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THE

Callicoon Historian

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*A Narrative of Leading Events in the History of
the Delaware Valley, from the Earliest
Times to the Present Day.*

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father of twenty-one children, fourteen of whom arrived at years of maturity. His son served in the revolutionary war, and one Capt. Bezaleel Tyler fell at the battle of Minisink, July 22d, 1779. The family is extremely numerous in this section at the present day. The Conklins came from Haverstraw in Rockland county about the same year. They were of Dutch extraction and served valiantly during the war of the Revolution. After the war they returned and two of the family, John and Elias, became men of note. John was elected to many public offices, while Elias was noted as an Indian doctor of rare merit. They removed to Great Bend in 1817. William Conklin, a brother, lived on lands of Joseph Griswold on Big Island, and though twice driven from his home by Indians, he always remained a friend to them, declaring they were more sinned against than sinning; that generally they were good fellows, and that he had seen sixty of them at one time playing ball upon the island.

The Ross family were from Bound Brook, N. J. They were induced to come by Joseph Griswold and settle in Cushtunk. Two of the sons of the elder Ross, John and James, settled upon the Callicoon Creek near its mouth, John on the south side and James on the north. The latter died in 1812. In those days the village of Callicoon had not been thought of.

At the time of the Revolutionary war, Cushtunk was particularly liable to attacks by the Indians. Lying in an exposed situation, and at the point where the various trails converged, it was thought best by the settlers when war was declared to remove their families to the more densely populated settlements at Minisink, Shawangunk, Rochester and other places where they would be comparatively safe. A few remained who professed neutrality, and some were open Tories. Many of the Whigs left without harvesting their crops, and when the safety of their families was assured, they returned to care for their property, and found that their enemies had destroyed it. This conduct was not calculated to promote amicable feelings, or to lead to peace and good will, particularly as they themselves were driven away. The patriots at Mamakating organized a company of scouts placing them under command of Capt. Bezaleel Tyler. They were intended for the general defense and often visited the Cushtunk to regulate the Tories and make reprisals. It is not to be presumed

that they spent much time in trials, or bothered about the quibbles of the law. They drove away the cattle and took other property of the malignants, and sometimes carried along the Tories, also. It does not appear that they shed blood except on two occasions. On one of their trips to the upper valley, they met a poor half-witted fellow named Handy, in what is now called Old Cohecton. Before the war he had been disappointed in love, and the result to him was most disastrous. Feeble-minded and an outcast, he wandered from place to place. Finally he stole a horse from a Whig at Mamakating and joined a party of Indians under a chief named Minotto. Elevated in his own estimation by this acquisition, he rode about thinking himself some great individual, when, meeting by accident Tyler's Scouts and mistaking them for friends, he rode towards them and exclaimed "I'm Minotto's man!" Some of the scouts had recognized the horse and when he declared what he was, his fate was sealed. He was shot and his body buried upon the river bank. Some years ago his bones were uncovered by the action of the water; they were taken possession of for scientific purposes, and are now believed to be in the possession of one of our local physicians.

A well-known Whig of Cohecton, by the name of Nathan Mitchell, very nearly lost his life because of his peculiar headgear. He had remained after the others left because his wife did not wish to leave her father, whose sympathies were known to be with the Tories. In order to protect himself from the shots of the lurking Redmen, he wore an Indian cap. The cap excited the suspicions of the scouts and they concluded that the wearer should give an account of himself, and he, fearing he would not have time to make an explanation, ran for the woods. The pursuers were well-mounted, and soon were within shooting distance and about to fire when he was recognized. The scouts, taking Mitchell with them, proceeded up the river until they came to the residence of David Young, the Tory. Young lived on the New York side of the river opposite Big Island. His wife claimed to be a natural child of George III., and was a woman of intelligence. Young was not at home; it was quite customary for people of his political views to be absent when Capt. Tyler was around. Mrs. Young received her visitors and informed them that Brant, the Indian, with five hundred warriors, was at the mouth

Bloomingsburgh and Great Bend. He married Weighty Calkins, and from him are descended the respectable family of Irvines.

As early as 1797 Rev. Isaac Sergeant began to preach up and down the valley. Wherever a little company of the scattered people could be gathered together, he would meet them and hold a religious service. He was a minister of the Congregational church, and probably formed the first religious society in Sullivan County, at Narrows Falls in 1799. In 1800 he administered the Lord's Supper, according to the Congregational order, to fifteen persons at Cohecton. It is possible that Mr. Sergeant took steps to organize these persons into a legally constituted church, but if he did so, no certain evidence of the fact remains. Mr. Sergeant ceased coming after a few years, and of those whom he admitted as members of the church, some died, others were scattered, and the rest joined the Presbyterian society.

Another of the early pioneer preachers was Elder Enoch Owen. He was of the Free Will Baptist faith, and for a number of years was the only clergyman living in the town. Mr. Owen never had the advantage of a liberal education, but combining shrewd good sense with robustness of manners, he succeeded in doing what now many accomplished ministers fail to do; he impressed the truths of Christianity and morality upon the people. On week days he worked as a lumberman, farmer or mason, and some of the stone chimneys still to be seen are an exhibition of his handiwork. It is said that he usually carried his rifle with him in going to hold service, and often he has put an end to the Sabbath-breaking proclivities of certain panthers, deer and bear that crossed his path. On one occasion while returning from a service, and cogitating deeply upon some theological subject, and just as the dusky shadows of night were falling, he thought he saw before him a vision of horns and hoofs. Believing he saw a large buck he raised his gun and fired, hastened forward to cut the animal's throat, as the shot had been successful, and found, alas, too late! he had shot and killed his only horse which had come to meet him. He never afterward carried a gun on the Sabbath. In his old age Mr. Owen joined the Close Communion Baptists. His good name and good deeds survived his mortal body, and are yet held in grateful remembrance.

The ubiquitous circuit riders of the Methodist church early visited the Cushtunk. One

of the appointments was St. Tammany Flats, another was at Conklin Hill, and another at Milanville. This was in 1831. The ministers were appointed by the New York conference until 1843. The records are very deficient, however, and not much can be said about the status of the church at that time. The organization of the Methodist church in Callicoon will be noted in another place.

Through the researches of the late Hon. James C. Curtis, we are enabled to supply a list of those who lived in the town of Cohecton in March, 1814. Cohecton at that time included the town of Delaware. The following are the names of those who had families:

On the river below Jared Irvine's,—

David Young, Stephen Mitchell, Elias Conklin, William Conklin, Oliver Calkins, Joseph Mitchell, Old Mr. Mitchell, Elias Conklin, Jr., Bezaleel Calkins, Charles Irvine, James Mitchell, John Conklin, Jacob Conklin, Moses Calkins, Pierre A. Barker.

In the village above those before mentioned, Benjamin Raymond, Nathaniel Tyler, Ebenezer Taylor, David Brown, Timothy Tyler, Bezaleel Tyler, William Palmer, Paul Tyler.

On the turnpike,—

Enoch Owen, James Hill, William Tyler, Frederick Wallace, and one other family whose name is not known.

At Pike Pond,—

A family by the name of Woodruff who ran a saw mill.

At Callicoon Flats,—

Silas Tyler, and one other family whose name is not known.

At Beechwoods,—

Ebenezer Taylor's family, George Keesler, Timothy Tyler.

At Big Island,—

William Conklin, Squire Marsh, James Brink, — Baker, Jesse Tyler.

At Callicoon,—

John Ross, Joseph Ross, Charles Layton.

At North Branch (above Callicoon),—

James Ross, William Tyler, Nathaniel Tyler, Sen., Benjamin Tyler, William Tyler, William Billings.

Those without families,—

George S. Young, George B. Guinnip, Eli Conklin, Elias Ross, John Kellam, Bateman Smith, John Mitchell, — Robinson, Paul W. Conklin, John Layton, George Kellam, John Hill, Chas. R. Taylor, Amos Tyler,

The Tyler Family.

THE TYLER FAMILY is well known on both sides of the Delaware river, having settled at an early date in Sullivan county, N. Y., and Wayne county, Penn. In the first Tyler family to move into this section there were twenty-two children besides the parents. They came in 1757, at the same time with the Calkins and Skinners, all immigrating from Preston, New London county, Conn. The Thomas, Conklin, Ross, Layton, and Mitchell families were already upon the ground, or came immediately after.

The second generation of these families intermarried, and this they have continued to do to a considerable extent ever since, so that a history of the Tyler family would involve a history of all the others. The following genealogical table is published, not only because it will be of interest to the Tyler family, but to the public generally, and is believed to be correct.

One of the early settlers whose descendants became prominent in the annals of Damascus Township was Bezaleel Tyler, the one previously mentioned. He married Sarah Calkins, and was brother-in-law of Simeon and John Calkins. He had twenty-two children, fourteen of whom attained to years of maturity, viz: Hannah, Bezaleel, Sarah, Silas, Paul, Abigail, Timothy, Nathaniel, William, Charles, Mary, Rebecca, Zuriah and Amos. Most of the sons were soldiers in the Revolutionary War. Nathaniel was a drummer in the army and was taken prisoner at the battle of St. Johns. Bezaleel was known as Captain "Zeel" Tyler, and was killed at the battle of Lackawaxen, July 22d. 1779. He had previously married and settled on Hollister's Creek, where with Daniel Skinner he built a sawmill, the second one in the town of Damascus. He also assisted in the erection of Daniel Skinner's

house on St. Tammany Flat, which was burned by the Indians in 1777. His children were John, Moses, Oliver, Elam, Phebe and Abigail.

John married Jane Fanoy and had seven children, viz: Bezaleel, Moses, Benjamin, Oliver, Sally, (the wife of James Ross, Jr.) Abigail, (the wife of Jesse Drake, Jr.) and Lydia, (who married Moses, a son of Oliver Calkins of Big Eddy). Oliver, the fourth son of Captain Tyler, married Elizabeth Comfort. His oldest son was John, but who the others were is not known, the family having moved to Dryden, N. Y. Moses married Sarah Ross, a daughter of James Ross, Sr. One of his daughters married Elias Calkins of Barryville. Elam was killed in youth; Phebe married Joseph Thomas; while Abigail became the wife of Joseph Mitchell.

Simeon Bush was one of the original settlers and came with the Calkins and Skinners; he was a half brother to the Tylers, and married Hannah Smith of Orange county during the Indian war.

Paul Tyler, son of Bezaleel Tyler and Sarah Calkins, married Hester Brink, a sister of Judge Brink of Sussex county, N. J.; and his daughter Sophia married David Wilder, who removed from Cochection to Bethany in 1803. Wilder's daughter Charity became the wife of Judge James Manning and had ten children.

William Tyler, son of Bezaleel 1st, married Mary Monington, and his children were Israel, Raymond, Alfred, Truman, Sally, (who married Cortland Skinner), Eliza (wife of Kinney Skinner), and Emeline, wife of David Fortman of Tyler Hill. The elder son, Israel, was for many years one of the influential and prominent residents of Damascus township and lived at Tyler Hill. He died in 1874, leaving two sons, Moses and Lorenzo D. Tyler. He mar-