

Down from the Bookshelf

Selected for Interest in the Mohawk Valley, Palatine Immigrants, and New York State History.

By Clyde J. Getman

Ellis H. Roberts. **The Battle of Oriskany 1777: The Conflict for the Mohawk Valley During the America War of Independence.** Leonaur: Oakpast Ltd, <http://www.leonaur.com>, 2011, 100 p.)

Having talked personally and corresponded with several (or many?) persons who can trace ancestors to residents of the Valley in the 1770s, I can make at least one side comment. They have heard stories and snippets about the battle, visited the sites of the forts and churches in what is now German Flatts and Herkimer, and probably visited the site of the conflict of 06 August 1777. Perhaps some have read the 1936 historical novel by Walter D. Edmonds, **Drums Along the Mohawk**, and the 1939 film adaptation by John Ford (same title) and learned much about Oriskany and even some of their ancestors. When I hear them say "I know all about the battle of Oriskany," I understand what they mean and believe what they are telling me. They do know much about the battle and surrounding events, more than the general reader reviewing briefly the events of the American Revolution.

At the same time I would posit that the person mentioned above knows very little about Oriskany and its place in the American Revolution. This does not include the historians who have searched further into how the events at Oriskany are an important part of American history and the revolution.

In 2022 I attended a regional genealogical conference including members of the major societies of the six New England pre-state colonies and New York . A primary focus was a visit to Fort Ticonderoga. It was amazing/amusing for

this country boy to realize how few attendees were even acquainted with Oriskany.

Ellis Henry Roberts (1827-1918) was born and died in Utica, NY. Educated in Utica and at Yale College, he was a newspaper editor, bank president, member of the NYS Assembly and US Congress, United States Treasurer, and author of several books. While he may not have personally known those who fought at Oriskany, he was certainly acquainted with their families and with others who survived that era.

His story of the battle is relatively brief and covers less than fifty pages in the book. The details are well known and are familiar to the readers of this review. The valuable part of this book is that Roberts has well researched and included as an appendix and the accounts of Fort Schuyler, Oriskany and Bennington. These are materials from British reports and official correspondence between members of government and military officers. Some of them are in the Colonial and Documentary History in the London and Albany archives but are not yet available to this researcher.

A brief summary is plans for a three-prong assault from Montreal down the Hudson to Ticonderoga by Gen John Burgoyne, a move north from New York City by Sir William Howe and a move east along the Mohawk by Lt Col Barry St Leger, all to converge in the Albany-Ticonderoga area, controlling the Hudson and cutting off New England from the remaining colonies. The retreat by St Leger and the change of base to Philadelphia by Howe led to the defeat of Burgoyne and patriot control of the Hudson.

Extracts by Roberts of a variety of sources provide multiple items to flesh out an understanding of events and consequences not readily available to the reader in other places.

Roberts' **The Battle of Oriskany** is an enjoyable and readable contribution for anyone interested in a brief but thorough presentation and is worthy of a place in a Mohawk Valley library.

Getman Genealogy Book Available

A book covering the first six generations of Getmans, starting with Caspar is available. This book was published in 2013. Included in the book are the known descendants of all of the family lines, including daughters.

500 pages in length on 8 ½ x 11 paper this represents countless hours of research by our predecessors as well as input from many current researchers. Printing costs are high, so the print run is small.

The book will be available at a price of \$42.00 per copy plus shipping, of \$5.00 each.

Copies purchased or picked up at the reunion will not have a shipping charge.

Orders with payment should be sent to: Wayne Getman, 2672 Newport Road, Poland, NY, 13431. Checks should be made to Wayne Getman.



How Big is Your Family
Tree ??????

Send Us Your Stories
Share your Getman histories
and traditions with
your cousins, near and far.

wayget@ntcnet.com

Getman News From The Past
The Getman Family

The history of this family is interwoven with the history of Montgomery county, from Revolutionary times till now and the family is spread over a goodly section of the western end of the county, in St. Johnsville, Canajoharie, Fort Plain, Fonda, Tribes Hill, Johnstown. N. Y. and other towns and villages. A genealogy of the family would show them to have entered in most every walk of life, farmers, merchants, lawyers and businessmen of all professions, thereby giving a good cross section of the history of the Mohawk valley.

(Saint Johnsville, New York, ENTERPRISE AND NEWS, Wednesday, February 19, 1936)

Life in Schmidtsdorf or Schmidt's Dorf

Frederick Getman's story, part 8

When Frederick and his step-parents left the pitch camp on the Hudson River they made a difficult trek over the northern foothills of the Catskill mountains (part of the Appalachian Chain located in southern New York State). When they arrived in the Schoharie valley they settled at Schmidt's Dorf (Schmidt's village), named after the primary leader of the settlement. Some records suggest they were at Hartman's Dorf, a neighboring settlement. In all likelihood they were somewhere in between the two, the exact location being unknown. Schmidt's Dorf was located at what is now the village of Schoharie.

Frederick was approximately 19 years of age at the time. His future wife, Maria Bierman, daughter of his now step-father was approximately 14 years of age. The Bierman/Getman family was one of many refugee families who once again in 1713, needed to build homes, clear land and start anew. Mohawk Indians living in the vicinity offered some assistance.

Governor Hunter refused to assist them because he did not want them to leave the pitch camps. Several attempts were made to evict these relocated refugees from their new dwellings. The evictions were not successful and were in at least one instance repelled by the women who had organized in order to

protect the men from prosecution for refusing. Apparently there was a reluctance to arrest the women at the time. Hunter in 1714 granted the land which was occupied by the refugees to wealthy associates who now owned 10,000 acres in the Schoharie Valley. Claims of the Palatine refugees were not considered valid by him and were completely ignored. The new land owners sent representatives to the dorfs informing the settlers that they could either buy the land they occupied or leave. Some agreed to make the purchase, others refused and a stand-off continued. During this period a relatively small group left the Schoharie valley to move to Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania.

In 1720 Governor Hunter was replaced by William Burnet who did not have a contentious history with the Palatines. Under the leadership of Governor Burnet in 1723 arrangements were made for land grants at Stone Arabia and Burnetsfield. The Burnetsfield grant encompassed a significant portion of the western Mohawk Valley where the modern village of Herkimer and city of Little Falls are located. Johannes Beerman (sic) was granted lot # 26, 100 acres at Herkimer and his wife Mary Beerman (sic) was granted lot # 11 at Little Falls.

Hundreds of Palatine refugees were now able to clearly own deeded property and have an uncontested home. They had been "in transit" for at least thirteen years

and could once again start over. This time the move could be permanent.

In the mean time Frederick married Maria Johanna Bierman. The exact date and location are currently unknown, but it was most likely in what is now known as the village of Schoharie by a Lutheran or Dutch Reformed minister. During their married life at Schmidt's Dorf three children were born: Anna Maria Getman, 1721; Anne Eve Getman, 1722 and George Getman 1723.

When Frederick and Maria moved to Burnetsfield they took possession of the land granted to his step-mother, Lot 11, near "the falls". Here they would once again clear the land and build their own home.

Send Us Your Stories

**Share your Getman histories
and traditions with
your cousins, near and far.**

wayget@ntcnet.com

Getman Home Quimby Fund

The Morning Herald, Gloversville - Johnstown, NY
Thursday, June 29, 1916

Endowment Amounting to More Than
Twenty-Seven Hundred Dollars Turned over
to Association.

Under the will of Thomas B. Quimby, a resident of Broad street who died on April 14, 1914. the Helen and David Getman Home for Aged Women will receive an endowment fund of \$2,726.29. This figure was announced yesterday by Attorney Wm. A. MacDonald. who, as executor of the Quimby will, has Just succeeded in closing up the matter of several bequests ordered by the document. The endowment left under the Quimby will is to be known as "The Thomas & and Margaret A. Quimby Foundation Fund." The estate of Mr. Quimby amounted

to considerable more than the endowment fund, but several bequests had to be distributed by the executors as well as the payment of some claims filed against the estate. The endowment fund will be turned over to the Getman Home association at once for investment and the income turned over to the support of the Getman home as soon as possible.

In addition to the endowment fund, the will provides for the turning over to the Getman association of a large quantity of furniture which may be used in fitting the place for its purpose. The matter of settlement of claims against the Quimby estate has been a considerable ordeal for the executor, but he has been able to increase the value during his handling.

The Quimby endowment is the first to be given the Getman home since its creation by the will of the late Captain David Getman Jr. The building is now in possession of the Getman association and an effort is being made to effect an early opening.

Editors Note: this endowment would be worth approximately \$76,000 when converted to today's value.

