it gave a leap off into the woods, of at least, as appeared to the boy, thirty feet distance, mounting into the air on a long curve. He stood still, listening to the sound of the panther, which as it came down on the ground, at long intervals, struck heavily, as if it were a monster of the kind. But in a few seconds darted off again, beginning now to wish he had went the other way with his father, and to fear for his life. He had run however, but a few rods, when to his horror the panther was again just before him in his path, snarling still more angrily and winding his long body one way and the other, as it shifted about, evidently preparing for the fatal spring upon its victim. This the boy instinctively knew; when, as he could do nothing else, he now threw his club with all his might at the creature's head, and as the same time gave another yell. The club hit creature pretty hard, as the sound of the concussion was quite loud, much like a blow placed on the side of a large dog. Again the panther bounded off with a mingled yell and snarl. Now the boy took to his legs in hopes of escaping. He however, had not run as far as at the first encounter, when there stood his enemy again before him. His club now being gone, he had, as he ran, stooped and seized two or three large stones, which on the third encounter, he had in his hand. The creature's motions were the same as before, evidently determined to try the strength of the claws of the flesh of his prey. But at the instant he drew back, and with all his power, which was doubled by fright, he let fly a stone, accompanied with a yell; the stone took effect exactly on the animal's head, so that it rang again. It again sprang off into the woods, when the lad put his legs, which were of the most agile construction, into full and complete requisition, and ran so swiftly, as himself related to the writer that he seemed to fly, scarcely touching the ground. He believed that no mortal ever ran half as fast as swift, which must no doubt in part correct, for he escaped, the panther not being able again to get head him. This same intrepid lad is now one of the first citizens of Albany, NY., an fortunate opulent wholesale dealer in dry goods, in State street.

In the same region of the country, but in the interior on a creek, called the Wyalusing⁸⁰, were a few families who had settled there. Near the house of one of those early settlers, was a bush pasture, in which were feeding his horses, and among the number there was a colt. A boy of about then years old, in passing through the enclosure perceived a large panther, crouching here and there about the horses, evidently bent on the destruction of the colt, This the boy did not like should happen, as it belonged to his father. He now began to try to drive it away, by shouting and throwing rocks at it. By this time the father of the boy had seen from the house what was going on, and immediately hallooed at the child to come away, or he would be torn to pieces, - while he sprang into the house for his rifle, which was always ready for a shot. But before he had come near enough to fire on the panther, he saw its dreadful spring, and heard one scream of the child. He knew it was over. But notwithstanding his alarm on that account, he came so near that he drove a bullet safely through the panther's heart, when it gave one awful bound and fell dead. But the child's face was torn entirely off, and was at the instant of the shot in the jaws of the panther, which was sucking in the joy of hungry ferocity the steaming blood of his temple and torn feature. The child breathed but a few seconds it the spasms of dissolution, when all was over.

Wolves also in great numbers infested the county. Their howling were often heard from the depths of the woods reverberating on the stillness of the night, filling the tormented air with the ruthless yell of those wild dogs of the forest, often destroying entire flocks of sheep, which were carelessly exposed in the field over night. But the deer seemed to be a lawful and devoted prey, which the wolves in droves might pursue with impunity, from mountain to mountain without reproach. The deer in an animal which, seems to abound most along course of rivers and bodies of water, as lakes and bays of the sea. In this there appears to be design, for the God of nature has placed in the defenseless deer, an instinctive principle which directs them when pursued to flee to the waters, seeming to know that the scent of their feet can be no longer traced by its enemy, if they can but reach *that* asylum where all trace of their feet is lost in the bosom of the faithful and secret keeping waters.

A gang of wolves as it appeared, had scented and pursued a stately buck, which on finding itself in danger, immediately fled for the river, in all the heat of the flight and alarm. The enemy pressed hard upon it,

⁸⁰ This was southwest of Binghamton near Rush, PA.

through the bounding tenant of the woods, fled with the speed of an arrow, while the staunch and murderous wolves, sure of their destined victim in the end, lay close on its track, never missing the trail of its feet, as lightly they touched the dry leaves, at vast distances apart, as the deer sprang onward in terror. Now the last hill, whose top showed the winding current of the river, was gained; down it darted, and amid the dark forest, toward the vale, its antlers thrown majestically back, to avoid the entangling brushwood; while bound after bound in rapid succession, neared the haven of its utmost wishes every moment, while its pursuers, wearied not at all, were heard now and then to give a smothered yell. Now the broad flood is full in view; a few more bounds and all is gained. The last leap came at length, when from the bank it sprang far, with the hope of laving its burning sides in the luxurious waves, and escape the enemy. But oh! The surface was frozen, it was winter: it struck and sprawled upon the glare of horrid ice, when in a moment after, taut most fears were felt; for the teeth of a wolf had seized its throat, and cut asunder the juices of life, where in the morning it was found uninjured, except being bitten in the throat; the neighbors dressed the venison, and divided it among themselves. However the wolves had not yet relinquished their clam, though they had left it as they did, occasioned no doubt by being too near the house, and daylight, it is likely had broken in upon their intended banquet, for the next night following, about eleven o'clock in the evening, it seemed as if the whole wolf tribe had come together, expecting, as the hunters say, to find it where they had left it. Their presence was announced by an united yell, which continued nearly an hour, when the horrible assembly suddenly creased their orisons, and were heard no more.

In this place we cannot but relate the laughable fete or a hunter. The hounds had been put into the wood for the purpose of scenting a deer - a business with which the dogs were well acquainted, while the hunter placed himself in a convenient spot, suitably near the deer's *run-way*, so as to be able to bring it down at a shot, as it fled at the noise of the dogs from the mountain to the river. The spot he selected to wait in ambush was at the head of a certain flat, very near where the foot of a steep hill descended into plain. This flat was in length about three-fourths of a mile, and where it came to a point, formed a high bank along a deep eddy of the river. The hunter had now chosen his position - had narrowly examined the contents of his rifle, and was sure the priming was in good order, he had rubbed the edge of the flint with his hat - a method used by hunters to make the flint fire the more sure. All was now in readiness, while he stood in a silent listening mood, with his ear turned toward the hill, his mouth gently open to aid his hearing. He had not waited in his hiding place but a short time, when the distant cry or the hounds struck his ear. He now knew that but a few minutes would pass away, before a deer would as certainly stretch his limbs along the paths or their *run away*, as that his dogs had been heard to give the tokens of the chase by their yells. He was not deceived; as directly he heard plainly the rapid, but heavy bounds of a deer, which in an instant after he perceived, as it broke over the brow of the hill with its majestic antlers thrown back in wild array. Now comes the decisive moment. One leap more and his noble breast is brought exposed to death, within a few feet of the caliber of the fatal gun, which already had been brought to the cheek, while the eye shot in keen survey along the range or the smooth sided barrel. The trigger touched at the right moment -- it blazed - the death ring spoke sharp and shrill on the still air; the fugitive - a noble buck - fell, when the hunter in a moment, to secure his victim, having dropped his gun and drawn his knife from its sheath, sprang exactly astride his back to cut its throat. But behold, the ball had only struck one of his horns, near its root, which stunned the animal and caused it to fall, from which condition however, it recovered, before the hunter had time to wound it with his knife; and finding its enemy on its back, rose and sprang off with the swiftness of an arrow, so that the hunter finding he had use for his hands in holding fast to his horns could not find time to invade his throat, so clinging his feet under the belly of the deer, he did so frightfully at a fearful rate the whole length of the flat, to where the *run-way* entered the river, at which point from the bank, he had no sooner arrived, than with the rider, the deer plunged with a tremendous leap into the deep water, where a scuffle ensued between the hunter and the deer, the deer endeavoring to push him under with this fore feet, while the hunter endeavored to get its head under water and at the same time cut his throat which he soon accomplished, and swimming ashore drag his victim after, declaring to some who had witnessed the sight, that he had a most glorious ride. This man's name was John McMullen, well known even now to the older inhabitants along the Susquehannah.

The wild woods of that country, in the spring, summer, and autumn seasons, afforded buds, roots, berries and nuts, upon which human life might possibly subsist, and of the first settlers many were compelled to live upon them or starve. Little do citizens, wealthy farmers, or even the most indigent among us now, know to

what lengths a lack of food has driven some of the first settlers to sustain life. The story of a Mrs. Livermore will illustrate this. This woman had accompanied her husband in the woods about twenty-five miles west of Chenango Point, but now called Binghamton, near the Otselic river, when he had fixed on a spot for a home. But it so happened that his stock of food by the last of February was nearly expended, which had been provided for the winter. A supply therefore must be had, or they must perish, as nearly two months were yet to come before a resort to the herbage of spring could afford any relief. A journey to old Schoharie through the wilderness was the only alternative, to which place the road could be but barely traced, as it was obscured by the snows of the winter, and the bending hemlocks and bushes, and for many miles in several places, especially from his own house to Chenango point, and from thence up the river as far as the place where Cooperstown now is, the road was then rarely passed with a team, of any kind in the depths of winter.

At that time the now populous and beautiful town of Binghamton contained but two log huts - provision at that place therefore could not then be had. He left his home with an aching heart, well knowing that if any misfortune should prevent his return, that his wife and children must fall a sacrifice to famine.

At length, however, having arrived there with his team, but in a situation which rendered him incapable of telling from whence he came, or what his business was, on account of having been taken ill on the way, and having no medical aid, the disease, which was a fever, had increased to a delirium, from which he did not recover for two or three weeks. And now, having obtained a supply of provisions, he hastened back to his family, knowing that unless some interference had taken place in their favor, that they must ere that time be dead; but as related by herself, she subsisted as follows:

After having consumed all the provisions she had, and her husband not returning, she was driven to despair, as it was madness to think of going to the *Point*, a distance of twenty-five miles, through the snow with her children, the oldest of which was about twelve years old, and all barefooted, and it was equal madness to think of leaving them alone till she could go and return - which however was then impossible, as she was too weak from hunger to perform the journey. But even if her strength could not have sustained her, yet not leave the children, as she knew not what might happen to them from either from fear, fire, or wild animals, which might have been attracted by their crying, if they *should* as most likely they would have done. Waiving however all this as uncertain, there was one thing certain, they could not sustain so long a fast as two days and one night - the time it would have taken her to go - in addition to the hunger they already suffered. In this situation full many a time she had been to the cup-board, but famine was where the cheering loaf used to be; the bag which had contained the last particle of meal had been turned inside out; the barrel was empty where the last morsel of meat had been salted; not on. potato, turnip, or vegetable or any kind was left in the small cellar beneath the floor, all was gone. "Oh, God must we perish!" she cried in distraction, But In this extremity It came suddenly into her mind that possibly in the tub, made of a hollow log, where they used to throw the bran or their pounded Indian corn, there might be yet little which had not fed to the horse. To this she hastened, when lo! there was nearly half a bushel of it, ever which he rejoiced as if a supply of food had fallen from the clouds. Of this she immediately mixed little with water, and placed it over the fire, seasoning it with the brine and salt yet remaining in the meat barrel. While this was boiling it came into her mind that possibly *bass wood buds* might be good to boil with it; when she went to a tree and gathered a handful, threw them in, which from the mucilaginous nature or the buds, proved a great acquisition to the bran. Upon this, her self and children subsisted till her husband's return, which saved their lives.

The want of grist mills was a privation of no small magnitude, to which the first settlers of the Susquehannah were compelled to submit. One story more of hardships, arising out of this circumstance, will illustrate perhaps hundreds of the like nature, as follows: Having for a time made their bread from corn pounded in a mortar, we greatly coveted meal of better quality. And hearing that some six or eight miles, down the river was a mill newly built⁸¹, they were anxious if possible to carry a little grain to be floured. Accordingly the eldest brother⁸², a lad of about fifteen years old, undertook to carry on his back three pecks of corn to the mill, as from the time of their father's death, all kind of hardships incident to the cares of the family fell to the share of this brother, the eldest boy of the family. There was no road to the place, except the Indian's path, which for

⁸¹ The author might be referring to the Carr Creek Mill up river from where Sidney was located.

⁸² The author is referring to Deborah Beach's eldest brother, Richard. He was the lad that went on the land scouting adventure in early 1784 with his father, Timothy.

ages had been the highway of warriors and hunters - the tales of whose feats or valor, origin and dexterity, had sunk into the earth with their actors, unwritten on the page of any book, and unknown as the herbs on which they had subsisted. The way was a gloomy one, being wholly through the woods, and accompanied with *one* circumstance which heightened in the child's imagination the terrors of the journey, - and this was it. The path led exactly by a certain tree, called the *white mans tree*, where in the time of war the Indians had burnt a prisoner whom they had taken - the remembrance of which was painted, or stained, after the Indian manner on the side of this tree. It was an elm, which was preserved many years after the country was settled as a memento of the tragically affair, and stood at the lower end of what is called the *dug-way*, immediately above the bridge which crosses the Susquehannah, near the upper end of the village called Unadilla. The ignorant the superstitious, and children on passing this tree never failed to fear lest his spirit might appear, and if questioned, would tell who he was, from whence he came, and when and for what the Indians had burnt him. Now as poor Richard drew near and still nearer this tree the more its dread increased upon him, till he fancied that in reality he saw something stir by its roots. He now stood still, straining his eyes to try to undeceive himself if possible. But to no purpose; there certainly was something, and that something had motion to it. The more he looked, the more it seemed like a man. He now had thoughts of returning, it seeming impossible for him to approach nearer this tree, as the thing which seemed to be alive and had motion to it - might be the ghost. If it was he thought he should die if he spoke to it, or some strange thing would certainly befall him. But rather than to give up his expedition in hopes of obtaining some meal, he adventured slowly and cautiously a little nearer; but ere he was aware he trod on a dry stick, which broke, when in an instant the face of a man looked upon him, and slowly rose up to the full height of a tall person. Richard now had no doubt but this was the soul of the burnt man, which had so flurried his sight and confused his thoughts, that it had prevented his perceiving it to be an Indian, of a very aged description. The Indian, perceiving that the boy was frightened spoke to him in English in a good natured voice told him to come to him, as he would not hurt him. Richard now went boldly up to him, being naturally a stout hearted boy, yet not without some trepidation of feeling. "Sit down," he said to the boy, "me tell you something. See this tree," - here he pointed to the painted marks on the smooth spot, where the bark had been removed for that purpose long before by the hatchet of the Indians, "me cut that, me paint him too. A hundred moons ago, (about nine years) me - twenty Indians more, came through woods, from Sopus county, on North river, have five prisoners tied hands behind em. One man got away, when all sleep, - he stole gun - five Indian follow him. We hear gun shoot - one Indian fall dead - pretty soon 'nother gun shoot, 'nother Indian fall dead - *me* see him, then *me* shoot - broke him leg - carry him back - tie him to this tree, and burn him to the great Spirit. His name Coons, Dutchmans. We go on than to Canada. Me now go to Canada forever, pretty soon."

Here they parted; the boy to his mill, and the lone Indian to his fellows. This tree was a favorite one to the Indians, as at this spot was offered a victim to the manes of the slaughtered friends, and also a memento of the past struggles in war, a sign of victory and of the bloody customs of their beloved savage rites. According to Indian tradition, somewhere in the Susquehannah river was the ancient seat of an Indian empire, but about we do not know, yet it is supposed certain signs yet remaining, to have been at the junction of the Susquehannah and Chemung rivers, at which place are the immense plains of *She-she-quin* being of the richest soil, while round about were the vast mountain and upland ranges, where game was abundant. The Tuscaroras, according to *Cusick* - the Delaware and Iroquois Indians say that the first people - meaning themselves - dwelt *north* of the great lakes, toward the region of *Russia* as, now called; and that they then formed but one nation. This period according to the best Indian dates, or manner of counting time, was 500 years before Christ. But after many years a body, or colony of them, for some reason, left the main nation, which was then called Ya-guy-ho-hy, or: *first* people, and settled on the *Kanawag*, now St. Lawrence.

After a long time a foreign people came by sea, and settled south or *Lake Ontario*-many hundred years before the era of Columbus; these no doubt were the ancient Phoenicians, and people of ancient Greece and nations of those ages, as they had even thousand year' s before the Christian era, a knowledge of navigation, and visited foreign parts of the uncultivated world; and no doubt were the builders of the cities, whose foundations have lately been found in the west and south of this country, were built of brick. One of those cities was called by them the golden city, and is supposed to have been situated somewhere in the neighborhood of St Louis. War was made upon those cities, built by this over - sea people, by a great confederacy of the ancient Indians, who

was then called *Yak-ka-tan*, a great warrior. From the people of the golden city, a colony fled to the east and settled in the mountains of *Oswego*, but these were destroyed long before the *Danes* found this county and settled in it, which was some eight or nine hundred years ago.

From among those who destroyed the people from the golden city, there arose a king, named *Ta-ren-ya-wa-gon*, who went with his people, out of the Oswego County on to the *Ye-no-na-at-tah*, -or *Mohawk* river, when soon after, several tribes form a confederacy, called *Ago-ne-a-se-ah*, form, a confederacy, called *A-go-ne-a-se-ah*, or the *Long house* compact. After this several dynasties of kings arose, making war here and there, till at length a great tyrant arose, called *Sah-nan-ro-icah*, who had his seat of empire as above stated, somewhere on the river *Ka-nna-seh*, or as it is now pronounced - Susquehannah. This tyrant substituted all before him, to the south, west, east and north from whom all the nations inhabiting these parts of the country, descended - as found when settled by the Puritans from England. *Susquehannah* therefore, is a country of far more importance in relation to ancient faces of men-reduction and ruin of empires, than is imagined by the present industrious and enlightened people who now possess it. *Brant*, of whom we have spoken, and whose likeness, we have shown on the frontispiece, was descended from that warlike race, one branch of said empire, was the ancestors of that renowned Mohawk.

But to return to poor Richard. It was late in the fall, and he was literally clothed in rags with nothing but some cloth moccasins on his feet, although there was then on the ground quite a flurry of snow. He shouldered his bag; the day was before him, as it was early in the morning - with all its toils, having no road but the warrior's path, through woods and wilds, which were not a little to be feared; yet he arrived safely about twelve o' clock of the day, at the mill. But what was his disappointment on perceiving it to be a mere temporary thing, placed over a rivulet, not capable of turning a wheel larger than a common grindstone, which had been erected not for the purpose of customers, but for the exclusive use of the owner, it being an easier way than to pound his corn in a mortar. On application to the proprietor to know if he would grind his corn, received for answer: "No it is *impossible*: you see, said he, the stone is but a small and poor one, which I have in the most miserable manner cut out of that rock there, and it will take all day to grind your grist: I cannot do it." This answer so discomfited and grieved him, that he cried very much, all the while pleading with the man to grind it for him, as it was *too hard* to be obliged to carry it back again in the same state he brought it, and disappoint his mother and the children, who had tasted no good bread for a great while. At length the man was moved with pity, and told the boy he would try. The mill was set in motion, the grain poured into the hopper, when he waited the residue of that day, all night, and till near noon the next day before it was ground. He shouldered the precious burden, and retraced his way. It was nearly night when he was heard to halloo, to be brought over the river in the canoe, one of his feet entirely naked, having worn out the moccasin and left it on the way. He was nearly exhausted, having ate nothing from the time he left home till his return, which was two days and a night, except the raw meal from the bag, as the miller, either from neglect or hardness of heart, had offered him nothing, and he was too stout-hearted to ask for anything.

In those early times, very soon after the Revolution, the Indians were very troublesome, but not so much on account of any hostile disposition, as from their strange manners and costumes; a notable specimen of which was given at a certain time, when several tribes had met in the very neighborhood, which constituted our little community. These were the Oneidas, Onondagas, and Tuscaroras, who had met at this place by appointment of certain land speculators, who had purchased of the Indians a tract somewhere in this region. They were here to receive their pay in specie, from the hands of one McMaster, the agent of the purchasing company.

During their stay among us there was one continued scene, night and day, of yelling and confusion; pawwaws fighting, rough and tumble, leaping and shooting at a mark, with both bow arrows and guns, which constituted their sports. Their fires illuminated the woods during the night - around which the several tribes agreeable to their own customs, slept or celebrated the warlike deeds of their ancestors t in there war songs and dances, which were accompanied with indiscrible le gestures of Indian education and devotion, called the Pawwaws. And however wild and fantastic they may appear to be to the white man, yet to them, those songs, dances, and terrifying, attitudes, are and always have been the solemn and *only* modes by which traditionary accounts of former ages, their origin, deeds of fame, mighty battles, conquering or conquered, and their continuance on the earth, the earth's *origin*, their belief in the great Spirit,-were handed down, from generation, to generation, by impressing them on the minds of the young savages in this emphatic and never to be forgotten

way.

A company of these having made free with ardent spirits, procured of some of the families of the neighborhood who had purchased it at Cooperstown for the occasion, came one evening to my father's house, with a view of getting whatever he might have to sell that was eatable. They had not been in the room but a few minutes, when they fell to dancing after their manner, which was led on by a certain old squaw, who boasted much of being the mother of the great chief, who they called SHINNAWANA, or the big warrior, at the same time exposing her naked bosom, saying as she leaped here and there: here *me* nourish Cornelius, *great Shinnawana*. Directly this big warrior, by way of demonstration his powers knocked down an Indian of another tribe with his fist, called Schoharie John, which in a moment brought on a general fight on the spot. It seemed however, as afterwards ascertained, that Schoharie John said highly offensive to the big warrior which invited his vengeance in a particular manner. Accordingly the offending Indian had no sooner fallen by the blow of Shinnawana, than he sprang up upon him with both feet, and fell to stamping him down with all his might. This act together with the rest of the scuffle, broke the floor, and sleepers and all, when the whole company rolled into the cellar, one undistinguished mass of yelling Indians. In the morning my mother⁸³ asked the big warrior why they had so abused poor Schoharie John, when he replied: "*Me* make him feel my big power."

After the death of my husband⁸⁴, says Mrs. Priest,-which, was occasioned, by a cold, taken in, by the rescue of several persons from drowning, in the time high water - I was compelled to remove on to an entire new farm⁸⁵ alone, which had not even a house upon it, however, I soon caused one of logs to be built, in the very midst of a dense forest of pines, which from a hundred directions might have fallen upon it, had the winds been over furious. But to remove this alarming exposure she caused several acres which were immediately about the house to be felled, so that when this was done, she was literally in the midst of an immense brush heap.

Out of this circumstance arose another difficulty which had nigh well been more ruinous than the dreaded whirlwinds acting on those trees; and was as follows. The surrounding wilderness filled with the brush-wood and leaves of a thousand autumns, lay deep upon the surface of the hidden earth, as dry as the scorched forest of the torrid zone, which by some means had taken fire several miles distant, and was flying before the winds eager to destroy. The air was filled with a smoky maze, the sun traveled in blood, the stars were but dimly seen, the moon shorn of her silvery tissues, rolled her clumsy bulk through the dull heavens. "Oh, that it would rain," was every where the silent wish. Very soon in the night season, the distant hills in various directions were seen in spots flaming to their tops. Some places appeared to burn but feebly, while others poured forth flames as a great furnace; there the fire reaching a grove of withered pines covered with pitch, at once darted to the clouds, in one long tissue of flame, till the fat pitch was exhausted, when a chasm appeared; then in another direction the streaming grandeur floated on the air, as the mysterious light northern aurora borealis.

At such time when the woods were burning in every direction, the only safety from the rain of all fences all buildings, was for the people of a neighborhood to run together with axes, hoes and rakes and with these instruments remove the dry bush, leaves, and &c., around their fields, or on the side exposed to the current of the fire, then to set what is called *back fires*, so that by the time the fire of the woods should come too near, it was met by, counter current, and thus assuaged, amid sweat, alarm and exhaustion. Day and night the fire

⁸³This would be Deborah Beach Priest

⁸⁴Deborah is again referring to her first husband, Joseph Priest.

⁸⁵We believe Deborah is referring to land on the Unadilla side of the river at the upper end of the village. It was believed that she and Joseph Priest first lived on her father's land, but the author did indicate that when Joseph came to the Unadilla area when he brought a good amount of money which he may have made at the saw mill in Cambridge. It also said he was clearing wood from the land, which might have meant he had purchased some land. What I do know is that I found records in Cooperstown, the deed between Deborah Lull, Joseph Lull to Josiah Priest of Albany in 1825. We also found another deed created one month later, but this one had dropped Joseph Lull's name from it. Both deeds seemed to describe the same land, which is believed to be at the upper end of the village of Unadilla. It was co-signed by Abijah Beach the Justice of the Peace, living in Unadilla not far from this property. Abijah was Timothy's cousin. We believe that Joseph Lull's name was taken off the deed because it originally belonged to Deborah Beach Priest and Joseph Priest, not Joseph Lull. We don't know what Josiah Priest did with this land. Never found it re-deeded. He died 26 years later and might have still owned it and it could have been auctioned off. There was nothing in his probate about this property.

continued to make rapid progress; my fears now began to be, alarmed, lest sooner or later the woods which encompassed my house, as well as the several acres of dry fallen trees immediately about it would take fire when nothing could save my dwelling from its fury. I was along at a distance from neighbors. It was impossible to procure aid, as all the people were engaged to save their own fences and houses. Now the fire had reached the neighboring hills, raging before the winds like a tornado, trees falling with a dismal crash, the fire flying like meteors like hastening to devour. I clearly saw my fate, for the bush piled to the very eaves of the house, on all sides but the front. What could I do; must I flee and leave my all to the flames, and sink in one sad hour to ruin almost irreparable. Suddenly in the midst of my trouble it struck my mind that I would try, one experiment, which would either instantly fatal or would save me; and this was to pull away the brush, where it came in contact with the house, and then set it on fire, calculating that it would naturally pursue the dry wood. This was my rescue; for in a moment it took fire and fled from the house every way, through the immensity of brush, farther and farther, roaring as it receded, like the top of some volcanic mountain.

Perhaps no river in America abounds more in forests of pine than the Susquehannah, or of a superior quality, covering generally the mountain ranges from Otsego to the tide waters. But at the time of Mrs. Priest's settling on her *new* farm, these forests had not been broached by the axe of the raftsmen. Of this description of early enterprise among the first settlers on that river, a history of no small magnitude might be written, as for many years the paramount exertions of the most ambitious for accumulating property were engaged in this pursuit.

Were we capable of chivalric and comic description, there is not wanting incident in the history of rafting on the Susquehannah and its branches, to furnish *both* subjects with an amplitude of matter, and we may add, even of a *tragical* charter. It is said of the, whalemen of Nantucket and the fisheries of Maine, that however poor a young man may be, that if he is courageous and skilful in capturing the whale, he is sure of being held in high estimation by the ladies, and even those who are rich; while at the same time, if the sons of the opulent do not labor to acquire glory in this way, their galantries are far from being acceptable with the fair arbiters of that sea board. We believe we should not exceed the truth were we to say nearly as much of the raftsmen of the Susquehannah and Delaware, in the time of their first settlements. In all ages, the most dangerous pursuits of men have drawn forth the admiration, and even the love of women; this very propensity, however difficult to be accounted for, has laid the foundation and given the spring to all extravagant achievements among men since the world began.

The Susquehannah or the ancient *Ka-u-na-sch*, is a river exceeding crooked, and in many places fearfully rapid, on which account in the first attempts to navigate, or run it, as the raftsmen's term it, before its channels were better known, lives were often lost, occasioned by *staving* their lumber on the heads of Islands, among flood wood, or hidden trees fastened to the bottom, and in running the rapids, being driven ashore by the violence of the current of the short bends of the stream, and in various other ways. On these accounts the importance of the pursuit was magnified, so as to fix on the man who had the hardiness of soul, courage, good judgment, a knowledge of the channel, and with all, was lucky, a complete veneration of both man and woman, as by it his powers was wonderfully exhibited, and though his charter otherwise might be the most inviting, yet such a circumstance would be nearly overlooked, on account of the all absorbing qualification, that he is a *first rate steersman*. He could always command the highest price, and was sought after equally with a first rate whaleman, among the oil merchants, whose, wealth was derived from the sea on the coast of Newfoundland and the north: as the value of a *ten cribbed* raft of pine boards was of equal importance to the owner as a ship to the East India Company - his *all* being often at stake in *one* such raft.

During the course of this river - which is the eight in magnitude in known world - there are many dangerous places, occasioned by its crookedness, by its falls, its rapids, and its islands, where all the skill strength and ingenuity of the steersman, and from four to eight men, its brought into action for many miles together. Not even the extreme vigilance of a ship pilot, on the most dangerous coasts of the ocean, in a storm, is more needed to guide and save the his vessel, than are the exertions of a steersman of a raft on that river, as was also as the Delaware. There is no class of human man exertion the field of battle, which is capable of exciting more interest in the beholder while passing a dangerous rapid, than the deep fixed solicitude of a *steersman* and his hands. Previous to entering on the fearful channel, and while passing it, all are silent, coats off, handkerchiefs tied under their heads and waists, sleeves of the shirt rolled up, each to its place, with his

eye's fixed on the suck of the waters, and his ears opened to the cry of the pilot, knowing that one wrong stroke of the oar is fatal, till the danger is past. One such a place among many is the *Caughnawaga Falls*.

Many are tales of the raftsmen who have run the falls, of the disasters there taken place, and of the fears and trepidations felt before entering the *gap*, and is called the *Caughnawaga* fear, which the modest heart is not proof against. Fifteen miles above, their roar is distinctly heard, if there is no wind to prevent it, but as they rapidly neared by the current, hurrying its volume to the brow of their descent, the sound is louder, and seems as if the earth were falling to pieces in the distance. The raftsmen who now are silent watch with intensesness the least variation of the raft's course, and also the cry of the pilot, which is sharp and quick: *right, left-right, left,*" as may seem to him best; when accordingly the deep, long blades of the oars are dipt slightly but quick, with a strong hand in the rapid water. and thus the raft is thrown one way or the other as the pilot directs.

But soon they come in sight or the breakers at the head of the falls, which may be seem three miles above and appear like a flock of sheep leaping in succession the fence of the farmer, or like a wreath of snow new fallen from the clouds; the roar of which soon becomes deafening. Directly after passing this point it is too late for the fearful to recede; there is no escape; the falls *must* be passed, amid its terrors. Now is the time when the sins of the most wicked are brought to remembrance, when the secret unseen prayer ascends "*Oh God carry me safe through the falls;*" as each one knows full well that the least error on entering the narrow sluice of the true channel - which is about fifty feet wide, and somewhat crooked - will inevitable throw the raft among the rocks, where the whole power of the river in full flood rages for several miles. In the event of such a disaster, the raft is frequently doubled in an instant, the one half being thrown endwise over on to the other, or in a twinkling torn into many parts, or turned up edgewise, so that every soul is in the greatest danger of perishing, yet sometime escape by seizing upon some severed crib, and thus float through to the still waters below, where they are taken up by the boatmen, who are always in readiness on such occasions.

The length of these is about six miles, and the descent of a raft through them is at the rate of nearly a mile a minute, so that a company of rafts above the falls being so near each other as to converse together, and to hear the voice of the steersman as he gives the word, but as soon as the *dip* of the raft is felt, as it enters the first breaker, it is straightway out of sight, on which account any error on entering them is fatal. But no sooner are they passed than the rafts by hundreds are thrown ashore at the place of rendezvous when a joy as extravagant as was their fears take place among such as have safely descended the rapids, expressed by the free passing of liquor, and the shaking of hands, as heartily as if they had been separated by the terrors of a seven years war. There are several other falls below these, of a very dangerous charter, such as *Fosters, Hunters and Turkey Rill*.

Nothing can exceed the life and hilarity of the lumbering population on that river, on the opening, of spring in the month of march and April, as the boards, plank and scantling of a thousand saw mills the river and its tributary streams, have during the winter been discharged by the means of ten thousands of sleighs, sleds and wagons, and triple that number of men, horses and oxen. On every part of the river from within a short distance of its head, at Collier's mills to the tide waters, where is found suitable eddy for rafting, in a lumbering neighborhood may be seen in those months vast heaps of the product of the piney mountains, ready on the break up of the ice and rise of the water to be put in the river and run to Columbia or to Baltimore, as well as from Delhi to Philadelphia. Everywhere the country is in motion, engaged in the general enterprise; provision for the long and hazardous voyage is pouring onto the shores from every quarter. But this part of the arrangement falls under the care and disposition of the hardy wives of the lumbermen, and of their beautiful daughters, whose engaging manners and exceeding fair countenances are not surpassed by the far famed Georgian and Circassian beauties of Armenia. The provisions consisted of the best the larder could furnish stowed away in the great provision chest of each raft, even where the shouts of the raftsmen are heard, with the load clap of the boards as they were laid in cribs in the water. The eddies were alive with men and boys at work, making haste to be off, lest they might loss the freshet before they could reach their destination. But now all is ready, wives and daughters are taken leave of; the sad *good bye* is responded and the keen glance of happy lovers reciprocated, with the customary whisper--"*take care of yourself;*" Do;" when the moorings withs are cut loose, and the long ponderous raft is swept by the whirl of the waters into the heading current. Now all along the river could be seen a large amount of the population afloat on its waters, as at certain times it was literally covered with lumber and people, hastening swiftly away to other regions; and with them frequently descended the cautious

merchant, who during the year had furnished goods, the comforts and elegancies of life, and sometimes *too* much of *that* which destroy life; for these things, and the payment thereof, thereof merchant sometimes thought there could be no-harm, if he were present when the lumber should be sold and paid for. Thus from the sale of lumber the country had annually an influx of cash, which was the raftsman's harvest. But were we to relate a thousandth part of both the comical and tragical incidents which fall out during those expeditions, we could fill a volume. It is amusing as well as instructive to listen to the tales of the war worn soldier, who has faced death in many a battle, and is ever the uppermost subject of his mind; so also the raftsman, who has devoted his years, as many have, to this pursuit, is ever ready and always delighted, to rehearse the hair breadth escapes, while threading the mazy windows of the river, or while passing the dangerous rapids; how when stove and broken to pieces, he collected the scattered boards, and with what dexterity and more than human strength, he rescued himself from, instant death in a hundred instances. One escape out of a thousand of a like nature we will relate, as we are personally acquainted with the man. The raft on which he was, had just struck the first breaker on entering the narrow channel at the head of the Caughnawaga falls, the forward oar was unshipped by the waves; there were but two men on the raft, who had by way of *brave*, undertaken to run the falls thus feeble - handed, one at each oar only. These oars were always made of a young pine, generally about thirty feet in length, thick and strong enough to bear the united strength of ten men at once. A plank of an inch and a half thick, twelve feet long and a foot a foot and a half wide, formed the blades of these oars, which inserted about one-third of the length of the plank into the into the largest end of the pine tree, (all of which is a sufficient lift for three men,) when it is to be shipped or hung upon the pin on which it plays. This oar at the fore-end of the raft being lifted off the pin, exposed them to instant death, as the raft, had not the oar been instantly reshipped, would have passed out of its proper course, and been dashed to atoms among the rocks. But he succeeded, and a stroke or two in the fierce waters saved them, as they went safely down. We cannot here enumerate all the *pioneer* raftsmen of these early times and scenes; but foremost among them may be mentioned the Bundys, Frances, Gateses, Shephards, Wattles, Bennetts, Colliers, Helmers, Arnolds, Averys, &c., several of whom acquired affluence in this pursuit, and whose descendents are now numerous on the river, maintaining, many of them, an honorable distinction in society.

Often, when the raftsmen arrive at their destination, where their lumber is sold, conflicts of a deadly character take place between them and citizens of pugilistic propensities, so that broken heads and limbs are received on both sides. But victory sides with the more fierce and powerful raftsmen, who never, that we heard of, lost a battle of the kind. We could here name several hero's of this description on the head water of the Susquehannah, whose glory among their fellows, and even the whole population, was as great at far as it went, as that of Gen. Jackson, at the fight of New-Orleans; but lest we might displease such persons, many of whom are still living, we desist. But freely confess that we still feel a degree of veneration whenever we meet with one of them - as it brings to mind of the writer the early scenes of his childhood, on the river, the memory of which will ever cause in his heart a sensation of warmth and tenderness, as it was there in one of the most beautiful towns the west, namely *Unadilla*., that he commenced his career of life - the site of which, we well remember was once covered with once covered with one continued forest of beach and maple, where but a little while before the *Delawares*, the fierce aborigines of the woods, inhabited. **FINIS**

Publishers note: We found it impossible to insert the last three stories mentioned on page 3, although we have printed the pamphlet on a very fine type, and an exceedingly large page. But we doubt not the reader is satisfied with the amount already communicated, for the price it cost.

The Author:

Josiah A. Priest
Born 9 December 1788 - Unidilla, New York
Died April 1851 - Ceres, New York

Josiah was the first of two sons born to Deborah Beach and Joseph "aka Josiah" Priest on the farm of Deborah's parents in what is now East Sidney, New York. When Josiah became a teenager it is believed he apprenticed as a saddler with cousin, Abijah H. Beach, in Unadilla. Abijah was also a Justice of the Peace and Lay Preacher. Josiah later moved near his grant uncle, Ebenezer Beach, in Roundtop, Greene County, New York. Here he worked as a saddler on his own.

In his early twenties, Josiah moved to Lansingburg, New York near Albany where he married Eliza Perry 5 July 1812. By 1819 he and his family of four children moved to Albany where it was said the State of New York contracted him as a Saddler. Beginning in 1824, Josiah decided to become a writer and peddled his works along with the works from other writers and publishers. By 1832 the family grew to 13 children. In his 56th year, 1844, he published his last known book. At this point he seemed to have disappeared, although Eliza died in Buffalo, New York 17 July 1878.

Wanting to know more about Josiah, I located a copy of a book "JOSIAH PRIEST - Historian of the American Frontier - A Study and Bibliography", By Winthrop Hillyer Duncan, 1935. This was published for the American Antiquarian Society. This 60-page book sheds some light to Josiah's life and goes into detail with his publications. It also gave an indirect clue as to what happened to him. One of Josiah's most respected publishers was Joel Munsell of Albany. Many from this Munsell family were writers and historians as well as publishers. In this book the following letter was found written to Mr. Munsell:

4 May, 1876
J. Munsell Esq. *Newton,*
N. J.

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 3^d is at hand.
My father died in Enes, Alleghany⁸⁶, Co., N.Y. in
April 1851. The record which I have does not give
the day of the month and I am unable to state it.
He was born at Unadilla, Otsego Co., N.Y. Dec.9,
1788 and was thus in his 63 year at his death.
For your kind and sympathetic expressions with
regard to him & his enterprises, I am much
obliged.
My mother now in her 87th year, is still living.

Truly Yrs.,

J. A. Priest

So where did he die? I could not find any such location named Enes in New York. I noticed that J. A.

⁸⁶ This was the way the County was spelled in Penna., not New York.

Priest, known as Rev. Josiah Addison Priest and son to Josiah, spelled the county as Alleghany, which is closer to the way it is spelled in Pennsylvania, not Allegany as in New York. So I searched Pennsylvania too and found nothing. It was time to send queries to genealogy forums for these two counties. One person returned a very interesting observation. He said, "was it possible the handwriting was not clear, in the letter, and the author, Duncan, might he have interpreted it to be written as **GENesse** instead of Genesee. At about the same time I received an email from Charlie Barrett, Historian for Ceres, New York and the surrounding county of Alleghany.

He told me he was writing me this email at his desk while looking out the window at the large headstone for Josiah Priest in the Ceres Cemetery across the street which is in the Pennsylvania part of Ceres. Charlie had charted that cemetery and knew that Josiah was a saddler and writer and wanted to know more about him. Ceres is next to Little Genesee, New York, thus the end of my search for our elusive Josiah Priest.

I was able to find his Probate that verified Charlie's findings that Josiah remarried to Adelia Southworth about 1844/5 and became a Justice of the Peace in Ceres, Penna. before he died in 1851. He had three children with this wife.

During 25 years of writing, Duncan documents some 65 various booklets and pamphlets. Duncan also said Priest also wrote prose and other short stories that he added to his major works along with some block etched illustrations.

To quote Duncan: *"Priest was in no sense a great author and never attained any literary eminence whatever. Some of his works had been dead letters for years and today (1935) are of little interest. At the time of their publication, however, they met with a certain popular favor and several editions of some of them were published. Among the others he published several pamphlets of Colonial and Revolutionary war interest, which are still well read and appreciated by those inclined to read history or engaged in historical research.*

In writing these pamphlets Priest rescued from oblivion, many long forgotten historical facts relating to the perils, sacrifices and heroism of private soldiers and their associates, during the Revolutionary War. The thrilling feats, and exciting adventures, contained in these tales are part and parcel of our historic past and were it not for the study and devoted patriotism of these men and women, we would not now be an independent nation.

It is true that Priest has been accused by many, of writing merely fictitious stories, made out of whole cloth. This is not at all the case. All the facts upon which his stories are based were collected by him from participants themselves and they are often corroborated by other writers who also had the privilege of personal interviews with these same individuals.

The average person is more inclined to read a story embellished and adorned, than a story composed of nothing but plain, prosy, facts. Priest wrote to sell and he knew his customers.

Munsell, the publisher of some of his works, has stamped him as 'the greatest inventor of ancient history and biography of his time'."

This Antiquarian book about Josiah Priest illustrates the wide range of subjects such as Theology, archeology, anthropology and local history during the Revolutionary period. He often colored his stories with wonders of nature, He was known for his *American Antiquities and Discoveries in the West* (Albany 1833) which continued for six editions and some 20,000 copies sold⁸⁷. His writings did not go without some controversy in his writings on *Bible Defence of Slavery or the Origin, History and Fortunes of the Negro Race*, which can still be found on Amazon.com.

He was often confused as being a minister, but he never became a man of the cloth. That was his son, a Presbyterian minister, who became world known for his sermons. Josiah began to write, toward the end of his writing career, about the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Some of these works were embraced by the teachings of the Church, but not all. A few were condemned. It is suggested that Joseph Smith aquatinted with and influenced with Priest's Mormonism theories. Critical readers were not always very kind to Priest's literary works, but his illustrated accounts of history of the pioneer not only brought entertainment to his early readers, but also historians and genealogist today.

⁸⁷ This 400 page tome was a self-described "exhibition of the evidence that an ancient population of partially civilized nations differing entirely from those of the present Indians peopled America many centuries before its discovery of Columbus," and claimed that these pre-historic Americans were descendant of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

It is not clear why he took to writing these Religious dissertations, but it is believed that Priest was introduced to some of the early LDS founders that were beginning to create small settlements in New York going westward to Salt Lake City. This might have been the reason why he ended up in Ceres since one such a LDS settlement was nearby in Friendship NY. The Church said that he never became a member of their religion.

During my Beach heritage research, I became elated to find this Priest works about his, and my, Beaches coming to New York. It is something that many cannot say they have been able to include in their research findings. What makes it so unique is that most of the source was first hand by family eyewitnesses. Duncan said of Priest's book, "Stories of Early Settlers in the Wilderness Embracing the Life of Mrs. Priest"; *"This work contains a most interesting account of the adventures and privations of Priest's mother's family, who at the close of the Revolutionary War emigrated from Weston, Conn. to a place near Wattles Ferry on the Susquehanna, in the town of Sidney, Delaware County, N. Y."* This book was the first true document that actually states that this Beach family is descendants of a line of English Beaches. In all the research, by many professional researchers at al, only speculation of such was found within statistical data; a great fine indeed!

For those that are interested in obtaining an original book, there are not many around anymore, the following antique book dealer has one, as per 2002. This was last priced that year at \$950.00.

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Title is **Stories of Early Settlers.....**

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