



Title: History of Dryden, from 1797 to 1857 : by the Old Man
in the Clouds
Author: Rumsey, H.D.
Call number: LH-CASE 974.771
Publisher: Ithaca, NY : DeWitt Historical Society of
of Tompkins County, 1961.,

Owner: Ithaca - Tompkins County Public Library
Assigned Branch: Ithaca - Tompkins County Public Library (TCPL)
Collection: Local History (LH)

Material type: Book
Number of pages: 19 pages

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History of Dryden.

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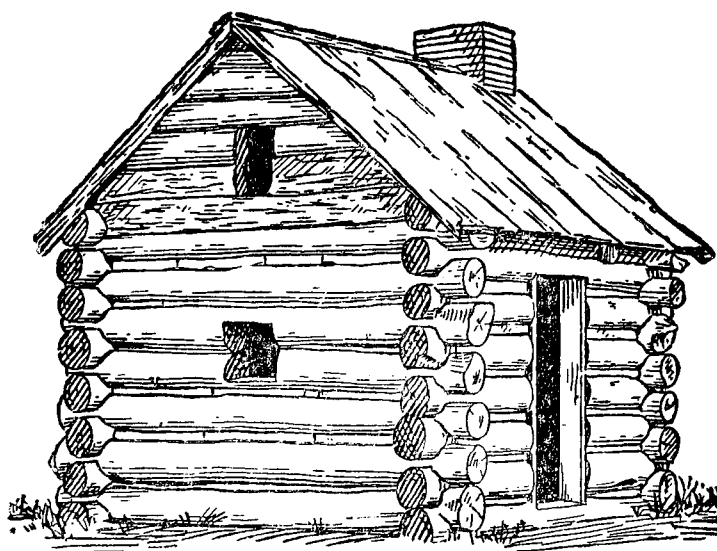
Ithaca, N.Y.

History of Dryden

From 1797 to 1857

By the Old Man in the Clouds *pseud.*
Jumsey, H. D.

Transcribed by Mrs. Betsey L. Clark
Town of Dryden Historian



Courtesy Rural News

Centennial Cabin, 1897

1961

Published for

DeWitt Historical Society
of Tompkins County, Inc.

Ithaca, New York

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Editor's Notes

For more than a hundred years, students of local history have encountered quotations from the "History of Dryden from 1797 to 1857" as related by "The Old Man in the Clouds" and published serially in Rumsey's Companion early in the latter year. The weekly newspaper had been established at Dryden in May of 1856 by H. D. Rumsey, and it has always been assumed that he was the author of the series of early-history accounts of the village.

Assuming the appropriate role of an old man, the narrator ostensibly addressed his series of letters to young readers, quite likely to emphasize the passage of years since the first settlers came into the forest-clad area. However interesting and factually important the series may be, only five installments have been preserved, and these are in the collection of the Dryden Town Historian.

Mrs. Betsey L. Clark, town historian, has long been interested in increasing the preservability of this early record by means of printed pamphlets that will be placed in many collections as well as in the hands of the public. She has transcribed the five available installments that appeared between January 7 and February 18, 1857, and is co-operating with the DeWitt Historical Society in printing and circulating them. Copies of the final installments have not been found as yet, but the search is continuing. It is felt that circulation of the pamphlets may create an awakened interest in the search and produce the missing numbers.

In this printed edition the author's original form of the material has been preserved: his literary style, spelling and punctuation. His long paragraphs will not be conducive to rapid reading, but it was thought best to retain them as they appear in the Companion's columns.

The following historical notes closely related to the record compiled by the Old Man in the Clouds are derived from other sources.

In early years there was considerable strife over whether the settlement on the site of Dryden village or Willow Glen would be the principal village of the town. Quite a number of prominent and enterprising settlers located at the latter point, and it was important to them to build the village there. To this end Joel Hull opened a store there in 1802, the first in the town. He was a practical surveyor and a man of considerable influence.

By the energy and activities of the settlers on the site of the present village of Dryden, shops, stores and taverns were established and the tide of settlement turned its way. So deeply interested was Edward Griswold that it is said he gave a blacksmith forty acres of land to locate his shop there. Mr. Griswold was also interested in establishing a store which was managed for a time by Parley Whitmore. The other early settlers were equally zealous to bring business to this point. These improvements and the building of the Presbyterian Church in 1812 settled adversely the fate of Willow Glen.

The illustration of the log cabin in this pamphlet is that of the one constructed on the grounds of the Dryden Agricultural Society by the members of the Dryden Centennial Committee for the Dryden Centennial held July 4, 1897.

While made of new material of the most durable character and designed to last for "a hundred years to come," it was modeled as to form and size after the first human habitation ever erected by white settlers in the Town of Dryden. The original was built by Amos Sweet in 1797 on the lot on East Main St., now No. 19, in Dryden village. This building was afterwards used as the first schoolhouse in the town, where Daniel Lacey kept school in 1802.

The illustration used here is from an engraving made in 1897 of the replica of the Sweet cabin. The original engraving is owned by the Rural News of Dryden and is reproduced here by courtesy of that publication. It may be noted that the replica did not last for more than half the predicted "hundred years to come," but disappeared when the famed Dryden Fair was discontinued and the grounds sold. Long neglected, and its original historical role forgotten, the little building suffered the ignominy of serving as a pig pen in later years.

WILLIAM HEIDT, JR.

Ithaca, N. Y., February 15, 1961

Number 1

January 7, 1857

Dear Readers: As you will readily see by my address, I am an old man, and have remained in the position you now behold me for a great many years, and have seen and noted down a great many incidents, that have occurred from the earliest period in the History of Dryden, up to the present time. Through negligence, many things that have transpired in years long since gone by, and that might prove interesting to you now, have slipped my mind, for my memory is getting somewhat impaired by the storms of many winters, and my sight is growing dim with age. But, my dear young friends, I can see a little, and with my rude old-fashioned pencil, made of the charred end of a hardwood stick, it will afford me the greatest pleasure to communicate to you some of the most noted hardships and privations, the pleasures and pains of our good settlers, as they passed beneath my notice.

My Log-book has become very much impaired by time, and some of the leaves have been lost altogether, particularly the first pages, but if my memory serves me right, it was in the spring of 1797, that a man by the name of Amos Sweet, came from the East, somewhere, and after ascertaining the location of his lot, put up a log house about ten feet square, just back of where now resides Mr. Freeman Stebbins, in this village. where himself, his wife, two children, mother and brother all lived. This would seem to be a very small and rude habitation to the people of our present gay and beautiful village. It was built of logs about a foot thick. These were halved together at the ends, and the cracks chinked with split sticks and mud. The house was eight logs high, and covered with bark peeled from the elm and basswood. Through one corner an opening was left for the smoke to pass through, there being no chimney or chamber floor.

The fire-place was composed of those large hard-head stones turned up against the logs for the back, and three or four oth-

ers of the same stamp formed the hearth; these being laid upon split logs that formed the floor. In as much as there was no sash or window glass in those days, in this vicinity, their only window consisted of an opening cut through the logs, about eighteen inches square, and this was to keep out the inclement weather, and was covered with a piece of brown paper, greased over to admit the light. The door was also in keeping with the rest of the house, being composed of slabs split from the pine and hewn off as smooth as might be with the common ax. The hinges were of wood and fastened across the door with pins of the same material, serving the double purpose of cleat and hinges. In this house, thus built without nails, and the benches fastened to the sides of the house for chairs, eating from wooden trenchers, and slab tables made after the fashion of the door, did this little group of pioneers live, and to all appearance were as happy as the wealthiest lord that rolls along our streets in his stately carriage, and in the full enjoyment of all the blessings and conveniences of the present time. Does my young relative understand me to say their happiness was never disturbed? Think not of an asylum in this world, where thieves will not break through and steal.

Mr. Sweet and his loved ones, although so far in the wilderness, were destined to become a prey to those hungry wolves that go prowling about our land in the form and wearing the garb of the human shape. Thus, about the year 1801, Mr. Sweet, having some difficulty with a man by the name of Nathaniel Shelden, in respect to his land, was compelled to leave it, through some fraudulent means on the part of Shelden. Soon after this transaction, Mr. Sweet sickened and died, and his remains, together with those of his mother and two children are now resting just back of the present dwelling of Norman Phelps, directly across the street from the Dryden Springs Hotel.

What an example we have here, of the untiring efforts and indomitable courage of those hardy sons of toil who have spent their lives in thus leveling the dense wilderness that was once so wide-spread over the face of our now fair Dryden, and made the soil subservient to their will. We should ever feel grateful to such noble spirits, as by the fruits of their labor, we are now enabled to live at our ease, as it were, and enjoy many a privilege to them unknown. It gives me unspeakable pleasure

to emulate their virtues, for I have sat here and looked down upon these hardy sons and seen them toil and strive for many long and weary years. I have seen them grind their grain in a mortar when a shortcake or small loaf of bread was wanted for company, or hull it for everyday use. You need not look with contempt upon them, because they were compelled to throw a bag with a bushel of wheat in it across their shoulder, and go one hundred miles on foot to the nearest mill, and on their return bring a few potato eyes and other seeds for planting in one end of the bag.

This was an easy task, compared to many of the hardships these men were compelled to go through, in the purchase of a home for themselves and families. They were surrounded by tigers (panthers) wildcats, wolves, bears and hoards of reptiles, with but scanty raiment, and without the ordinary luxuries of life.

Number 2

January 14, 1857

My dear readers: In my letter to you last week, I spoke of the little log house ten feet square, built by Mr. Sweet for a dwelling, but did not mention the fact that it was subsequently converted into a school house. Such was the case, and the first school that was kept in this village, or anywhere in the vicinity, was kept in this house in the year 1804, by a man from New Jersey, whose name was Daniel Lacey, an uncle, we believe, to our very worthy citizens, Messrs. John and Garrett Lacey. This school did not last long however, for want of proper support, there being but few inhabitants at that time, and they were so scattered through the woods, that it was a thing next to impossible for small children to venture abroad in so dense a wilderness, where there was no road to guide them other than marked trees. To send them abroad in this manner, in consequence of the hoards of wild beasts that lurked about every tree. It is well that such scenes should be recalled to the minds of our oldest inhabitants of the present time, and by them handed down to the rising generation as facts illustrative of the privations and dangers of those noble men and women whose adventurous spirits have paved the way to future prosperity and happiness, for the present as well as the many generations that are still to come and go.

I shall now ask my dear young friends to go back with me a little, and see what had been done previous to the settling of the first inhabitant. To do this, we must glance at a paragraph, from the early history of the State of New York. In this we shall see that previous to 1789, the County of Montgomery embraced all the Western part of the State. In that year the County of Ontario was cut off, comprehending that part of the State West of what was called the 'Preemption Line.' In 1791, the Counties of Herkimer and Tioga were cut off from Montgomery. The County of Onondaga, including the whole of the 'Military Tract,' was set off from Herkimer in 1794. From

Onondaga, Cayuga was detached in 1799, Cortland in 1808. The Military Tract was so called from the fact that it was set apart for the payment of Military bounties to the soldiers of the State, who had served for a certain period during the war of the Revolution. This tract embraces the present Counties of Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Cortland. The greater part of Tompkins is included in this tract, but not all of it, with a small part of Oswego and Wayne.

After the Indian title had become extinguished, an act was passed by the Legislature of the State, February 28, 1789, for surveying the land and appropriating it to the use of the Soldiers. The tract was surveyed into twenty-eight townships, each containing one hundred lots of a square mile each. Of this appropriation, every soldier and non-commissioned officer had one lot assigned him. The officers received larger portions in proportion to rank. Very many of the soldiers, in consequence of the long period which elapsed previous to the issuing of the patent, disposed of their lands for a mere song, some of them as low as six, eight and ten dollars. The lot of one mile square and containing 640 acres, now belonging to Henry Dakin, three miles West of this village, was once sold for a coat, hat, one drink of rum and one dollar in money. The land is now worth forty dollars per acre and we doubt very much whether friend Dakin would dispose of it even at that price. To facilitate the settlement of these lands, a road was projected, that would run through from Oxford to the head of Cayuga, or in other words, connecting Oxford with Ithaca. This work was let and entrusted to the care of Joseph Chaplin, on the 5th day of May, 1792. The length of this route is about sixty miles. The work of cutting and clearing was accomplished in the year 1793-94, but not to Ithaca, as it was agreed to have been done. Mr. Chaplin had prosecuted his work as far as the town of Virgil, when meeting some settlers from Keeder's Ferry, it was proposed to cut the road through to that point, inasmuch as it contained the greatest number of inhabitants. After having accomplished his work at this point, Mr. Chaplin presented his bill to the Legislature and it was rejected, upon the ground that he had not fulfilled his contract. The year following he commenced the road which now passes through our village to Ithaca, and is known as the "Bridle Road," after completing which, Mr. Chaplin returned

to the Legislature and drew the amount stipulated in the contract.

Having thus described the course and purpose pursued in the laying out of the townships, I shall ask the attention of my kind readers, while we return again to the history of the early settlers, and as there is a blank leaf missing from my log-book, it will be necessary to skip for the present, some incidents in other parts of the town, and confine myself to that portion of it called "Willow Glen, or Stickles' Corners." These corners, if my memory serves me right, were first settled in the fall of 1798, by three families, all of whom moved in at one time, and with the same team, which team drew the entire furniture, eatibles and other necessary paraphernalia belonging to all three families, together with Mr. Ezekael Sanford, his wife and one son—David Foot, his wife and four girls—Ebenezer Clauson, wife, one boy and two girls, making the round little number of fourteen persons that were transported all the way from Chenango river to the place, by one yoke of oxen and upon a very roughly made heavy ox sled of the olden time, with wooden shoes and a heavy split pole to draw with. Now my dear young friends, you may think that this is almost incredible; you may think that such a load would be enough to kill a single team, but it did not, they only came a few miles each day, but even this was a hard stent, as they were forced to make their way through an almost inaccessible wilderness, over old logs, around fallen trees, and through the partially frozen mud and mire. Thus they journeyed on for days and weeks, camping beneath small huts constructed of poles and brush, cut for the purpose upon the spot each night.

The oxen were tied to a neighboring tree, with a good pile of green boughs before them, of which they were at liberty to make a hearty supper, and also the same for their morning repast.

These hardy pioneers, however, at length arrived safely at their new homes, in the woods, for there was not a house to call their own. Nor was this any discouragement to our industrious and enterprising little band, with an ax and a hearty good will they soon made the wilderness resound with the falling trees. As soon as a sufficient opening was made, they reared for themselves huts, and covered them with brush, in which they were enabled to pass a very comfortable winter.

Ezekael Sanford located himself across the road from the residence of Elias W. Cady, and near the present dwelling of John Sharts. Mr. David Foot built his hut somewhere near the premises of the Widow Miller or Andrew Simon's, and directly across the road from where now lives Joshua Phillips. Ebenezer Clauson settled with his family upon the opposite corner, now owned by Samuel Rowland. Soon after the arrival of these three families, or early in the Spring of 1799, Mr. Aaron Lacey, father of John R. Lacey, located himself upon the corner now occupied by Mr. Jacob Stickles, whose name the corners bear. During the summer of the same year, Simon Hurd, with his wife and five or six children came in from Vermont, and settled upon the opposite corner, now owned by Joshua Phillips. Mr. Hurd moved in with a span of horses, these being the first that were ever in this part of the town and to which I shall refer more particularly hereafter.

Number 3

February 4, 1857

In looking over my letters to my young friends, I find that a couple of errors occurred in my last of some importance. In speaking of Mr. Hurd, I told you that his name was Simeon, now this is a very great mistake, as his given name was Lyman, and he moved into Dryden as late at 1800 or 1801, instead of 1799, as I stated in my last. My reasons for these errors are traceable to the fact that my log-book is very much defaced, and my sight dim, which reasons should be sufficient to excuse an old man who is doing his utmost to hand down to posterity some of the most important events that have occurred during the last sixty winters. When Mr. Hurd came to Dryden, there had been but little done in the way of improvement, but he being of a very energetic and persevering turn of mind, soon worked a reform in his neighborhood. He had no house prepared for his family previous to his arrival, so that he was obliged to move in with one of the young men who had previously settled here, while all hands set themselves to work, and very soon had a log house 16 by 18 feet. The doorway was cut through the logs on the East side, with a window to the West. Mr. Hurd improved somewhat from the early settlers, inasmuch as he roofed his dwelling with shingles which he split out of a pine tree and bound to their place with poles. His floor consisted of split logs, hewn smoothly upon the split side and notched on the rounding side to match the sleepers that were first lain upon the ground. This formed a good and very firm floor, and when once down was walked over with as much pride as is the nicely matched floor of the present time. The fire-place was the next thing to be furnished. A portion of the logs were hewn away in one end of the house and some stones were brought from the little stream that still flows along the West of the house, and piled them up against the logs for the back, and some more were thrown flatwise upon the floor for the hearth.

He then split sticks from the same pine of which his shingles were made, for the purpose of a chimney; this was commenced and built up from the beam directly over the fire-place. The sticks were so placed that the end of the one should cross the other at right angles in precisely the same manner as children are often seen laying up cob houses. The crevices between these sticks were chinked and mudded up to keep them from taking fire, and also to keep the draft in its proper place. Thus the house was left without other finishing until quite late in the fall, when a door was added, the window place covered and the logs chinked and mudded up.

After Mr. Hurd had got into his house in the Spring with his family, he directed his attention to clearing up his land about the house, principally upon the East side. After the brush and part of the logs were burned off, they took some and built a log fence by piling logs one upon the other, and allowing the ends to pass so as to admit of a chunk crosswise to keep the logs in their place. The logging was done with Mr. Foot's oxen, which had been kept from the time of their first arrival up to the present time on the brouse from the trees and the little moss they could collect, not an ounce of hay having yet been grown. The ground having been burned over, preparations were made for putting in the corn and oats. The sod was either broken with a hoe or ax, the corn put under and slightly pressed with the foot. It came up black and strong, receiving no other attention than that of the children, who succeeded in keeping down the weeds, so that when Fall arrived, Mr. Hurd was blessed with a noble piece of corn; his oats also, yielded well, the latter of which was put in with a drag made of a crotched tree and wooden teeth. From these two crops Mr. Hurd procured a sufficient quantity of fodder to winter his horse, one ox and a cow—cutting brouse occasionally for a change.

One of Mr. Hurd's horses having died, quite early in the Spring, himself and a Frenchman in his employ went off through the woods to Tully, or somewhere in that neighborhood and purchased an ox, which by means of a sort of half yoke, he succeeded in working admirably with his remaining horse. This was indeed a curious tho't in Mr. Hurd, but it answered the purpose, and served as a capital illustration of the fact that "Want is the mother of invention." The manner in which the two were harnessed together may be somewhat in-

teresting. As has already been stated, a half yoke was made, a hole bored through each end—strips of rawhide were cut from the dead horse and twisted into a rope, the ends of this were put through the yoke—knots tied in the ends to prevent their pulling through, and the rope allowed to run back for traces. Thus the ox and old Dick were hitched together for all purposes, such as logging, going to mill and to meeting, and this without bridle or lines.

Number 4

February 11, 1857

Having described somewhat minutely, the rough manner in which Mr. Hurd built his house, and also some of the hardships which he had to endure, I shall now endeavor to describe his barn; this was also of early origin, having been built in the fall of the same year that Mr. Hurd moved in. It stood not far from the barn now on the premises, and was quite an extensive structure. The creek had worn a large place in its East bank in the form of a half circle, leaving the banks high except on the West side, to where the creek had retired, leaving a fine level place between the banks that formed the half circle, and which was selected for the barn and yard. Directly between the points of the bank that formed this circle, stood a large birch tree, some 18 or 20 inches through and also another and smaller tree occupied the North bank just in range with the birch tree and East bank. About eighteen or twenty feet up the birch tree, was a very strong crotch, through which a pole was laid, one end of which was placed upon the South bank, and the other against the small tree in the North bank, this was to serve as the ridge pole. He then placed a large pine log some forty feet long upon the East bank for the back part of the contemplated barn. Then for the North end he set some smaller poles and fastened the ends into the bank against the large log while the remaining ends were all allowed to rest against the smaller tree, these formed the pitch of the roof and were on an altitude of about thirty-five degrees. A smaller log was now placed upon the big one and from the top of this to the ridge pole rafters were placed. This framework was covered with pine and hemlock brush, so placed in layers with the tops down, as to almost completely exclude the storm and inclemency of the weather.

A partition was built up of poles from the birch tree to the East bank, which divided the barn into two parts; the North part being used for threshing, and for stables—the South half for storing his fodder and grain.

Thus did Mr. Hurd pass his first winter, but the summer following a saw mill was built directly across the creek from the old grist mill that still stands upon the premises of Joseph McGraw Jr., from whence Mr. Hurd obtained slabs and boards with which to recover his barn and also to build an addition, the whole of which when done, made a very convenient barn not less than forty feet square, and was used for that purpose for many years. This barn being the largest and most singular building of the time received the name Golgotha, and was so called as long as it stood. This name was given by an old man by the name of Ward, who moved to Dryden in 1801. This same man gave the name 'Podunk' to the village, a name that is quite familiar to many ears at the present time.

Soon after Mr. Hurd came to Dryden, his wife presented him with a very fine pair of twins, both girls, both of whom are living. There being no cabinet makers in those days, cradles were not to be had, leaving every family at liberty to construct one after their own design, and this Mr. Hurd did. He cut a large hollow tree, from the butt of which he made a cut long enough to receive his two girls, one in each end; he split it in two, reserving the smoothest half for the cradle; this was very nicely shaved out with the Howel, an instrument made for such purposes. Upon this log, rockers were fastened, and boards split out of a pine block were put in the ends, making a very handy cradle. The children were placed, one in each end, and rocked as easily, slept as soundly, and grew as finely as do those children who are, at this day rocked in cradles that cost a great deal more money. It is not intended that any disgrace should be placed upon these children, because they happened to be born at a time in the history of our country when hollow logs served the place of cradles.

The saw mill above spoken of, was the first mill built in this town, and was commenced in the year 1800, by Col. Hopkins, of Homer, and his brother-in-law Ruloff Whitney. A dam was constructed across the creek, and some forty acres of the rich lands just across the road from the residence of Mr. McGraw, was overflowed, killing the beautiful large trees completely and from which it is supposed the Fever and Ague that subsequently raged in this town had its origin.

Number 5

February 18, 1857

My dear Young Friends: I hardly know what you may think of my letters to you, my style is so simple and old fashioned, but I am now telling you about your ancestors, and they were made of just such material as I am, and were just as simple and old fashioned, and so it pleases me best to continue on in my own way, writing with an old fashioned pencil, made, as I have told you before of the charred end of a hard wood stick. As I have been and shall continue for some time to exhibit our ancestors as the first inhabitants of this town, it will be interesting to many and satisfactory to me to describe, not only the aspect of their new homes, but also, those many incidents in every-day life, of which but few of my friends of the present day can form any adequate idea. The whole country about was one unbroken mass of wilderness. This, however, was well filled with all kinds of wild game, upon which the settlers placed great dependence. The mountains and plains seemed alive with the gray and fallow deer, while bears, wolves, panthers, wild cats and many kinds of inferior animals filled the deeper recesses of the wilderness. Numerous flocks of the feathered tribe filled the wilderness with their music and each stream produced an abundance of its finny race. Thus placed in a dense forest, many miles from the conveniences of civilization, it is not to be wondered at, that they should be the heroes of occurrences that shall seem to be, in the present day, almost super-human. But my young friends need have no fears, as I shall tell them of nothing except that which is strictly true.

Up to the time of which we are about to speak, the town of Dryden had not been organized. But one road had been laid out by Commissioners, and they were authorized by the town of Ulysses, sometime during the year 1800, commencing at the State Road, near the farm of Deacon Thomas, from which it took a zig-zag course for the South, terminating at the Bridle

Road, on the line between the premises of David Foot and Ebenezer Clauson, and was so recorded in the old Town Book of Ulysses.

Perhaps my readers would like to know how this book was made. Well, as there was not a book binder anywhere in the country, short of Albany, the clerk concluded to be his own binder. This he did by sewing together some brownish coarse paper upon which to write, then pasting some courses together for a cover, took a piece of very nice deer skin with the hair on and covered this latter, making a very substantial book in which to keep the records of the town. Since the organization of the town of Dryden, however, the course of the above road has been altered so as to lay upon the line of lots between the tiers of six and seven, where it has since remained.

About this time, a man, whose name was Joel Hull moved in from Massachusetts, and settled upon a part of the farm now belonging to Samuel Rowland Esq., some sixty rods from the road, nearly North from the School House in that district. Mr. Hull had a wife and four children. He built himself a small log house, around which he cleared a few acres. He was a very persevering man, and figured quite largely in the doings of our town. The results of his labors may still be found upon the record in the office of the Town Clerk at Etna. Aside from the Commissioners that surveyed the road described at the head of this article, Mr. Hull was the first surveyor that was ever in this town, he was also the first Town Clerk, to which office he was chosen by the people at the first election after Dryden became organized as a town in 1803, and prepared the first Town books, as heretofore described. Mr. Hull also acted in the capacity of lawyer or sort of justice, to whom the people were accustomed to go for the drawing up of deeds and such other articles as were needed by the people in the transaction of business. Such articles were all written out in full, there being, at that time no printing office in Dryden, or nearer than Utica or Albany which made the business quite a laborious one. Mr. Hull was Ensign of the first company of Militia that was formed in Dryden, and which required every able bodied citizen of the town to make up the Company. Of this Company George Robertson was the first Captain, hence the name of Captain George Robertson.

Mr. Hull was the first merchant. He bought a few goods of

a man in Aurora, and brought them in a wagon. They consisted of one chest of real old Bohe Tea, so much esteemed in those days, for which he got \$1.00 per pound; he also had some cavendish tobacco for three shillings the pound; two or three rolls of pig-tail tobacco which he sold for three cents a pound for cash. There being but a limited supply of cash in the county, it was generally understood that one plump bushel of field ashes would buy one yard of pig-tail. He also had a keg of whiskey, and two or three patterns of calico, which he sold at six shillings per yard; some narrow cotton sheeting at four shillings. This constituted the most important part of his establishment. He built a small addition to his house, for the store. This was required to be something a little more in keeping with the business for which it was intended, so he built it of rough boards, letting the roof slant up to the gable-end of the house. A lady who is now living, bought a dress from one of the pieces of calico, for which she paid six shillings a yard, working six weeks to earn the money. The dress lasted four or five years for a nice dress on all occasions. The same quality of calico may be bought at any of our dry goods stores now for one shilling a yard. Mr. Hull was like a great many persons, who are doing too extensive a business; he failed and lost all he had, or nearly so.

Mr. Hull was neither a hunter or a shingle maker, which was very rare, as almost every settler followed one or both; he was very lucky, however with his ax, more so, perhaps than many were with their fire-arms.

In the Spring of 1803 he received a pig from some of his distant friends, as there was none to be had nearer. The pig was allowed to run at large about the house, and grew to be a fine large shoat, weighing from sixty to eighty pounds. Mr. Hull was chopping wood at his door; one day, when he heard the pig squeal as if something unusual was the matter, upon which he started with his ax in hand for the woods, about fifteen rods from the house, and where there had been a windfall of large pines, and around which the cattle had to pass to get to the woods, and had beaten a path.

Mr. Hull took to this path at the top of his speed, with two youngsters, his oldest boy, and Thomas Lewis, Esq., now a resident of this village. When they reached the farthest edge of this windfall, they discovered a large bear upon his

hind legs, with the pig in his arms, and making for the swamp at a very respectable rate, halting, occasionally, to look at his pursuers, and get a new hold of his prize, who seemed very anxious to obtain his liberty. Thus circumstanced, all ran toward the swamp, as it was then called, Bruin to eat the pig and Mr. Hull to save its life. The bear shortly arrived at a very large pine log, over which he was tugging and straining with all his might to get the pig, when Mr. Hull came up behind him, and drove the whole length of his ax into the head of the bear, and scattering his brains over the ground. As the bear fell dead, the pig shaped his course for the house. While the bear was kicking his last, Mr. Hull exclaimed, damn you, Bruin, I'll learn you to steal my last pig in broad daylight. Assisted by the two youngsters, he drew his bear to the house, and dressed it; this furnished him and his neighbors with bear meat for some time besides leaving him a bear skin to sell. The pig was badly torn, but got well, and made a good sized hog.

The following winter there came a deep snow which ended with rain, and finally froze over, leaving a thick crust, sufficient to hold up youngsters of considerable heft. One of Mr. Hull's neighbors started out in the morning with his boys to catch a deer. They had not proceeded far, however, before they discovered seven of the very objects of their search, all nicely huddled together in a thicket of young pines, where they had taken refuge for safety. The dog had already placed himself on a scent, and very soon singled out a large buck, which he gave chase and overtook, the deer breaking through and the dog running more lightly on the crust. The boys then came up and dispatched the noble animal. This done the dog was sent after another, which was soon overtaken and shared the fate of his companion, and so they continued, until six deer lay dead within a short distance around.

The seventh, having found the path that led to Hull's house, followed it into his yard, who happened to be chopping up some drags of wood he had just been drawing. He threw the ax at the deer and broke one of his legs, the dog then caught the deer, which Mr. Hull killed and dressed, and which proved of much value, as it saved his pork immensely.

One or two years after the above circumstances transpired, a man by the name of Jones, built him a house just North-

East of the Dryden Springs House, and at the time of which I am now speaking was floating logs down to the mill and had nearly filled the shallow part of the pond with them, when some dogs drove a very large deer down, who undertook to swim the pond, and thereby escape the dogs. Becoming entangled, he could make but little headway, when Mr. Hull, our hero of the ax, discovered him. Taking up his favorite instrument of attack, he made for the deer by jumping from one log to another until he got near enough, when with one blow he killed the deer and lost his ax in the pond, the bottom of which is now the beautiful meadow in front of Joseph McGraw's present dwelling, and where the ax now lies buried in its rich soil.

Soon after this occurrence, Mr. Hull bought out a part of the farm belonging to Ebenezer Clauson, and in 1806, sold the farm to Thomas Southworth, that venerable old gentleman, who is still living among us, and who is the father of John Southworth, so well known to the people of this town. The last that was heard of Mr. Hull, he was at work in the coal beds of Pennsylvania.

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Rumsey's Companion was changed to Dryden News with the copy of April 16, 1857. In the issues between May 21, 1857, and July 30, 1857, the second part of the letters of The Old Man in the Clouds was published. Having found no papers of those dates, I have copied the following from The Four County History, page 486.—B.L.C.

The following is a description of a queer religious sect who invaded the quiet precincts of the town in 1818. We copy verbatim from letters written by the Old Man in the Clouds.

“As it has been some time since my last letter was written to you, I shall skip over a time, to give you a sketch of a very curious kind of religious people that came to Dryden about the year 1818. Such a religion most of my readers of the present day have probably never heard. They numbered some fifty persons, men, women and children. They styled themselves ‘Pilgrims’ and came here from Vermont, where it would seem their pilgrimage was neither of the right kind, or destined to be of long duration, so they made their way to Dryden.

“Like most other fanatics they were possessed of a prophet, in whom all their confidence and belief were centered. When

they moved in they had several wagons, some of which were drawn by four horses. One team carried a large tent, beneath which the entire family were housed in all kinds of weather. The name of their prophet was Thaddeus Cummins, a very stout, healthy, and well proportioned man, with sandy hair and about thirty-five years old. The woman he brought as his wife was called Lucy. A priest also accompanied the prophet, whose name was Joseph Ball. There were also two or three brothers by the name of Slack; the rest of the company was made up of the scourgings of wretched humanity.

“When the prophet and his followers had arrived near the residence of David Foot, they pitched their tent and rested over night, but I believe moved the next day into the woods on the lands now owned by the Widow Stickles, where they remained a week, when they again moved up the north bank of Fall Creek, just back of Joseph McGraw’s saw-mill, and near the present residence of Jacob Updike.

[This farm was purchased by Mrs. Clark’s great grandfather Aaron Foster in 1829 and sold to the McGraws in 1849. The McGraws built the house at 7 North Street, Dryden, in which Mrs. Clark resides. After the health of Aaron Foster failed, he exchanged his farm and sawmill for this residence, and it has been in the family ever since.—W.H.Jr.]

“Here this singular people remained for six weeks, practicing all kinds of deviltry upon themselves and the people in the neighborhood. They had no beds, but slept in nests of straw, each sex in common with the other, they having no belief in, or regard for the marriage ceremony. They did not believe in beds, chairs or tables. They stood up to eat and sucked food through a goose-quill, and could not be prevailed to eat any other way.

“They wore large white clothes upon their backs, which, as they said, were marks for the devil to shoot at. Their antipathy against the devil was very great, and every morning early they could be heard howling and yelling like a parcel of wolves for two miles around, driving the devil out of their camp. This class of pilgrims as they styled themselves, was a hard-working and robust people, and by paying great deference to their mode of worship, drew into their circle many who had been respectable inhabitants. Some sold their farms and other effects, and put the money into the general fund

for the diffusion of their religion, and to support those who had or might join them without money. Very many were drawn into their circle from this town, but more from Lansing.

“A Mrs. Fronk was induced to leave her husband, in the latter place, and join this degraded set. He getting wind of the fact, obtained a warrant and arrested the Prophet Cummins, and attempted to take him in charge; but being, as we have said, a heavy man and rather obstinate, would not walk to the justice. The next thing to be done was to carry him, and this the constable did, and after ducking the prophet in the mud a few times, as far as the tavern, which was kept by Thomas Southworth, in the house now owned by Samuel Rowland.

“While this was going on, the brother of the woman took her back to Lansing, and the constable and Mr. Fronk decided to let the prophet go. These people hung around for more than six weeks, during which time the men worked out by the day. Some of these were employed in various ways upon the farm of Thomas Lewis. William T. and Abraham Tanners also made them useful in cutting wood. When the pilgrims left Dryden they made their way to an island in the Mississippi River, to which some people still living followed them from this place.

“They remained there until they nearly starved, when the old prophet, after having stolen pretty much all their effects, called his followers together, stuck his cane in the ground, and told them he was about to leave, but that when the cane had budded and blossomed, he would return to them again. He never returned, and the ‘pilgrims’ were compelled to disperse. Some of them returned to their homes in Dryden, and some of them are living here still.”