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The Catskill Turnpike: a Wilderness Path

By ALMYRA E. MORGAN *for Ithaca Chapter, D.A.R.*
Adapted by WILLIAM HEIDT, JR., *City Historian*

1971

DEWITT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of* TOMPKINS COUNTY, *Inc.*
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PREFACE

Just one year short of fifty years ago, two Tompkins County residents retraced the route of the Catskill turnpike and its western extension all the way from Ithaca to the road's eastern terminus at Catkill on the Hudson River. Included in their equipment were a Model T Ford and a camera.

Seven years later, Cayuga Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, compiled a record of the route, and bound the manuscript into an indexed volume of 182 pages. Photographs taken on the trip and others were used extensively to illustrate the highway, particularly the western section from Jericho (now Bainbridge) to Bath which passed through Tompkins County. Old homes and hostelries provided much of the pictorial subjects. Almyra E. Morgan was author of the manuscript that was placed in DeWitt Historical Society's Museum.

By permission of the Chapter, adaptations have been made from this volume so as to offer a brief history of the Jericho-Bath section. Inasmuch as this description gives little attention to that portion of the turnpike between Catskill and Jericho, or the reason for its construction, an initial chapter has been prepared to incorporate an account of the Catskill turnpike, *per se,* or eastern section which became a public highway in 1804, the year the Rev. Mr. Dwight traveled it from Catskill to the Susquehanna.—W.H.jr.

Origin of the Catskill Turnpike

By WILLIAM HEIDT, JR.

It does not seem possible that as recently as 233 years ago Central New York of today was largely an unknown region; certainly it had not been explored. But Seymour Dunbar in his *A History of Travel in America* changes one's doubts into convictions.

"The importance of the Susquehanana River and Valley as a travel route was recognized at an early time, even the geography of the region was but vaguely known. Perhaps the first prominent reference to its as a possible highway for white men was that made by Cadawallar Colden in 1737, when he said, "goods may be carried from this lake [Otsego] in battos or flat-bottomed vessels through Pennsylvania to Maryland and Virginia and . . .by either of these two branches goods may be carried to the mountains, and I am told that the passage through the mountains to branches of the Mississippi (which issue on the west side of these mountains) is neither long nor difficult, by which means inland navigation may be had to the Bay of Mexico."

Dunbar continues by adding a footnote: Colden, as well as other public men, knew of the headwaters of the Ohio and dimly saw their possibilities of future utility as an aid to progress through the interior."

The first general manifestation of public interest in the Susquehanna country, became visible in New England about 1750, and was in part owing to stories descriptive of the district brought back by missionaries who had penetrated into the western forest to convert the Indians. Elihu Spencer and John Sergeant were two of these men whose narratives aided in producing this awakening.

These tales were spread through Connecticut and Massachu-

setts by word of mouth or through the newspapers. Reports of luxuriant vegetation—corn growing stalks twenty feet tall and ears that frequently measured a foot and a half in length—must have startled the farmers on the hard-scrabble acres of New England. Reports, too, of endless waterpower could do no less than fire imaginations. Dunbar adds:

"A few adventurous spirits soon organized the regular little caravans and set forth to grope through the woods and establish new homes in the far-off land, two hundred miles away, that was known to them only by hearsay. They put their women on horses, loaded animals and bedding and othe household goods, tied the babies in maple-sirup trouths for safekeeping, picked up their rfles, whistled to the dogs, and started.

"Their way led over the country [New England] to the Hudson River, which they crossed near the present town of Catskill. As a result of these migrations, a trail was promptly developed into a well-marked tote-road, and afterwards into a highway fit for vehicles, soon led from settled districts of New England to the Hudson."

In a footnote Dunbar records: "The road through Connecticut to the Hudson was made into a turnpike about the year 1800, and a flood of Conestoga wagons and other vehicles then moved over it toward the new settlements in the interior New York and Pennsylvania. Wagons, however, had reached the Hudson over the trail some time before it became a turnpike." This influx was touched off by opening of the Military Tract in 1790. Not all the immigrants were veterans of the Revolutionary War who came to claim military grants, but others who came to purchase sections of the 600-acre grants.

Once the stream was passed, the journey through the forest became a more difficult one, Dunbar assures his readers, then describes it.

"The route still to be traversed before the upper waters of the Susquehanna were reached was a hundred miles long in a westerly direction, and at first there were no serviceable paths to follow. The ground was a jumble of obstacles through which a caravan had to pick it way with infinite labor, at a rate of a few miles a day."

Gideon Hawley, who travelled from Massachusetts to the

Susquehanna in 1753, left a record of his experiences in the wilderness west of the Hudson in whch he said the road "was obstructed by fallen trees, old logs, miry places, pointed rocks and entangling roots. How bad the travelling is, we cannot tell."

Returning to Dunbar: "On arriving at the Susquehanna the men of each pack-train built canoes in which to transport the goods, women and children of the party southward to a favorable location, while a few members led the tired horses overland along the banks of the river. The other way of reaching the headwaters of the Susquehanna was by means of big canoes, usually of the hollow-log variety, that were propelled up the river by means of poles."

The state government of New York began to display some interest in the question of better highways about 1790 and took control of the road leading from the Hudson toward the Susquehanna. In 1792 a party of travelers passing over it from Connecticut required but eight days to cover the distance between them, although they were driving livestock. The highway was then twenty-five feet wide.

Also in 1792, a mail route was established over the thoroughfare, and from that time onward it constantly increased in importance. Later, it was rebuilt with a surface of stone and gravel and became known as the Catskill turnpike, whose history typified the last stages of the development of all similar highways by which they were finally transformed from red men's trails to white men's routes of travel—eventually to ribbons of concrete.

A Path into the Wilderness

By ALMYRA E. MORGAN

The Indian trails along which the Redmen traveled their narrow, winding way through stream and forest in going from place to place in the wilderness, and the old trail roads over which the first settlers came from the vicinity of the Hudson River and eastern states, are teeming with historical material. The data concerning one of these early roads, the Catskill turnpike, is especially interesting to us.

Little direct written information regarding this old highway is obtainable but, while searching for facts concerning an improved road of another century, such valuable information unfolded that it was decided to preface this history of the Tompkins County section of that highway with this introduction. Of course, its purpose is to preserve all the assembled data in a brief exposition for posterity, and to acquaint local readers with the turnpike as a whole that they more greatly appreciate passage of the road and its tributaries throughout the county.

Over this route travelled most of the pioneers who came from the East to Central and Western New York and Northern Pennsylvania. They brought with them household goods, livestock, poultry, seeds, tools, and crude implements to cut and hew the timber standing in the virgin forests. There were millstones and other equally primitive equipment for utilizing their essential grain.

Previous to the opening of this route, earlier settlers came into the county by way of the Bridle Path (which extended from Oxford into the Lake Country) to establish their new homes in the wilderness. Still others arrived by boats via the eastward-flowing rivers and the lakes of Central New York.

Coming from Catskill to Ithaca, the turnpike passes through

our main thoroughfare, State Street, then on up Hector Street to Mecklenburg, Reynoldsville, Burdett, and Watkins Glen to Bath. In making the effort to obtain whatever authentic information possible and relative to this historic highway, Charles Smith of South Aurora Street, Ithaca, was interviewed. He had just passed his 90th birthday anniversary, having been born on the turnpike in Caroline August 26, 1837. He is a descendant of the Widow Earsley who settled in Caroline in 1794, ten years before the road was built past her home in 1804. He is a man of exceptional physical and mental vitality; his knowledge of this section of the road has never been questioned.

Capt. Charles Meade, who is retired from the New York City police department and is now Cornell University proctor, and A. W. Sands, formerly a faculty member of the Department of Floriculture at Cornell University, both live in Varna. In 1922, for sheer pleasure and interest, they searched out and travelled the route of the old turnpike from Ithaca to Catskill. Mr. Sands took excellent photographs of interesting sights along the way, pictures which greatly help the reader to visualize the turnpike as it was at that late time.

A book in the Cornell University Library entitled *Northern Tourist,* written by the Rev. Timothy Dwight who was president of Yale from 1795 to 1817, gives a very fine account of a trip which he took over the Catskill turnpike in 1804. It is to this volume that we are indebted for the descriptions of the highway as it was early in the past century, and for names of the towns which it passed in traveling at that time from the Hudson River to the Susquehanna River.

This original highway was constructed before 1804 from Catskill on the Hudson to Unadilla on the Susquehanna, and was officially known as the Catskill and Susquehanna turnpike. Its western section was known by two names: the Susquehanna and Bath turnpike or the Jericho and Bath turnpike, Jericho then being the name of the present village of Bainbridge. This western section was built after the eastern was in operation.

These two sections, with two short, connecting turnpikes, were known to some as the Catskill, Jericho and Bath turnpike but more commonly referred to as the Catskill turnpike. This was the highway deluxe with its log-corduroy roadbed,

is stonewalls on either side paralleled by maple shade trees, and its tollgates where at ten-mile intervals was collected the fees for travelling in such luxury.

All mail was carried by this route to the western settlements. Along this thoroughfare passed coaches-and-four with outriders for the aristocracy, and lesser ones with one span instead of four for others less fortunate. Dropping through the various degrees of prosperity were the hopeful plodders with their oxcarts. All were traveling toward the western sun, ever answering the call: *Westward Ho!*

Insistently, voices of the present inquire, who cut and laid the logs which formed this dry but uneven roadbed? Who laid the stonewalls which hemmed the road on the sides? Who dug up and replanted the maple trees which bordered either side of this highway? Who carved and set the eighty-nine milestones along its route? Across the past no answer comes.

By one writer, this route was named the Appian Way, because of its splendid construction and its directness. It seems always to revel in leaping from dell to hilltop as if in pursuit of the alluring West, and avoiding the lowlands except where it was necessary to cross them, and in the large number of occurrences utterly reckless to grades.

Journeying from Ithaca eastward along the turnpike, just after leaving Slaterville Springs, the road is bordered by beautiful maples which cannot escape notice. This is a representative scene of the old turnpike and is repeated many time along its way today. From Caroline to Richford the roadbed is the same as a county road but from Richford to Lisle for a considerable distance it runs upon a winding serpentine ridge along which the farms and farm buildings are some distance below the road level.

This particular land formation is known as an "esker," and strikingly resembles a railroad embankment with a narrow crest along the top. The explanation is that it originally was the bed of a subglacial stream. Deposits of sand and gravel brought down the stream were confined within the ice walls, and when the ice melted and ice sheet retreated, this ridge was left. The road is well known to local motorists who have been obliged to use it when the main highway to Binghamton was

closed. It is sometimes called "the ridge road" but is more commonly designated as the "hogback."

Besides its stonewalls and maples, other real guides to the identity of this old road are the red sandstone markers which were placed one mile apart from the Hudson to the Susquehanna. Like stonemarkers were placed also in the Western Section, but these all seem to have disappeared. Mr. Smith says one of these was at Mulks Corners in Slaterville, and at one time another was a mile east of that site. Of the eighty-nine original markers placed on the Eastern Section, fourteen were located by Messrs. Meade and Sands, and with one or two exceptions these were still doing sentinel duty where they were placed a century and a quarter ago. A portion of the thirty-ninth miletsone was found propped up in front of a farmhouse and being tenderly cared for by the women of the homestead.

Having arrived at Lisle, to follow the turnpike one must cross the bridge and go up the hill. This old road east of Lisle has not been used for many years, except by residents along its way.

Next, the old road crosses the Tioughnioga and goes up the hill and down across the valley of Otselic Creek. Leaving this valley, it goes up a steep incline and on through some woodland. This road is rough and rocky, and leads into another valley. Upon the slopes of this valley the soil has been washed away from the outcrop, leaving giant steps exposed to view.

Local residents looked with wide-eyed amazement when they beheld Captain Meade and Mr. Sands riding down these rocky steps in a Ford car. At this point, the fences have disappeared and it is necessary to follow the ruts through a cow pasture. Coming out of this valley, the old road's progress is blocked by a fence, an unusual fact. Beyond the fence, the path of the former turnpike, abandoned forty years ago, is still distinctly shown by the ruts left by former traffic.

Detouring around this obstruction to the south, we come to the village of Triangle, where upon a hill on the right the former road comes out of a growth of underbrush, and descends seemingly as if wishing to proclaim again its usefulness to man.

From Triangle eastward there is a long hill and at the top,

through some woods, the rock roadbed is exposed and the scene here is typical of its first condition. It must have the general appearance of the primal road. Another long descent from this hilltop brings the old highway into the valley of the Genegantslet. Crossing the long bridge over the millpond, the road winds around the hill, and from its top, a panorama of great beauty unfolds to the south. The photograph of this scene cannot show the beautiful coloring.

A rather long descent brings the road down to the village of Greene. Passing through the village, the old turnpike seems again to have come into its own former pride and dignity. Here it is the wide main street of the village, laid out in the old days to accommodate crowded stagecoach traffic. Now a silent face says, "86 miles to Catskill." A message from the past century to the present in no uncertain language.

One can scarcely realize the importance of these milestone messages to the thousands of pioneer travelers who passed them on foot, on horseback, by stagecoach or otherwise. Then the highway itself was walled with stone and the outside view barred by surrounding forests, all of which made it quite impossible to leave the highway in those days.

Now, without some of those signs and markers, it would be almost impossible to find it. The markers are red sandstones, similar to those used in erecting many buildings in New York City during the early days. Probably quarried in Connecticut and carried perhaps by boat to Catskill, then hauled overland to their respective settings. The painstaking labor of the old stonecutters has defied the weathering of a century and more.

The fourteen markers which have survived the destruction of those who prized them not, should have venerable care from our present generation.

From the Susquehanna River, the old turnpike follows the valley of Oleoudt Creek for some miles, then not far from the creek's source ascends to the hills of Delaware County. It passes through the towns of Franklin, Treadwell, Meredith Square, and when near Kortright it descends to merge with the State Road.

The State Road follows the route of the old turnpike through Stamford to a point approximately three miles east of the

town where the turnpike leaps to the hills again, while the State Road continues on to Cairo.

Bearing east, there is a road hemmed in by stonewalls, and at the present time is still supreme in its amount of parking space for modern motor cars.

The road spans eighteen miles from Greene through Bainbridge, formerly called Jericho, and passes through two hamlets, Coventry and Coventryville. These were important in the stagecoach days, and still retain, in buildings and churches, the architecture of these former days. Next, the old road descends into the valley of the Susquehanna, then through a gorge, which is also the bed of a pretty stream, into the village of Bainbridge.

Some residents of Tompkins County and vicinity believe the turnpike should again be opened to Bainbridge, thus avoiding the necessity of going east by way of Binghamton, the old route being much shorter. Bainbridge and Unadilla are some distance apart, yet the two turnpikes were connected in some unexplained manner, but very probably by the highway on the west bank of the Susquehanna River.

Passing over this route to Unadilla, one mile east, is found an iron bridge. This is probably the terminus of the old Catskill and Susquehanna turnpike. Here was the site of Wattles ferry about which the Rev. Mr. Dwight wrote, apparently placing the village on the east bank of the stream. If this be so, he must have referred in 1804 to a very small village on the east side which, in our day, has been superseded by a larger Unadilla on the west shore, across the bridge.

The residents of the section east of the bridge seem to have no knowledge of the old turnpike. Passing straight east for two miles from the bridge and at the right side of the road almost hidden by tall grass and leaning as if weared by its many years of duty, is a mute red sandstone, a messenger who is bordered by hard maples that lift their arms as if in supplication to the sky. These infallible signs give again the right direction. Following this road but a little way, we find, standing so near the wheel track that it is in danger, the forty-first milestone.

Just beyond this place the road dips down into the valley of the Schoharie River, but where the turnpike formerly crossed

the river at Gilboa, New York City has built a dam as a unit in its water-supply system. A new road has been built for three miles around this dam. Beyond the dam the road follows Manorkill Creek for a few miles and then rises to pass over a very high mountain peak just north of Mount Pisgah.

At this elevation, one has a sublime view of the Hudson River Valley and the Berkshires. In making the descent to the valley of the Hudson, the old turnpike goes straight down regardless of grade, and on the mountainside passes through the village of Durham, a community treasuring its past and gratefully guarding three turnpike milestones within its boundaries.

A little farther down at Leeds the turnpike crosses the old stone-arch bridge over Thorp Creek. This bridge is one of the marvels of our state because of its beautiful design and durability. It was deemed worthy to be left by state roadbuilders when they "fixed up" the turnpike.

They recognized its beauty and worth. After a century of weathering and use it is still a fitting memorial to the skill of its builders, and a monument to the many unknowns whose labors built the Catskill turnpike. From this bridge the turnpike continnues to Cairo, where it merges with the State Road to Catskill.

We have followed thoroughly the route of the Catskill turnpike from Ithaca to Catskill, but we cannot in justice leave it without looking backward over its entire route from Catskill to Bath to consider, briefly, more of its physical features and the legality of such an immense building project.

The turnpike in its rugged journey over mountain and dell, crosses three original counties which were then in existence when the route was surveyed: Greene County, formed from Albany and Ulster, and named in honor of Gen. Nathaniel Greene, the Revolutionary War hero from Rhode Island; and Delaware County which joins Greene and Ulster on the west.

It also traverses the watershed of three great water systems: the Susquehanna, the Chenango and the Delaware. Its situation is most unusually beautiful for a public highway. It passed through the wonderful scenery of the Catskill Mountains, *Mountains of the Sky,* as the Indians named them, and the beautiful Finger Lakes region which is called by many as *The*

Switzerland of America, a region referred to by Judge Francis Miles Finch, noted poet of Ithaca, in his poem, *The Wilderness.*

Just outside of Ithaca, going west, the turnpike again makes one of its characteristic steep ascents up Hector Street and up a steep grade toward Mecklenburg. It is from this road, familiar to many, that a most beautiful panoramic view of Ithaca, Cayuga Lake and the surroundinng region is obtained. Toward Seneca Lake and vicinity, the turnpike passes through a delightful fertile region which today abounds in grape vinyards and peach and apple orchards. This is a prosperous country of scenic beauty and utility.

JERICHO-BATH TURNPIKE AN EXTENSION

Regarding the legality of the building of this highway, we find that by an act of the Legislature the Catskill turnpike became a public highway in 1804. This bill covers twenty-six pages of the volume of New York Session Laws of 1804 that is found in the Cornell University Library.

"An Act to establish a turnpike corporation for improving and making a road from the Susquehanna River to the town of Jericho, in Chenango County, to the town of Bath, in the County of Steuben, and to incorporate the Jericho bridge company." Thus the preamble recites the purpose of the bill. A special paragraph declares it a public act which fixes the status of the road as a "public highway." This bill passed the Assembly on March 29, 1804; passed the Senate on April 7, 1804, and passed the Council of Revision on April 7, 1804.

Alexander Sheldon was speaker of the Assembly of the 27th Legislature, and J. V. Van Rensselear was president of the Senate. Governor Clinton approved the bill and signed a joint resolution which reads: "Resolved, that it does not appear improper to the Council that this bill should become a law of this state."

The bill following the preamble, in summary, continues: "Be it enacted by the people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, that Benjamin A. Carpenter, Joseph Julliand, Elisha Smith, John Johnson, Esick L. Hartshome, Frederick A. Dezeng, Jonathan Parker, Platt Brush, Eleazer

Dans and all such others as shall associate for the purpose of making a good and sufficient road, running from the Susquehanna River, opposite or near to where the Ulster and Delaware turnpike road shall terminate on the said river, by the most direct and practicable route to the town of Bath, in the county of Steuben, along or near to the heads of Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, their successors and assigns, be and are hereby created a body corporate and politic by the name of the President and Directors of the Susquehanna Bath Turnpike road company."

The company was a stock company with a capital of $1,200. Shares were at par value $25. The bill provided that business notices be placed in newspapers in Kingston, Ulster County, in Owego, Tioga County, and in Cooperstown in Otsego County.

No shares of stock could be held by a person who was not a citizen of New York State and of the United States. Milestones were to be erected, one for each mile of said road, and on each milestone should be legibly inscribed its distance from the Hudson River (or the village of Catskill). The bill also provided condemnation proceedings and commissioners were appointed to obtain rights of way, and it directed these commissioners to file in each county clerk's office along the route of the turnpike a map of the section of the highway in each respective county. The entire highway was divided into three divisions, each one having it own superintendent.

The bill required the road to be laid out four rods wide and thirty-three feet between ditches. An immese amount of labor and material was used in construction, and great hardship and privation were experienced on the part of the workmen in cutting a swath four rods wide through a wilderness. It is doubtful if the surveyors and builders had even an Indian trail to guide them. The entire length of the road was covered by great primeval trees, mostly pine, hemlock, maple, elm, and oak. These trees were mature and of great size. With modern machinery as an aid, the task would be considered Herculean even today.

The valleys were swampy and overhung with dense shade. It required several years after the finishing of the road for the soil to dry out sufficiently to make a satisfactory road foundation. It was because of this excessive dampness that this old

highway sought the elevated lands to obtain a drier bed. In all places where the roadbed was found too swampy and boggy, a dry foundation was made of logs, which continued for miles in some places. Because of these many lengths of imbedded logs, the highway was termed the *Corduroy Road.*

The bill provided also that all bridges over the Chenango River and over all streams to be at least twenty feet wide. The bill provided, too, for forming a corporation for the purpose of constructing a bridge across the Susquehanna River, the same to be inspected by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas of Chemung County. This was to be a toll bridge, and the toll-keeper was required to remain on duty both day and night. It was to become the property of the State at the expiration of a term of one hundred years.

Toll rates for vehicles, animals and persons were specifically given in the bill. They were much the same as were those collected at all tollgates on the turnpike.

The Catskill turnpike was divided off into ten-mile stretches, and at each of these terminals were placed tollgates. These were made of logs and were large enough, usually, to swing across the entire width of the roadway. The tollkeeper was fully empowered to forbid the passage of any person, livestock or vehicle without first being paid the legal fee. The procedure in cases of dispute as to the amount of toll charges and handling of traffic at the tollgates was defined in the act. Certain exemptions were made in the matter of toll charges in favor of the traveling public.

The act provides: No charge for a person passing to or from public worship, his farm, or a funeral, or to or from a grist-mill for grinding grain for the family's use; or to or from a blacksmith's shop to which he usually resorts; or any person residing within four miles of said gate, or going for or returning with a physician, or attending election. United States troops on the march were exempted as were army stores of the United States in transit; jurors and witnesses who had been subpoenaed for court, and persons going to or returning from military training.

The toll charges were provided by the law as follows:

For every score of sheep or hogs, 8 cents; for every score of

cattle, horses or mules, 20 cents; carts drawn by one horse, 6 cents, each chariot. coach, or cochee phaeton, 25 cents; and for every cart drawn by two oxen, 12½ cents.

The Catskill stagecoach lines made possible for our early settlers a regular continuous passage to the Hudson River until 1850, when the Erie railroad was built through Owego, at which time some of the connecting routes were discontinued. Henceforward, direct passage to the east from this vicinity was preferably made on the Erie. When the stage lines were in operation, regardless of weather, travel was kept up throughout the year. Sometimes in heavy traffic, two four-horse coaches and a baggage wagon were operated *en masse.*

Governor Clinton, who signed the Catskill bill in 1804, and his brother, Gen. James Clinton, who took such an active part in the Revolutionary struggle, were residents of Ulster County (now in the town of New Windsor, Orange County), in the Catskill Mountains where was passed the greater part of the Governor's life. Therefore, it must have been with especial interest and a very great sense of satisfaction when Govenor Clinton affixed his signature to this bill which authorized construction and improvement of a highway that would open for settlement an expanse extending from the Hudson River to the western boundary of our state.

CATSKILL TURNPIKE STAGE DRIVERS

The Sloughter family settled on the back road to Brookton, which is an extension of the '76 Road. Irus Sloughter relates that when his father Elisha Sloughter emigrated from Ulster County and settled on this road, the valley there was covered with great forests, through some of which he helped cut the route of the turnpike.

A member of this Sloughter family, P. C. Sloughter of Milford, Mich., a brother of Irus, is probably the last surviving Catskill turnpike stagecoach driver. In reply to inquiries, he recently wrote Lyman H. Gallagher of Slaterville:

"You asked me what I can remember about my driving stagecoach on the Catskill turnpike from Ithaca. For a man

named Van deBogit, in 1857, I drove from Ithaca to Lisle. Some called it Mud Lake. We used to stop at Boiseville, Slaterville and Tobeytown (now Caroline). The other names I have forgotten. If I remember rightly, I made two trips a week, up one day and back the next. The road was very rough and bad. I drove two horses. This is as near as I can remember. It has been so long since that it has practically passed out of my mind."

The names of the other drivers are preserved for us, and were household words in the olden days: Walter Paine and Henry Bellus. Edmund W. Watkins, who operated the Catskill stage lines to Harpersfield, Delaware County, came to Ithaca in January 1825 and took charge of the line. The distannce from Ithaca to Catskill, 160 miles, was covered in four days when travelling twenty-four hours a day. Grant and Company were proprietors of the route, Catskill via Delhi, and John Bartley and John McQueen were the first drivers. At that time stage offices were at the Ithaca Hotel, the Clinton House, and the Tompkins House.

TURNPIKE ROUTE FROM ITHACA, 1835

The Catskill mail coach leaves the stage office in Ithaca every evening at 8 o'clock, lodging at Delhi next night, and arriving at Catskill in season the day after for the 5 o'clock boats from Albany and New York. Passing through Caroline, 8 miles; Richford 9 do., Lisle 9 do., Greene 17 do., Bainbridge 16 do., Unadilla 10 do., Franklin 9 do., Meredith 10 do., Delhi 7 do., Hobart 16 do., Head of Delaware 4 do., Windham 19 do., Cairo 16 do., Catskill 10 do., making a tour of 160 miles. Fare $6.—*Views of Ithaca and Environs,* 1835.

THE ITHACA HOTEL

An illustration of the first Ithaca Hotel from a woodcut is printed in a weekly newspaper. It depicts the Catskill turnpike stagecoach with four horses waiting for passengers to embark.

Note also the saddle horse tied on Aurora Street side of the hotel, then a current mode of light and rapid travel.

This hotel is mentioned in Governor Clinton's 1810 *Journal.* It was built by Luther Geer in 1809 and used as a hotel for more than half a century, when in August 1871 it was detroyed by fire, and replaced by a four-story brick structure the next year. Upon the "New Ithaca Hotel" is a tablet erected by DeWitt Historical Society to commemorate Sullivan's raid upon the Iroquois Indians in 1779. (This tablet is now on exhibit in the DeWitt Historical Museum). Charles Smith was for when the hotel was rebuilt.

THE COLUMBIAN INN

The Columbia Inn on the corner of State and Cayuga in the same block as the Clinton House was erected by Luther Geer about 1816. It was popular until a murder there prejudiced the public in 1831. Sometime later a part of this hotel was removed to the southwest corner of Cayuga and State Streets where it became the Carson tavern. It was the scene of another murder in 1844, and was burned in 1845.

THE BANK OF NEWBURGH

The first bank in the village of Ithaca was a branch of the Bank of Newburgh, incorporated by the Legislature April 18, 1815. The building was erected on a lot on the south side of Owego Street, which is part of the Catskill turnpike route. The bank building was later the residence of John L. Whiton, and still later was known as the "Blue Front Mission." The building afterwards was moved by the Rev. E. A. George, pastor of the First Congregational Church, to its present site on East Mill (now 106 East Court Street). It was later purchased by the First Baptist Church for use as a parsonage.

THE BANK OF ITHACA

The Bank of Ithaca succeeded the Bank of Newburgh, and was incorporated April 22, 1829. The new corporation pur-

chased the Newburgh Bank building in April 1830 but later the company erected a brick building on the south side of Owego (State Street) which later passed into possession of Treman Bros., descendants of Abner Treman, the Revolutionary War soldier who founded Trumansburg. It was early called the Colonial Building, by which name it is still known. Once the post office was located in it for many years, but now it is occupied by the F. H. Atwater grocery and food market. The charter of the Bank of Ithaca expired in 1850.

MARCUS WHITMAN

"It may be of interest to the people of Ithaca to know there are two photographs available of the home and church of Marcus Whitman, the pioneer of Oregon who was so instrumental in bringing setlers to that territory, and in its first auspicious beginning. In these pioneer efforts Ithaca had an honored place, for here dwelt both the Rev. Dr. Parker, who was so prominent in the setlement of Oregon, and also for a time Dr. Marcus Whitman, who was even more prominent in making Oregon American territory.

"The house in which I lived at 504 East Buffalo Street, stands on the ground where Marcus Whitman and Dr. Parker in target practice prepared themselves for the dangers which were to come from hostile Indians, and also for the means of providing themselves with meat food on the long journey. In our town, at least one of these gentlemen found his bride.

"Whitman was already a dead shot who hit the target after his first fire; but according to tradition, Parker wasted a good deal of lead and powder before he could hit the bull's-eye.

"Parker brought two Indian boys with him who used to play in the gorge behind DeWitt Place and Glen Place. They fled in terror whenever they saw a man with a gun, even though it were but a fowling piece; for their idea of the average white man was one who would shoot Indians at sight.

"Whatever part in the light of critical research may be attributed to the service of Whitman in saving Oregon for the United States, there is no question concerning the part he

played as a pioneer, as a Christian missionary and citizen, nor as the pilot across the continent of the great train of settlers and wagons that moved to the far-off empire of the great Northwest in 1847. In fact, some day the historian will award to Ithaca (on the turnpike) a great meed of praise in the making of Oregon and in the building of the great Northwest.

"Perhaps the only living witnesses who told me of these things, especially in regard to the local association in the matter, may all be dead now, but for the future intimate writer concerning Ithaca's history there is here ground for honorable mention, in remembrance of Ithaca's service to the nation."

OLD COWDRY HOUSE

This old house on the turnpike was built by Jacob McCormack in early 1800s. In 1856 it was sold to Elbert Curtis of Danby who took possession in 1857. The Curtis family lived there ten years until 1868, two years after the death of Mr. Curtis. A. S. Cowdry purchased the property that year, and it was owned by this family until recently when it passed to posessession of C. B. Stanion after the death of Miss Belle Cowdry.

The Revolutionary soldiers Jacob Yaple, Isaac Dumond and Peter Hinepaw in April 1789 arrived at Ithaca with their families, in all about twenty persons. En route, they followed the well-beaten Indian trail from Owego, and here erected three log cabins. One occupied by the Hinepaw family was on Cascadilla Creek near the T. S. Williams mill, east of the interesection with Linn Street. The second was occupied by the Yaple at the foot of East State Street hill (part of the Catskill turnpike) where the old Cowdry house stands. The third or Dumond cabin was nearby.

At this point the Six Mile Creek formerly divided into four branches and continued on to the lake. The course of the stream has been changed, but these old creek beds are still found under the city by excavators, and some or all of them still contain running water.

It was at this place also that the Cayuga Indian Trail began

on the northside of Six Mile Creek and followed on the north bank to the Six Mile Crossing at Brooktondale. Here the Indians forded the stream.

It is interesting to note here that straggling Indians of the vicinity collected during winter months on flatlands in the bed of Six Mile Creek and made their habitation in a sheltered area.

CAYUGA INDIAN TRAIL CROSSING

At this spot on Six Mile Creek the Cayuga Indian Trail crosses. It is a point just west of Brooktondale on the road to Ithaca, intersecting the Catskill turnpike at Cook's Corners.* This site is west of the Hungerford bridge on the road leading to the Bates farm. Six Mile Creek is no named because the Cayuga Trail crossing of it is six miles east of the "head of Cayuga Lake," Ithaca, at which place the trail started.

Leaving Ithaca, the trail ran along the north bank of Six Mile Creek to this spot near Brooktondale, then across the stream and south through Willseyville and Candor to a point on the Susquehanna River called Ahwaga (Owego). This trail was used by the Indians of the Seneca and Cayuga nations, and by the Iroquois Six Nations for 250 years for all their travel south. This was the trail that led to southern hunting fields and war scenes as the Iroquois succored the Tuscaroras in the Carolina before this southern tribe came north.

One of E. A. Cooper's grandmothers lived in a cabin near the site of the trail's ford or crossing where she often saw Indians making their way over the trail. She took him out when he was a small child to point out Senecas and Cayugas who were passing over this route. Senecas used it last, he remembers.

It is recorded in the 1929 edition of the Catskill turnpike history that nine young Indians once visited the site of the crossing. Each of the Six Nations was represented in the group.

*Mrs. Benjamin Rightmyer, Brooktondale, locates this point at the fot of Beesmer Hill on the Slaterville Road.

GEN. JOHN CANTINE

In the old burying ground at Brooktondale there stands a small, antique, weatherbeaten tombstone that marks the spot where a grave was made 119 years ago. The man who found his last resting place beneath it was a person of scholastic culture and rare personal refinement for his time and generation.

Gen. John Cantine resided at Marbletown in Ulster County, New York, a descendant of one of the early Huguenot families that settled there. Prominent in business and social life, for many years consecutively he represented his county in both branches of the State Legislature, was a member of the State Council of Appointment, and near the close of his life was a member of Congress.

Likewise, for a time he was colonel of the Ulster County militia regiment at the time of the Revolutionary War. But his services were not particularly noteworthy, being confined to opposing one of the two Indian incursions along the western border of Ulster and Orange Counties. More notable was his action in the Warwarsing Valley in the summer of 1779 at the time General Sullivan's army was marching to the destruction of the six nations of the Iroquois Indians in the interior of the state.

He was one of the six or seven delegates from Ulster to a convention held in Poughkeepsie in 1786 to consider, on the part of the State, ratification of the Constitution of the United States. Among fellow delegates from Ulster were Gov. George Clinton and his brother, Gen. James Clinton. In common with other Ulster delegates, excepting Governor Clinton, Cantine voted against its ratification by this State. Approval was finally carried by a majority of three, a result greatly owing to the labors and influence of Alexander Hamilton, Chancellor Livingston and Governor Clinton.

About 1788-89, General Cantine, John Hathorne and James

Clinton, father of the celebrated DeWitt Clinton, were appointed commissioners by act of Legislature to visit the interior of the state, notably the region of the Chemung Valley, then a part of Montgomery County, and a few years later of Tioga County.

Many settlers had penetrated through the wilderness and settled in this fine intervale region, many of whom had seen it for the first time as soldiers in Sullivan's army in the campaign of 1779 against the Six Nations. They came as squatters who intended to become purchasers and owners when the lands should be surveyed and plotted. But many, and in some instanstances ugly, disputes had arisen between conflicting claims to lands. It was to hear and decide these quarrels that the state government sent these commissioners with very full powers.

In addition to their duties as such, these persons availed themselves of the opportunity to make selections of divers tracts of wild land for themselves and their friends at home, two hundred miles away. Some of the locations were of considerable size and among them were three made by General Cantine: one of 4,000 acres was where the village of Waverly now stands; another of 2,000 acres was in the present Town of Candor; but the one of most interest to readers in this county was a tract of 2,000 acres in Caroline, called formerly Cantine's Location. This tract embraced both the villages of Slaterville and Brooktondale as well as the fine farming country lying between them, care being taken to avoid the mountainous ridges to the south of it.

General Cantine located this land upon the bounty claims of Minutemen in the Revolutionary War. They did not belong to the regular line, the Continental Army, but had been called into the military service during intervals of great danger by reason of Indian incursions or British invasions, notably Burgoyne's thrust from Canada. To these men the State granted a bounty of 100 acres of land each. Many of these claims Cantine bought and others were assigned to him to be advantageously located by him, and by him conveyed back to them as their interests appeared. The lands were patented to him in 1792.

Among the parties who became individual owners by this

arrangement were several persons by the name of Bevier, and others named Hasbrouck, Lowe, Verooy, Ransom, and Myers. None of these made any settlements.

In 1798, John Cantine, Jr., a son of the general, came here and settled at the falls in Brookton. He was then a young man and had but recently eloped with and married the daughter of a royalist who fled France to this country to escape the guillotine of Robespiere and the fury of the French revolution. He settled at Rosendale, Ulster County. This refugee was Jean Cart, who had narrowly escaped with his life by fleeing to the coast and embarking for America.

After his elopement, the son-in-law barely escaped by jumping from a second-story window. After this episode, he came here and settled permanently, being the fourth family in the Town of Caroline. The other three were Widow Earsley, David Rich, and Thomas Tracey, the latter grandfather of Gen. B. F. Tracey, secretary of the Navy, who lived here from 1797 to 1804.

Early in the season of 1800 General Cantine sent a few men with a millwright to erect a gristmill at the Brookton Falls of Six Mile Creek, reputed to have been one of the finest millsites of comparable water supply in the state. Later, in summer or early fall, he came in person to lead a small party of a dozen or so young men from Ulster County to view the land owned by him and which he was desirous of selling to them for actual settlement.

Of this party was Levi Slater, a Connecticut schoolteacher and native of that state. Others in the group named Bush, Jansen, Ennes, Robison, Mulks, and Quick all became permanent settlers and most of whom have descendants here now. It was not until a few years later that General Cantine came here to live and spend the evening of his life which already was a few years beyond the Psalmist's limit of three score and ten. This was in 1804 when, owing to the death of his wife and the growing infirmities of age, he came to live with his son and married daughters, Mrs. Chambers and Mrs. Dupuy. He lived here until his death, which occurred at his son's home April 30, 1808, when he was 78,

General Cantine was elected to Congress during Jefferson's

first term, but resigned soon after taking his seat. He, with Gen. Philip Schuyler and a few other commissioners negotiated on part of the State, two treaties with the Cayuga Indians by which their title was extinguished to land in these parts preliminary to settlement by white men.

"A few years ago, when it was proposed to change the name of the post office from Mott's Corners to some more suitable one, that of Cantine was suggested and urged by many, but it was outvoted by Brookton which later was changed to Brooktondale. It would have been more in consonance with traditions of the place to have it designated Cantine."— C.W.M. [*Charles W. Mulks.*]

A diligent search through the volumes of the New York historian's report relating to Revolutionary service and *New York Men in the Revolution* failed to produce proof that Col. John (or Johannes) Cantine was entitled to the military rank of general, as he is persistently referred to locally. Hence, the assumption is that the title was given him by neighbors and friends as a mark of distinction or because of his prominence as a surveying commissioner.

If he ever was entitled to such rank, it was never recorded by the War Department as is indicated by the following report from the department:

"The records of this office show that one John Cantine served in the Revolutionary War as colonel of a regiment of New York militia, but nothing has been found of record to show that he held the rank of general."

BOICEVILLE TAVERN

A story goes: The Boiceville Tavern and the Bull Tavern were situated on slight rises of ground. As the stage left the Bull Tavern, on its short eastbound journey to the next tavern at Boiceville, the postillion, riding usually in the driver's seat, would send loud blasts of his bugle to warn ahead the next innkeeper of the approach of the daily mail. Whereupon, the horses were urged almost to a run, and the stagecoach swung up to the doorway of the hostelry with great pomp and flourish.

The Boiceville Tavern was built by Abraham Boice, Jr., who came from Ulster County in 1816 and settled land now owned by his daughter, Mrs. Arthur D. Wright. He built a tavern on the present site of the William H. Johnson residence. After removal of the old tavern this Johnson house was built for use as a hotel, as indicated by its style.

Part of the original Boiceville tavern may be seen today on the J. D. Schutt farm north of Slaterville, where it was moved years ago. Over the main entrance, though much faded after nearly a century, the name of the tavern "Boiceville" is still discernible. The stage horses were changed at Boiceville.

Of the Boice family, William K. Boice and his brother James were town supervisors.

BUSH'S TAVERN

The Bush family were pioneer settlers in Caroline, on the Catskill turnpike, coming to the town in 1800. Its members were prominent in town affairs for more than half a century. Two brothers, Richard and Oakley, in company with Hartman Ernest and one of three Chambers, came in 1811 from Marbletown, Ulster County. During the next five years a number of highly respected citizens came from the same place.

Richard Bush bought land of General Cantine, built a blockhouse of squared logs alongside the Catskill turnpike, and opened the first tavern in Caroline. This was known for many years as the old "Bush Stand." Bush died during the War of 1812, but his widow continued to conduct the tavern, scene of innumerable dances and parties during the old days. For these social affairs, Nathan Adams, most celebrated violinist in the locality, furnished the music.

Among the stories related of Mrs. Bush is the one which tells of a party being given at the tavern. A large company of the town's notables were present, including some of the aristocrats of the Southern colony, the Speeds and others. No doubt there were Cantines present, as well as other more or less prominent residents of the town, and a sprinkling of people from Ithaca, then called the "Head of the Lake."

When repast was ready, Mrs. Bush came into the assembly

room and announced: "Supper is ready, gentlement and ladies. Ye Speeds and ye Head of the Lakes, take the head of the table." Thus guests were seated according to their various social relations. Such attempts to form class distinctions and marked social discrimination caused much harshness of feelings among certain families. This custom passed away only with the passing of the tavern itself.

The Old Bush Stand stood on the south side of the Catskill turnpike, about in the center of the now clutivated field between the Celatus Stephens farmhouse and the barns on the lower Homer Wood farm. Some fragments of brick from the chimney and stones from the foundation still remain in view. On the farm across the road from the Bush Tavern, owned by Frank Bull, were kept in early days a large number of horses that were used as stagecoach teams on the turnpike. Change of teams was made at this tavern.

On the acreage across the road from the tavern were pastured for the night some of the many herds of livestock that almost daily passed over the Catskill route. Of these droves, some were pastured on the Daniel Higgins farm as well.

The Old Bush Tavern was destroyed by fire so long ago that the event has been lost to history.

The barroom of this old hostelry was a melting pot where, despite class or social distinction, the landed gentry mingled freely with cattle drovers, stagedrivers, and travelers of every description. At this tavern also many parties were given by the younger sea. In April prominent men living in the town met at the Bush taven to establish the town's government by selecting its first officers. Among those present were Dr. Jospeh Speed and General Cantine, who named the town.

CASS OR BULL TAVERN

After the closing of the Bush tavern, another was built across the road by Josiah Cass in 1815; this old mansion stands today as one of the historic turnpike houses. It was for years occupied by Maj. Henry S. Krum, and is still occupied by daughter, Mrs. Homer Wool, as a summer residence.

Aaron Cass, a brother of Josiah, was a pioneer settler on the Franklin Smith farm, which was for many years the home of the Hasbrouck family. Aaron lost his life in the Battle of Queenstown in the War of 1812 while in Captain Ellis's company.

Josiah Cass conducted his tavern for three years, then Aaron Bull became its owner, by whom it was conducted as a public house for thirty years or more. Aaron Bull, an uncle of Cass, came from Bull's Crossing on the Housatonic River, Litchfield County, Connecticut. He married in Ulster County a sister of Matthew Krum and settled with him on Lot 95 in the Town of Dryden, which land they cleared the year they came, 1806.

Aaron Bull closed the tavern about 1848. Many cattle from the great droves that passed over the turnpike were pastured overnight in the acreage surrounding this old tavern.

MAGNETIC SPRINGS HOTEL

This hotel is known also as the Green or Halstead Hotel. Conducted by William J. Cairns, it was burned December 23, 1895. It had had several proprietors, and at one time was part of the chain of hotels along the Catskill turnpike.

Harrison Halstead, formerly of Elbridge, Onondaga County, purchased the tavern of Josephus Hasbrouck; among other owners were George Clark, Samuel E. Green, and Zophar T. McLusky, believed to be the first innkeeper there.

This hotel was the last link which connected modern times with the stagecoach route of the old turnpike's coaching days. The daily life of the hamlet of Slaterville seemed naturally to center about this central point. The land in front of the hotel was sort of a village common, where cows were driven to be milked at dawn and sunset. Small domestic animals and poultry ran in the village streets only willingly to be hurried away by frolicsome youngsters when the distant bugle call announced the approach of the stagecoach.

Whenever a stagecoach arrived at the hotel with its load of passengers, baggage and mail, many villagers rushed forward with curiosity to inspect the cargo. Business was increased at

weekend by shoppers and traders from the surrounding countryside, at which time the village green was often the scene of social games of quoits and baseball.

As either the Magnetic Springs or the Slaterville House, as the hostelry was known previous to Cairns' purchase of it, it is still remembered by many patrons of its later days for its sumptuous service. They hope it may someday be rebuilt and once again resume its former reputation for hospitaliy.

THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE

The other historic Slaterville hotel was the Fountain House, built by the Hornbeck Brothers in 1872. For years it was conducted by Moses Diederich, or by others including the Cairns family.

For nearly half a century the village was widely known as a health resort, with the Fountain House a leader in service. Many prominent names appeared on the hotel register, and persons of distinction were often seen about the village. Most of these men brought their families for the summer, and their beautiful conveyances were often seen about the streets. Horseback riding was a common diversion.

Fire destroyed the Fountain House November 9, 1916. It was never rebuilt, as some had hoped it would be.

THE TOBEY TAVERN

Nathaniel M. Tobey arrived from Massachusetts in 1810 and settled on the Levi Goodrich farm. After a year, he moved to the eastern part of Caroline and settled on the Hart place, now owned by Norman Mix and occupied by his parents. This house was built in 1808.

Tobey opened his house as a tavern and continued to manage it as such for many years after moving there. The architecture of the old hotel is similar to many of the houses in his native Massachusetts. The hamlet about the tavern took its name from this early innkeeper, and was first called Tobey's,

but today it is called also Yankeetown and Tobeytown, instead of Caroline, as the post-office village is named. Nathaniel Tobey was its postmaster for many years.

The sign of the old Tobey Tavern has been preserved. After a century, one clearly reads the gold lettering of the hamlet's name, "Caroline," on opposite sides of the sign; in the other two sides, "N. Tobey." This sign is a square box about two feet or two and a half feet wide, and perhaps twenty-one inches deep, painted black with gold lettering. Originally, it revolved on a post near the tavern's entrance.

Eventually, the barroom was removed from the tavern.

Many weired tales have been told of the mysterious happenings in this old tavern, and the solid stonewall dividing the cellar and the filled-in well are pointed out in substantiation.

Two of Tobey's sons, Nathaniel and Charles P., became builders on the turnpike.

In Nathaniel Tobey's tombstone in Caroline Grove Cemetery, there is embeded a good likeness of him. It is protected by a copper shutter, a common practice of the time.

VICKERY TAVERN

This tavern was kept by George Vickery about 1808. It was located on the N. M. Tobey farm, where he owned 82 acres in 1825.

THE RICH TAVERN

Capt. David Rich, formerly a tavern keeper in Vermont, moved to Caroline in 1794, and settled on land that a decade later came to border on the turnpike. His acres adjoined those of the Widow Earsley. The log cabins of these first two pioneers in the town stood on opposite sides of the turnpike after it was cut through, and at a short distance west of the tavern.

Willow Bridge eventually was located at the site where the turnpike crosses Owego Creek; it was the site of the second tollgate east of Ithaca. At this location Captain Rich erected

his frame tavern one half mile west of the bridge, and conducted the hostelry for several years. Ransom Rich planted the pine tree which stands in front of the old tavern after a century of struggle with man and the elements.