



The history of Orange County, New York

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PREFACE

In presenting this new History of Orange County to the public, we do so in the earnest hope that it will prove to be the most complete compilation of local chronicles that has up to this time been offered to our citizens. The authenticity of the facts contained in the various articles is as absolute as the utmost care could make it. The data have been procured from the best known authorities, and the sketches, when completed, have been subjected to the most searching examination for verification and correction. That no errors will be discovered in this production, is too much to hope for; but we do most certainly trust, that if any such errors there be, neither in number nor by their nature, will they be found to be sufficiently important to detract from that character for reliability, which it has been our constant aim and endeavor to impart to this history.

In this new work the design has been, to make clear the development of ideas and institutions from epoch to epoch; the social and economic conditions of the people have been preserved in the narrative, and much attention has been paid to describing the civil characteristics of the several towns and cities, both in the conduct of their local affairs and also in relation to each other and the county at large.

It is a well-known fact that considerable prejudice exists among a great body of the people toward county histories in general, for the reason that some such compilations in the past, have been composed of fact and fiction so intermingled, as to render it a difficult matter to know what was true and what was false. It has been our object in this work to hew straight to the line, satisfied to simply furnish such information as we were able to gather concerning each important matter or interesting event; and where the desired materials were lacking, we have not attempted to supply that lack, by filling in the vacant niches with products of the imagination. We have not striven for effect, but our object is merely to give an authentic account of facts recent and remote, so disposed in a proper and orderly manner, as to enable our readers to clearly understand the history of their county from its origin down to the present day.

It is the limitation attached to all works devoted to general history, that from their very character only a superficial knowledge of the men and their times can be derived from them, while on the other hand, that which they lack is supplied by local histories of this nature, whose great value in adding to the fund of human knowledge cannot be overestimated; for they are the only mediums through which we can get the whole story of the economy of life, practiced by those men and women in every county in our broad land, which eventually resulted in transforming a wilderness into a garden, and from a weak and needy folk, creating a rich and mighty nation. It has long been recognized by every scholar, that the knowledge of such humble elements is absolutely essential, in order that the mind may intelligently grasp the potent factors which go to make up history. Hence, our correct understanding of the advancement and growth of a people varies in just such proportion as the narrative of their daily lives is full or incomplete.

The history of our own county cannot be studied too often; for it is one of great interest, and the record revealed is a proud one. There is no section of the country possessing more of historic interest, nor does one

exist, as closely identified with those crucial events connected with the formative period of the Republic. In this county was held the last cantonment of the Revolutionary army, here Washington passed a large portion of his time, and within our borders he rendered his greatest service to our country.

At the time the army went into winter quarters at Little Britain in 1782, although peace was not declared until the following year, yet it was well understood that the long war was over and the States

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