



*NAVIGATING A SEA OF RESOURCES*

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OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN  
TOMPKINS COUNTY

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# OLD INDIAN TRAILS

*in*

## TOMPKINS COUNTY

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By W. GLENN NORRIS

*Tompkins County Historian*

*Tompkins County Clerk*

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*The Empire State, as you love to call it, was once laced by our trails . . . trails that we had trod for centuries—trails worn so deep by the feet of the IROQUOIS that they became your roads of travel, as your possessions eat into those of my people. Your roads still traverse those same lines of communication which bound one part of the Long House to the other.*

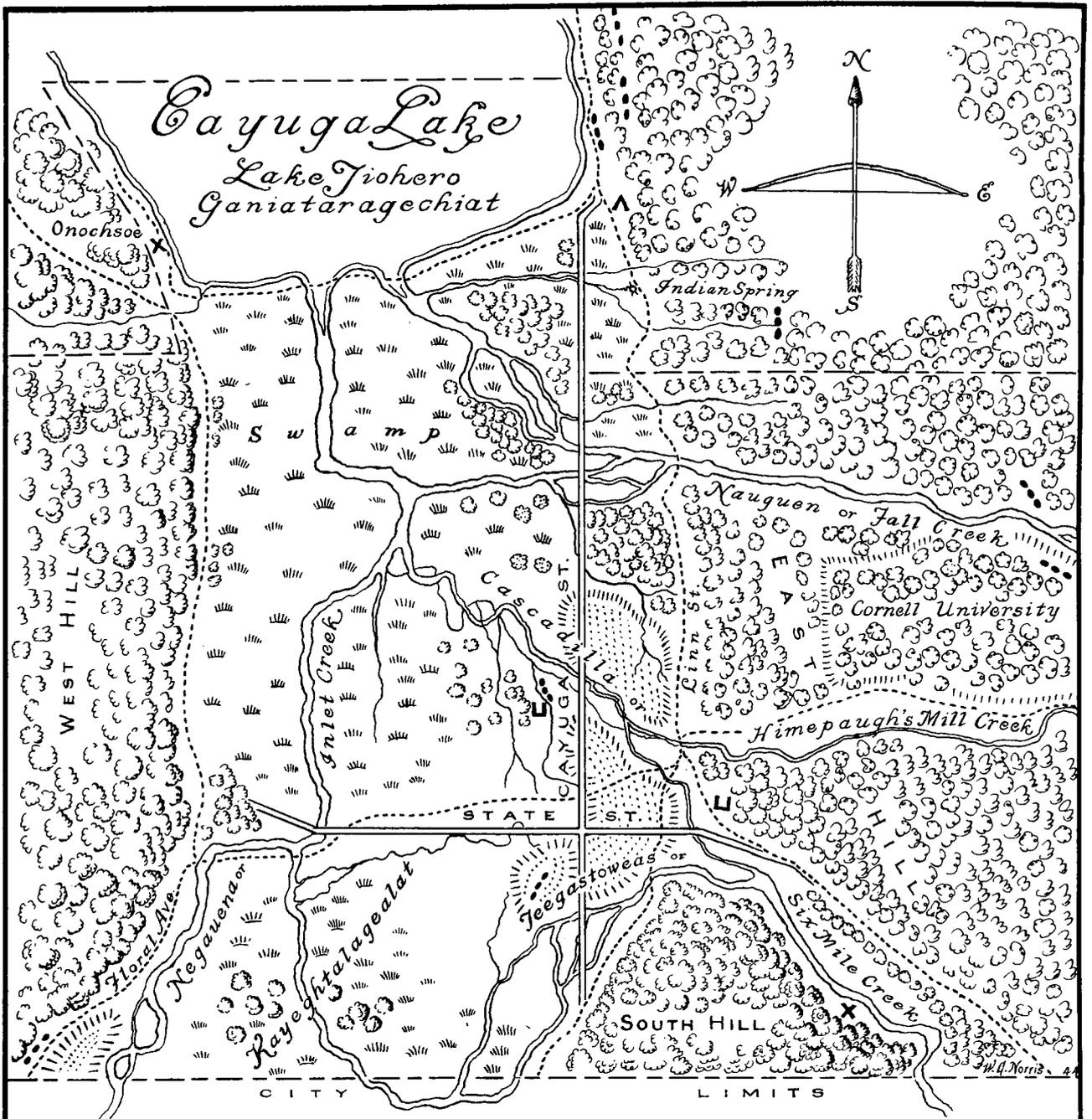
CAYUGA CHIEF WA-O-WA-WA-NÓ-ONK,  
OR PETER WILSON



*Published Under the Auspices  
of the*

DEWITT HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TOMPKINS COUNTY  
Ithaca, N. Y.

MCMXLIV



# MAP OF ITHACA

showing

ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION, TRAILS, NAMES  
AND GENERAL APPEARANCE  
BEFORE 1790

*Laid out within 1944 City Limits—with a few present day land marks indicated.*

*Legend*



VILLAGE SITE  
CAMP SITE  
BURIAL SITE



TRACES OF OCCUPATION  
AREA OF CULTIVATION  
----- INDIAN TRAILS



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## Preface

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I HAVE FOUND one of the many interesting aspects of the life of the Indian of antiquity to be his lines of communication, or trails leading from one place to another. These were constantly changing, but the first white men who entered this locality found them convenient and direct aids to travel.

Later, when the first settlers came in, many of these paths were widened into cart roads, and they became, in time, some of our important local highways. Among the Tompkins County roads that today follow the routes where once trod only the aboriginal inhabitants and the wild animals of the forest, are parts of the Slaterville-Brooktondale road, Elmira road, South Lansing-Lake Ridge road, Spencer Street, Floral Avenue, Linn Street, upper and lower State Street, part of South Tioga Street, and many others. The written history of a community is usually measured from the advent of its first settlers. Previous to that time, the historian often gropes in darkness as he seeks to find a way into the dim recesses of earlier history. Tracing out these generally unknown and forgotten trails of the red men has been a fascinating study; a search of many years for positive facts which could be substantiated. Old maps, manuscripts, journals, and other historical works have yielded a share in this undertaking; also, the author has personally explored and observed all the routes herein described.

These articles are the result of an untiring interest in the region in which most of my life has been spent. From our unwritten past has come the stories of the Indian Trails of Tompkins County.

It is with deep appreciation that I acknowledge the cooperation of the Tompkins County Board of Supervisors, and the DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, whose assistance made this publication possible. I wish to express my indebtedness to Professor Harold W. Thompson, Professor Benton S. Monroe, and Mr. Ralph C. Smith, members of the advisory committee of the Historical Society; and to Mr. John G. Brooks, the President. To all these, and to my wife Edna Norris, who assisted in the preparation, and to many friends who have aided me, especially Mr. Ernest W. Mack, who photographed the scenes for this booklet, I gratefully dedicate this volume, the first publication of the Historical Society.

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## Introduction

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**B**EFORE the coming of the white man to this region, Indian trails or paths extending in many directions traversed what was then a mighty forested wilderness; a region favorably endowed by nature with valleys and high hills, lakes and swift running water-courses.

Fed by a multitude of swift running streams, flowing into its southern end, was Ganiataragechiat, or Cayuga Lake—the French called it Goiogouen, or Lac Tichero—which stretched northward out of this rugged region, a region that later was named Tompkins County.

By far the largest and most useful of all the local highways of the red man, was that broad trackless highway of travel, Cayuga Lake. For unknown centuries it had been used by friendly and hostile tribes; even deadly battles had been fought upon it; yet on its fickle surface were left no tell-tale scars or tracks. Only on land could be found those marks of human communication, that, according to their use, were worn into deep, well beaten paths, or were merely obscure traces through the forest, over which at times even the Indian became lost.

The Indian trails can be divided into two groups. In the first group were the long continuous trails, running from important landmarks and towns; these extended throughout the state and beyond. In the second group were the short inter-connecting paths, leading from one village to another, and making most lakes and valleys accessible. Like the Indian villages, these forest trails were constantly changing, and all trace of their location was soon obliterated by the ceaseless forest growth. The main through trails in what is now Tompkins County were few but important, and for hundreds of years, or since the red man first inhabited this

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## INTRODUCTION

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region, they have played their part as throughfares, over which traveled hordes of aborigines of the Algonquin Family, and later the tribes of the Iroquois.

One of the most traveled was the "Warriors' Trail," which began at Cayuga Castle, the principal Cayuga village, on the east side of the lake, between Levanna and Union Springs, and ran to Owego. Both ends of this trail connected with other trails that reached out in many directions.



MIDDAUGH WOODS NEAR BROOKTONDALE, N. Y.

*A few primeval forest monarchs still survive along the route of the "Warriors' Trail" (Cayuga Lake, Owego). The author stands by ancient gnarled white pine tree, pointing southward along the course of the trail, a trace of which is still visible in these woods.*

## The Warriors' Trail

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**T**HE WARRIORS' TRAIL entered the county from the north, in the town of Lansing, along the county road to Lake Ridge; from there it followed the present State highway No. 34B south. Turning off this route it descended into the village of Ludlowville, by way of the cemetery road. Salmon Creek, or Gientachne, was forded at the site of the present iron bridge on the Ludlowville-Myers road. About 100 yards south of the ford, the trail turned eastward up a short narrow ravine, following the road now known as the "brickyard road." It then passed in a southeasterly direction up the long east hill to the crossing south of South Lansing hamlet, above the falls on Norton's Creek, where the highway bridge on route 34 is located. From there, the trail swung west, then south to Estys.

At Estys began the long descent of the hill. In places the path ran where the highway now does, but near the foot of the hill it bore a few rods east, following a natural ledge. At the bottom of the hill it crossed the streams of Twin Glens at McKinneys; then it followed the lake shore approximately where the present highway runs. From the southeast corner of Cayuga Lake, the trail continued past the old Indian spring at the base of the hill by Renwick Heights; then around the sandy bluff at the Lake View Cemetery to Nogaene, or Fall Creek.

Crossing Fall Creek about at the location of the bridge on Lake Street, the path continued in the direction of the Fall Creek school, where it crossed another sand bluff extending nearly to Tioga Street. From there it followed along close to the base of East Hill, as does Linn Street, to Cascadilla, or as called by early settlers, Himepaugh's Mill Creek. A few rods south of the Cascadilla crossing, another much used trail, from Seneca Lake and other points, connected with the Owego trail. This meeting place of the trails had

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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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special significance in early times; it was a milestone from which distances to other points were often computed.

Leaving Cascadilla crossing, the foot-path turned up East Hill in Ithaca at what is now known as Terrace Place, at the east end of Court Street, crossing Buffalo Street to Seneca Street; where turning eastward it passed Sage Place and out East State Street. The present route of the Slaterville Road No. 79 was followed almost to Cook's Corners; near there it turned to the right in the direction of the Six Mile Creek and continued over the route of the Brooktondale Road to where the Beaverbrook Road branches off.

Turning off in a southerly direction, close to this road the trail crossed the Teegastoweas, or Six Mile Creek, west of and near to the present iron bridge, and followed a short distance along the right bank of the Beaverbrook. The distance from where the trails joined in Ithaca, at the Cascadilla crossing, to this crossing, was just six miles, hence the name given the stream by early settlers was Six Mile Creek, to denote the six mile landmark.

Less than an eighth of a mile south of the Six Mile crossing, the trail crossed to the east of the Beaverbrook stream, and leaving the valley floor ascended a sloping hill back of what is known as the old Hanford place. There, in early times, it entered a dense pine and hemlock forest.

Part of the land beyond here is owned by Augustus Middaugh, descendant of an early pioneer family in the region. Through his piece of woods, traces of the old trail are still visible for a distance of about 100 yards; a beaten and well-worn trough, which in some places is nearly a foot deep, giving mute evidence of many centuries of constant travel. In these same woods and along the edge of this ancient highway, still stand three mighty hemlock and white pine trees, gnarled survivors of the primeval forest, silent sentinels of the distant past, when along much of the entire length of this historic path the sun's rays seldom penetrated its gloomy aisles. This path in the Middaugh Woods is the

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## THE WARRIORS' TRAIL

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last outstanding survival in Tompkins County of what was recorded as one of the seventeen important Indian trails in New York State.

Beyond here, the trail continued to the base of the rocky Bald Hill escarpment, then, running southerly along the east side of the valley, it left the Tompkins County line where it crosses the Willseyville Creek by the Cummings School House. From there it continued on down the valley along the Tiatachiunge, or Catatonk Creek, through Candor to Owego.

The course of this trail through Ithaca Township is shown on the first surveyed map of this region, known as "A Map of Ulysses Township, No. 22," by Moses DeWitt, in the year 1790. It is also partly shown on a map with the original deed of the Watkins-Flint Purchase, surveyed about 1793.

For hundreds of years this primitive highway was one of the main avenues of travel from Cayuga Lake to the Susquehanna River. The early Algonquins probably opened this pathway. The Andastes of Pennsylvania, and other hostile tribes on their raids against the Cayugas, and the fierce Iroquoian warriors on their raids against the southern enemy tribes, all used this well known trail.

During the Sullivan Expedition against the Six Nations in 1779, Joseph Brant (Theyendanegea) gathered 300 Indian warriors and Tories, and leaving the Cayuga stronghold, proceeded over this trail to Owego, hoping to harass Gen. Clinton's troops moving down the Susquehanna River from Otsego Lake to join with Sullivan's main army at Tioga Point (Athens, Pa.).

This route must have been frequented by early Dutch, French, and English traders from Montreal and Albany. The year 1743 marks the first record of a journey by white men over the southern part of this trail. The first permanent white settlers in Ithaca arrived in 1789. Jacob Yapple, Peter Himepaugh (spelled many ways) and Isaac Dumond, with their families, were the pioneer trail-blazers. To move their

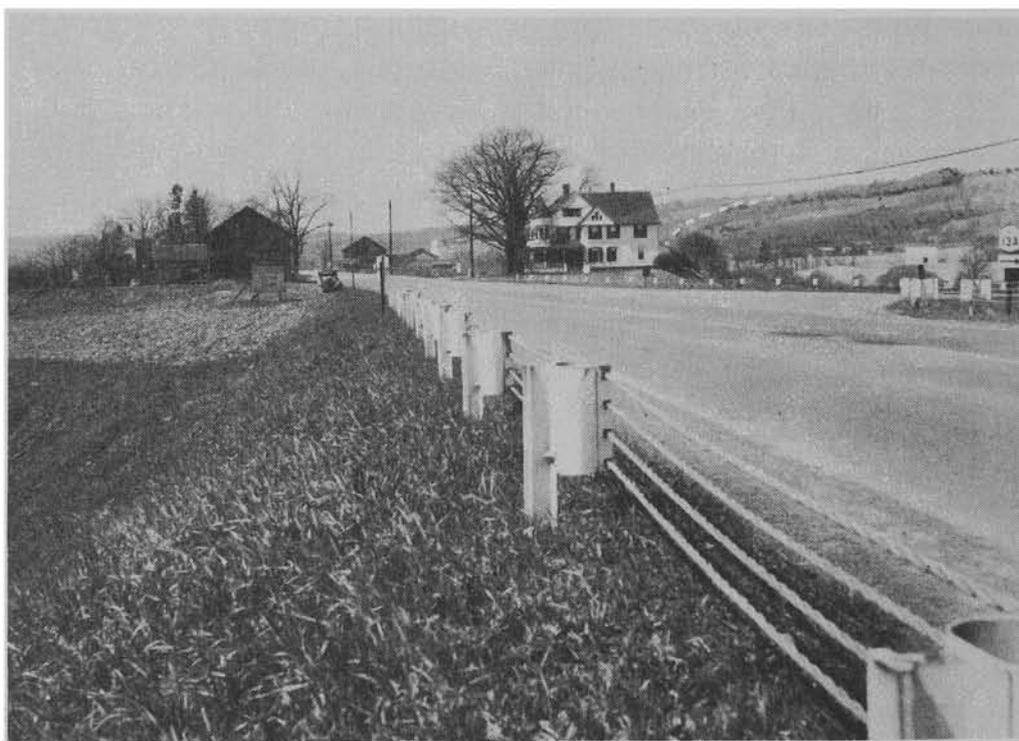
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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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household goods, sheep, cattle, and horses from Owego to Ithaca required nineteen days of constant toil, to widen and break open the narrow, well beaten path. The distance they traveled is about thirty miles, which today, over modern highways, can be traveled in nearly that many minutes.

This old trail thus became the first roadway to be used by settlers coming into this region. From a pathway 12 to 15 inches wide, the pioneers were forced by necessity to back-breaking toil in widening the path enough to accommodate their ox-carts. On the first actual survey map of this locality the route of this historic trail is designated as a "Cartroad leading to Owego Settlement." This road was used for many years by immigrant pioneer settlers, but the part through the Middaugh Woods was eventually abandoned for a more advantageous wagon-route.



*Site of Coreorgonel ("Where they keep the Pipe of Peace"). Two and one-half miles south of Ithaca, on Ithaca-Elmira highway; Route 13. Located at end of the new overhead railroad crossing. Tutelo Indian village, presided over by Cayuga chief. Burned during the Revolutionary War on Sept. 26, 1779, by Col. Dearborn's troops of the Gen. Sullivan Indian Expedition.*

## The Catherine's Town- Cayuga Lake Trail

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**T**HIS TRAIL was the main pathway from the head of Seneca Lake to the head of Cayuga Lake. Starting at Catherine's Town, now Montour Falls, the trail ascended the steep east hill of Seneca Valley. Passing through Odessa, the route turned northerly up Catlin Mill Creek Valley, then along the west side of Cayuta, known locally as Little Lake. Just north of the lake, the trail turned east at the north edge of the swampy ground, and crossing it, passed through Cayutaville, then eastward up a narrow valley that lies between Connecticut Hill and Saxon Hill. Three-fifths of a mile east of Cayutaville, the western border of Tompkins County was crossed at the intersection of the southern boundary of the Military Tract, at a point known to early surveyors as the Nine Mile Tree. It is now the point on the Schuyler-Tompkins line where Enfield and Newfield townships join.

Continuing east, the trail ran through the southern boundary lots of Enfield to lot No. 76, where Five Mile or Enfield Creek was crossed, about at the upper main entrance to Robert H. Treman State Park. The Five Mile or Enfield Creek was five miles from the Nine Mile Tree, the most probable origin of the name Five Mile Creek, since the actual length of the stream is nearly ten miles.

From the upper park entrance the trail followed easterly over Enfield highway No. 327 about one-half mile. Then bearing northeasterly it continued down the steep Enfield Hill, crossing a small ravine, then following part of the route of a now abandoned road (sometimes called the Calkins Road) which extended from its juncture with the Ithaca-Elmira road at the location of the Inlet Valley Dairy,

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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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up over the hill to the Bostwick Road. At the foot of the hill, just west of the Inlet Valley Dairy, the trail turned northeast toward the Ithaca-Elmira Road, or State Highway No. 13. Reaching the highway where it passes over a ridge or glacial moraine, where at one time stood the Indian village known as Coreorgonel (1753-79), at the site of the new overhead crossing of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, the trail then continued north about an eighth of a mile, then divided. The east branch crossed the Negauena or Inlet Creek, at the old Five Mile Drive highway bridge, a few rods north from where the Ten Mile or Buttermilk Creek empties into the Inlet. Crossing the Burtt farm it ran northeasterly along the western base of South Hill, as does Spencer Street today.

Six Mile Creek was crossed close to Clinton Street. The trail then swung around the northern base of South Hill as does the creek. Reaching what is now the corner of State and Tioga Streets, it continued north on Tioga, about to Buffalo Street, where it turned diagonally to the right, to the east end of Court Street; there it connected with the important Cayuga Lake-Owego trail.

To go back to the Buttermilk-Inlet crossing, we now follow the west branch trail north along the same route followed by the present Floral Avenue highway No. 13A, past Glenside, and north along the base of West Hill, nearly to West Seneca Street. Turning east, south of the corner of Seneca Street and Floral Avenue, the trail crossed the Negauena or Inlet. It continued east along the south bank of the creek to where it is joined by the Six Mile Creek, a few rods south of the present West State Street bridge. During that early period, both the Inlet and Six Mile Creek could in normal times be waded.

Going eastward, it bore off in the direction of Buffalo Street, followed the course of that street some distance, then gradually inclined toward the east end of Court Street,

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## THE CATHERINE'S TOWN-CAYUGA LAKE TRAIL

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where it joined with the east branch trail at its junction with the Cayuga Lake-Owego trail, on the south side of Cascadilla Creek at the corner of Court and Linn Streets.

The east branch along Spencer Street was the trail probably used most; it was somewhat shorter and on higher ground. The west branch from the base of West Hill as far east as Cayuga Street must have been almost impassable during wet seasons, because it ran through that section of Ithaca referred to by early surveyors as the Great Swamp.

That portion of the trail running into Tompkins County is shown on the original map of Ulysses Township, No. 22, by Moses DeWitt, 1790. It is also shown on the map in Vol. 3 of Sir William Johnson's papers as "Map, Showing Trails, Portages and Settlements from Albany to Niagara, during the Superintendency of the Six Nations, by Sir Wm. Johnson, Bart." It is also shown on a map with the original deed of the Watkins-Flint Purchase, surveyed about 1793, and on file in the Land Office at Albany.

Probably white traders used this trail in early times, but if so, they left no records. In Sept., 1779, Col. Henry Dearborn with 200 Continental soldiers from Gen. Sullivan's army, came along the west side of Cayuga Lake, raiding and destroying the Indian villages. Reaching Coreorgonel, the Tutelo village south of Ithaca, they destroyed that village and all the crops. Early on the morning of Sept. 25th, the tough, hungry, and ragged army turned westward over this trail on their gruelling march to join with Sullivan's main army, which they had hoped to meet at Catherine's Town.

This is the first record of a journey by white men over the rough mountainous wilderness traversed by this path, a journey that in their time called for the utmost in stamina, endurance, and patriotic zeal.

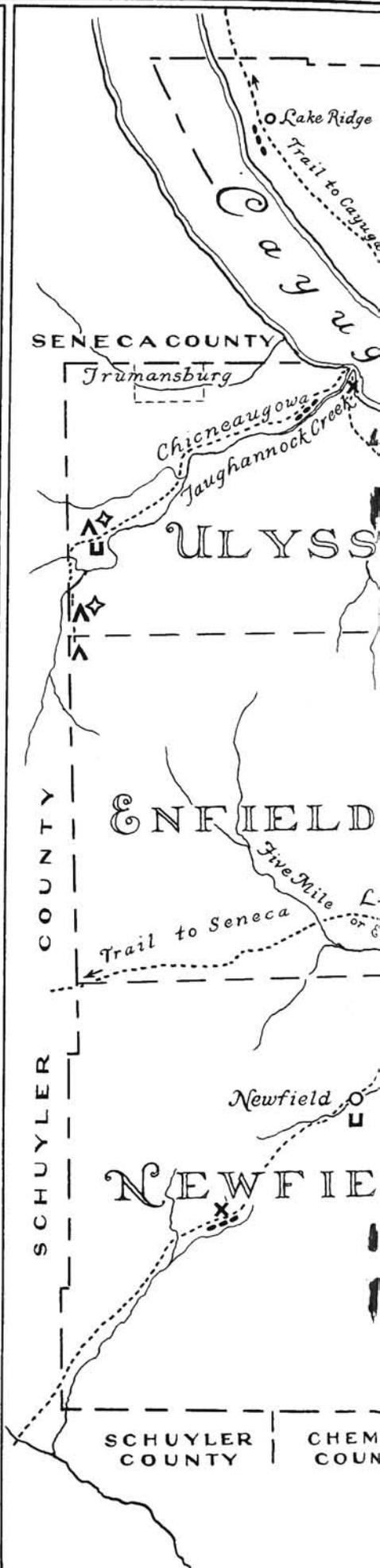


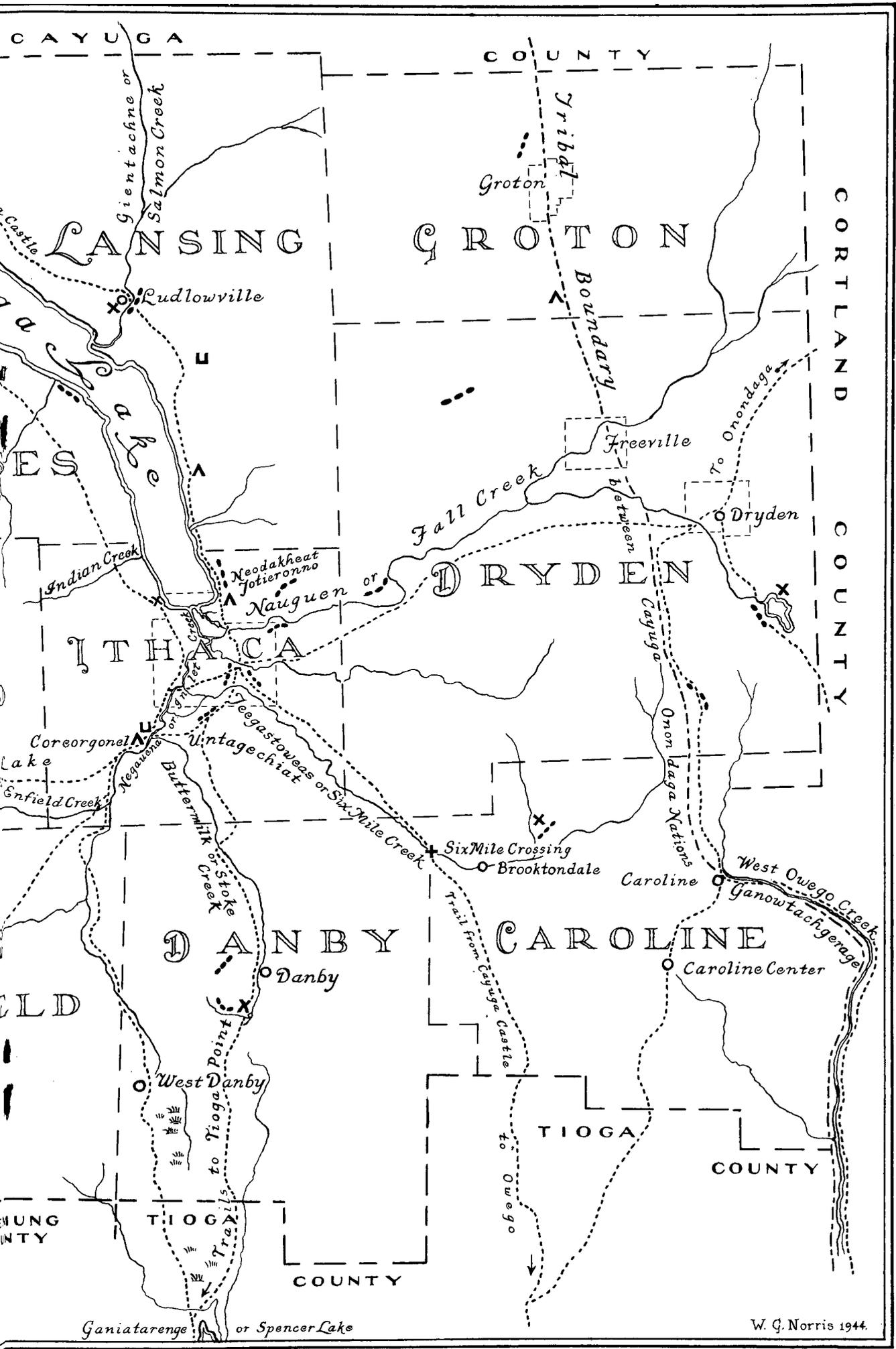
# MAP of the OLD INDIAN TRAILS in TOMPKINS COUNTY

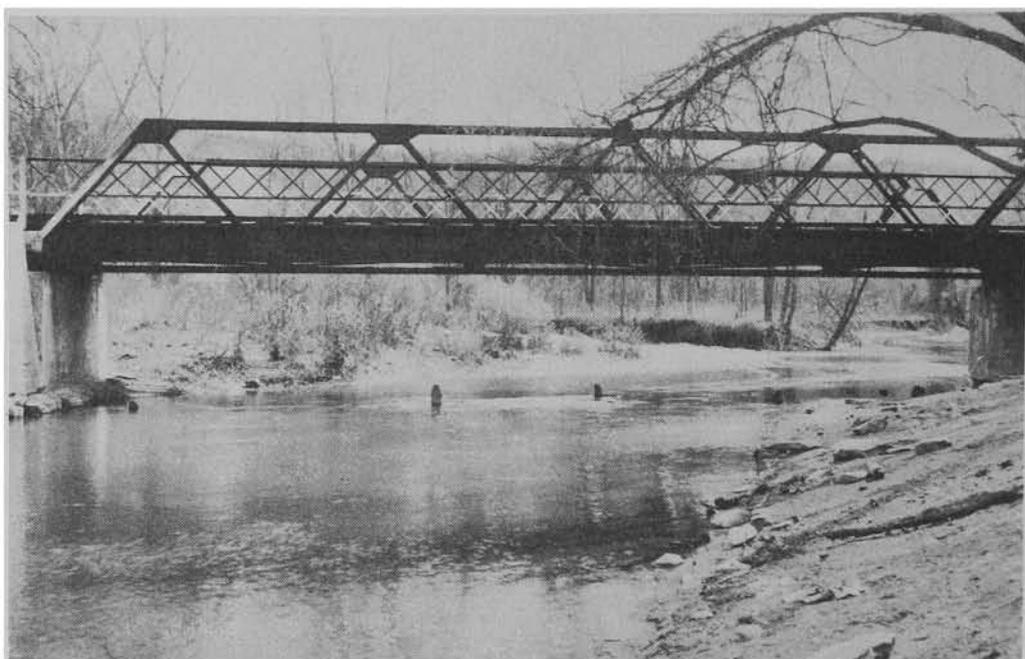
*Showing Aboriginal Occupation,  
with the Indian Names of some Streams,  
Villages and Localities indicated.*

## Legend

- Village Site **▲** Indian Trails ----  
Camp Site **X** Traces of Occupation **•••**  
Burial Site **■** Fortified Village **◆**







*Twenty-five yards beyond the bridge, Buttermilk, or Sto-ke Creek, joins the Negauena, or Inlet Creek. The east branch of the trail to Catherine's Town (Montour Falls) running along Spencer Street, crossed the Inlet here. To the right, just out of the picture, it joined the west branch trail running along Floral Ave. A single trail then continued through the Indian village of Coreorgonel, 500 yards south.*



**NEAR THE HAMLET OF CAROLINE, N. Y.**

*At the base of the hill at the right flows West Owego Creek (Ganowtcher-age). An Indian path from Owego came up this stream and joined here with the Owego-Dryden-Onondaga trail from Shandaken Valley. A single trail then continued northward over the ridge in the left background.*

## The Owego-Dryden- Onondaga Trail

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A PORTION of this little known but important Indian trail traversed the southeast part of Tompkins County. It is shown in its entirety on a map in Sir William Johnson's papers under the title of, "Map, Showing Trails, Portages and Settlements from Albany to Niagara, during the Superintendency of the Six Nations, by Sir William Johnson, Bart."

This Indian trail branched off the Cayuga-Owego trail, two miles south of Wilseyville, in Tioga County, at the entrance to Prospect or Shandaken Valley. Shandaken, now corrupted to Shindagin, was so named by early settlers from Shandaken, Ulster County. It is an Iroquois word meaning "rapid waters."

At a distance of five miles from where the trail branched off, the valley begins to narrow. There the path left the swampy lowland and ascended a high, steep hill rising abruptly on the east side of the valley floor. At that point, even today, can be found a faint trace of the old trail showing on the steep bank.

From the Shandaken Gulf, a long, steady climb is encountered; and at a distance of two and a half miles, the path dipped into a hollow in the hills where Caroline Center is now located. Continuing northward, the trail again climbed upward a short distance, then reached a level plateau where it bore to the right, following what is known as the Rounsville Road. At the lofty north brow of the hill were probably two routes down the precipitous slope. The first was a straight continuation of the trail down the Rounsville road to the Caroline road, or the old Catskill Turnpike, now route No. 79: There it turned east a short distance over route 79 to the hamlet of Caroline. The other route, which is the more probable, turned eastward at the

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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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top of the hill and descended the slope back of the Old Spring Farm, or the Old Speed Homestead, then followed north over what is known as the Level Green Road, to Tobeytown, or Caroline hamlet. Here another trail which came up the West Owego Creek from Owego joined, and both continued on to Onondaga as a single trail. At Caroline, the Ganowtacherage or West Owego Creek was crossed; the path then followed north along the creek a distance of nearly one mile. The trail which, since passing the site of the Old Spring Farm, had crossed a broad, level valley, now left the valley at the north end of the Flatiron Road, leading north from Caroline. Here began one of the roughest parts of the trail, the ascent over a high ridge and through the woods known later as the "Six hundred acre tract."

The path up the long, steep incline followed the course of the now abandoned Fairview road (so-called). Going north, it passed through a gloomy pine and hemlock forest, over a high level stretch; then, dipping down, it passed the site of the log-cabin home of John McGraw, Cornell University's great benefactor. At that point it reached a valley in the hills known as Irish Settlement. Continuing north from the valley to the hill overlooking Dryden valley, the trail then descended along a small brook tumbling down the hill and flowing through Willow Glen settlement, into Fall Creek.

Near the bottom of the steepest part of the hill, about three-quarters of a mile south from Willow Glen on the Bridle Road, or the Ithaca-Cortland highway No. 13, the trail turned eastward about one mile, and crossed Virgil Creek, at the western edge of Dryden village. At or near the four corners of the village, the east branch of the Owego-Dryden-Onondaga Trail, running through Newark Valley, Berkshire and Richford, joined.

From Dryden village the trail continued on toward the Six Nations Indian capital at Onondaga, near Syracuse. One mile north of Dryden village the trail turned northeasterly up a long slope, following generally the course of the Cort-

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## THE OWEGO-DRYDEN-ONONDAGA TRAIL

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land road; and onward over the high ground to and beyond Gulf Hill, which was a section some of the early travelers described as the "Dry Wilderness." More than a mile beyond Gulf Hill the trail followed a slope, bearing to the left toward Mud Creek, near Homer. It then continued in a northerly direction up the west side of Tully Valley, past the Tully Lakes; then, dipping down into the deep Onondaga Valley, continued on through Cardiff to Onondaga, the principal Iroquois village.

This trail was one of several routes leading from Onondaga to the Susquehanna River. The first record of white men traveling over this part of the trail passing through the Prospect, or Shandaken Valley, and the site of Caroline Center, to the present hamlet of Caroline, is the account of two Moravian missionaries, who passed that way in 1745, guided by Shikellemy, famous chief and ambassador of the Six Nations.



*View north toward Willseyville from entrance to Prospect, or Shandaken Valley. Ithaca-Owego highway in foreground here follows the old "Warriors' Trail" (Cayuga Lake-Owego). The trail to Onondaga branched to the right here, going up "Shindagin Valley."*

## The Taughannock Trail

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**T**HE TAUGHANNOCK TRAIL started at the foot of West Seneca Street where the Floral Avenue trail crossed the Inlet. Going north along the base of West Hill at the edge of a swamp where the Airport is now located, it climbed upward toward the Williams Brook, which tumbles down the steep hillside, emptying into the southwest corner of Cayuga Lake. Ascending the north side of the brook, the trail passed the east and lower side of the well-known Stone House, situated on the Trumansburg Road just outside the city limits. There it turned northwest for a distance of a mile and a half over the Ithaca-Geneva Highway to Indian Creek. Turning to the right on Indian Trail Road or Willow Creek Road, now County highway No. 140, it continued northward, crossing Willow Creek. A good mile north of Willow Creek, the path crossed what is now the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way; then, bearing down toward the lake, made the final steep descent to the south side of Goodwin's Point, now Taughannock.

This was the route followed from Taughannock Point southward by Col. Dearborn with 200 men, on their raid along the west side of Cayuga Lake in September, 1779. At the intersection of the two county roads just south of Willow Creek crossing, along the Indian trail, is a little known boulder monument, commemorating this brave expedition.

Over this trail, in the year 1790, came Samuel Weyburn, who traveled from Tioga Point (now Athens, Pa.) with his wife and four children. He built the first log cabin on Taughannock Point. It was by this trail, in March, 1792, that Abner Treman and his brother-in-law, John McLallen, found their way to what is now Trumansburg.

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## THE TAUGHANNOCK TRAIL

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In 1794 the two Goodwin brothers, Richard and Benjamin, came in by the way of Owego, carrying their goods on a cart and driving their cattle over the Indian trail to the place long known as Goodwin's Point. For several years this was the only route in existence for travelers on their way from Ithaca northwest.

An extension of this trail was the ancient route up the Chicneaugowa, or Tschochnioke, now Taughannock Creek, through Halseyville, Waterburg, and Perry City, leading to several Indian settlements near these villages. This region, which, in early times before the white man came was a secluded and abundant dwelling-place, was well hidden from marauding enemies. Curiously enough, the sites of these Indian villages are to be found strung along in a north and south line, directly on the Schuyler-Tompkins County borders. One location can be found where the Hayts road intersects the County Line road. Another, and by far the largest, site was located on and just a trifle west of the Tompkins County border, where the so-called Town Line road intersects the County Line road. This site extends nearly one-half mile along Taughannock Creek and is one-half mile south of the hamlet of Perry City.

Another large Indian village and fort was the ancient site one-half mile west of Waterburg. From the town highway, which passes through the site, can be seen today the remains of part of the fort's line of defense, a long, low mound, upon which at one time a log palisade was erected. Recent excavation to widen this road by cutting back the banks has plainly revealed some of the old fire pits, around which small bones can still be found.

Directly north in Seneca County, south of Interlaken, was another large Indian village belonging to this group. Recent excavation at this site has brought forth many Indian artifacts of considerable archaeological significance.

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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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At some places on the edge of the cliffs along the west side of Cayuga Lake, from the southwest corner, can be found traces of an Indian foot-path, known to many cottagers who have camped in the vicinity. This was a by-path used by itinerant Indians who hunted and fished along the lake. A favorite eel-fishing camp-site was at the southwest corner of the lake, called by the Cayugas Onochsoe, later known by local residents as the "Hog Hole." Farther north, near Willow Creek along the lake highway, evidence of early Indian camp-sites have been noted.



*Taughannock Falls ("The Great Falls in the Woods"). Evidence of Indian occupation near here. According to legend, a battle between the Delaware and Cayuga-Seneca Indians took place near this spot.*

## The Danby Trail

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THE TRAVELER taking the Danby path from Ithaca, followed the Catherine's Town trail out Spencer Street to where the Stone Quarry or King Cemetery town-road branches off. There the trail branched to the left, going diagonally southward up the rocky west side of South Hill. At a distance of one mile from the valley, where the ascent began, the trail passed the present site of King Cemetery, where Jacob Yapple, one of the first settlers in Ithaca and Danby, is buried. Following along the Buttermilk, Ten Mile, or, as the Cayugas named it, the Sto-ke Creek, meaning probably North Creek, the route reached the site of Danby village.

There a short branch connecting with the Cayuga-Owego trail at Wilseyville turned off. This branch followed southeast down the valley of Danby Creek. Its course along this short tributary of the Catatonk Creek was, strangely enough, nearly the same course taken by the newly laid gasoline pipe-line (1940), running along the southwest base of Eastman Hill.

Bearing south from Danby village, the main trail continued past the west side of what is known as Jennings's Pond, then up the long slope leading to what is known locally as North Bald Hill. The path followed over the high hill, then dipped down and again climbed upward, now following along near the top of a long ridge called South Bald Hill. At the south end of the ridge the path descended a steep slope at a place known as the Point of Rocks, where Michigan Creek flows out of the Hollow. Several rods from there it crossed the south line of Tompkins County. The trail continued on over a fairly level course from the Point of Rocks to Spencer Lake (Ganiatarenge), where the Inlet Valley trail joined.

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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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This trail was used as a direct route south to Tioga Point, now Athens, Pa., where the Chemung and Susquehanna Rivers join. The year 1615 marks the first record of a white man traveling over this route. That man was the Frenchman, Etienne Brulé, who traveled from Carantouan (known as Spanish Hill) at Waverly, N. Y., with five hundred Andastes warriors, to a battle rendezvous in Madison County with Samuel Champlain and his Huron warriors.

One hundred and thirty-five years later, in 1750, two Moravian missionaries, traveling from Bethlehem, Pa., to Cayuga Castle and Onondaga, recorded a detailed account of their journey, part of it over this trail. The description of their journey reveals the hardships then encountered by the traveler in penetrating a wild and unconquered wilderness.



### The Inlet-West Danby Trail

Leading southward from the valley of Ithaca were two Indian trails that led to Spencer Lake (Ganiatarenge), and points beyond. These trails followed separate, though generally parallel routes as far as Spencer Lake, where they joined. The lower, or Inlet Valley trail from Ithaca followed the Catherine's Town trail to a point just south of the Inlet Valley Cemetery on the Ithaca-Elmira highway. There it branched to the left, crossing Enfield Creek close to where it joins Cayuga Inlet Creek. It then continued south toward Spencer, following generally the route of West Danby highway No. 34. The trail in its primitive state must have been exceedingly difficult to travel over. The long rough climb toward West Danby, traversed a dark, narrow valley, filled with boggy places, steep pitches and the debris of fallen timber.

Continuing on through West Danby village, the path joined the Danby, or east branch trail at Spencer Lake.

## The Pony Hollow Trail

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**T**HE PONY HOLLOW TRAIL was one of the lesser known paths. It did not connect with any important trail except where it joined the main trail in Cayuga Inlet Valley. In some places in its upper reaches, the trail penetrated a dark, narrow, swampy hollow; a valley that at one time harbored a remnant of the southern Siouan tribe of Sapony Indians. From the Indian word, Sapony, this locality derived its present known name of Pony Hollow.

To reach this trail from what is now Ithaca, the traveler followed southward over either the east or west branch of the Catherine's Town or Seneca Lake trail. Near the west bank of the Inlet, where Buttermilk Creek joins the main stream, these two branches of the trail met and became a single main trail going south.

Continuing south a quarter of a mile, the trail crossed the site of the Indian village of Coreorgonel (1753-79). There the trail divided, one branch going westward over West Hill to Catherine's Town near Seneca Lake. The other branch continued south past the Inlet Valley Cemetery as does the Ithaca-Elmira highway.

This trail also divided; the Pony Hollow trail branched to the right over the road leading to Enfield. The other branch continued up Inlet Creek through West Danby to Spencer Lake and beyond.

The Pony Hollow trail followed the Enfield road to the present lower north entrance of the Robert H. Treman State Park. There it descended a low bank on the north side of Enfield Creek. It then crossed the broad level ground in front of the entrance to the gorge, to the steep south bank. Here a short climb was encountered, after which the trail reached the present Ithaca-Elmira highway No. 13, near what is known as the Decker farm.

From there, the trail continued toward Newfield Village

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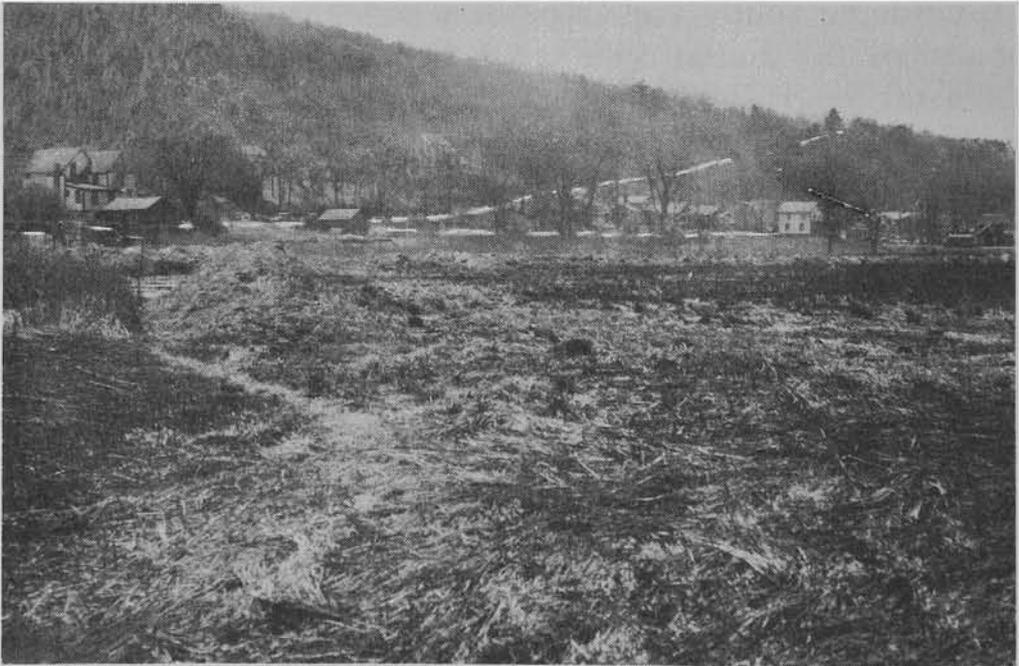
## OLD INDIAN TRAILS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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on approximately the same course taken by the state highway. At Newfield Village the path ran along the eastern base of Key Hill. The west branch of the Inlet or Newfield Creek, was crossed at the south end of the village, and from there the trail continued in the direction of Pony Hollow, as does the present main highway.

The Oneida Indian guides with Col. Wm. Butler's troops must have known of this trail. This was the route taken in September, 1779, from Ithaca to Elmira, by Butler's expeditionary force of 600 men detached from Gen. Sullivan's main army. It was a punitive expedition against the Six Indian Nations, allies of the British, during the Revolutionary War.

I believe that the accounts of their strenuous journey over the rough hills southwest of Ithaca, through what was then an almost impenetrable wilderness, is the first record of white men, to pass through this rugged portion of Tompkins County.



*View of course of the Indian trail leading up the west side of South Hill to Danby and beyond. Trail to Seneca Lake, Inlet Valley, and Pony Hollow, ran along Spencer road at the base of the hill. Col. Wm. Butler, with 600 men, passed this way in Sept., 1779.*

## The Ithaca-Dryden Trail

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A FEW references here and there in old historical writings indicate the existence of an Indian foot-path whose course between Ithaca and Dryden village was generally the same route now followed by the Ithaca-Cortland road, or State Highway No. 13. It is also quite probable that Joseph Chaplin, who built the first authorized state road west into this region (1793-95), followed very closely the course of this trail from Dryden to Ithaca. He merely widened the path by cutting out the brush. It became known as Chaplin's Bridle Road. This roadway, in its primitive state, passed through a dense white pine and hemlock forest that extended from the East Hill of Ithaca almost continuously to Dryden and beyond.

Travel over this primitive highway was so difficult that at some places along the dark, narrow road travelers dismounted and led their horses by the bridle. They referred to the road as the bridle road, a name that is still used today by older residents in the vicinity.

### THE CAYUGA-ONONDAGA TRIBAL BOUNDARY

Separating the Cayuga Nation from the Onondaga Nation was a tribal boundary which was erected by these two member nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, to indicate the jurisdiction of their chieftains respecting hunting rights and matters of local authority.

This tribal boundary extended south from Fair Haven on Lake Ontario to Owasco Lake; and from there it followed nature's outline, the deep valley south, through Moravia, Groton, Freeville, Dryden, and southerly to Owego, where the southern end of the boundary line rested on the Susquehanna River.



# Aboriginal Place Names in Tompkins County

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Gwe-ú-gweh-o-nó-ga, meaning, *People of the Mucky Land*. Iroquois name for the Cayuga Indian Nation

Ne-o-däk'-he-ät, *At the Head of the Lake*.

Ne-o-däk-he'-ät, *The Village at the End of the Lake* (southeast corner). A change of accent changes the meaning.

Co-re-or-gó-nel, Maj. Norris said it is "Call'd Corcargonell," *Where They Keep the Pipe of Peace*. Small village near Buttermilk Falls at Lehigh Valley R. R. crossing; burned Sept., 1779, by Col. Dearborn's troops. Occupied by Tuteloes and other remnants of subject tribes.

De-Ho-Riss-Canadia, another name for the above village; so called by Sgt. Major George Grant of Col. Wm. Butler's troops, Sept., 1779.

Te-da-righ'-roones, subject tribe governed by the Cayugas.

To-tie-ronno, name of village near the head of the lake occupied by the Tedarighroones.

Ka-yegh-tá-la-ge-á-lat, *Valley between Mountains*. Oneida dialect. The valley of Ithaca from the head of the lake southward.

Un-ta-ge-chí-at, South Hill, Ithaca, defined as Prospect Hill, or *From Which a Good View Is Had*, or better, *The End of the Mountain*.

Ti-a-non-ti-á-ou, name given by the Cayugas to the long slope north from North Bald Hill in the town of Danby.

On-och'-so-e, *Cave in the Rock*. Name given by the Cayugas to the southeast corner of Cayuga Lake, near the "Hog Hole."

Te-ho-ti-tach'-ies, one of the Andaste tribes of early times; supposed to have fought a battle against the Cayugas in the south part of the town of Danby, near Spencer Lake (Ganiatarenge).

Sa-pó-ny, southern subject tribe which occupied the valley now called Pony Hollow; present name derived from aboriginal inhabitants.

Stó-ke, believed to be Buttermilk Creek, or Ten Mile Creek. Probable meaning, *North*.

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## ABORIGINAL PLACE NAMES IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

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Nau-gu-eń, or No-go-ene, *Fall Creek*.

Ne-gau-ená, or Noch-wá-i-o, *Place of Rushes or Flags*. Cayuga Inlet.

No-tan-tak'to, *To Go Round the Bend*.

Tee-ga-sto-wé-as, names given to Six Mile Creek.

Tau-ghan-nock, Ta-ghá-nic, Chic-neau-gó-wa, Tschoch-ni-oké, various names given to present Taughannock Creek.

Gi-en-tach'-ne, Salmon Creek, flowing into the east side of Cayuga Lake near Ludlowville.

Ti-a-tach-schi-uńge, or Cat-a-tónk Creek, flowing into Owego Creek.

Ga-non-tach'-a-rage, or Ganowtachgerage, West Owego Creek, between the towns of Caroline and Richford. Has been defined as meaning, *There Lies the Creek, or Path*.

### VARIOUS NAMES GIVEN TO CAYUGA LAKE

Ca-yu-ga Lake, named from the Cayuga Indian Nation which inhabited its shores.

Goy-o-gou-en, name given by French to Cayuga Lake.

Ti-ché-ro, *Place of Rushes*, so called from swamps at each end.

Goí-o-goh, *Mountain Rising from the Water*.

Ga-ni-a-ta-re-ge-chí-at, Cayuga Lake, or, *At the End of the Lake*.

Cá-i-ou-go, earliest English form.

Kihuga, Koiokwen, Caiyoga, Gwengweh, Gajuka, Kyuga; various early spellings, but sound did not vary as much as the spelling.

Acknowledgement is made to the following writers for interpretation of local place names to be found in their works: Lewis Morgan, Rev. W. M. Beauchamp, Gen. John S. Clark, John W. Jordan, David Cusick.



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