

Life of General Philip Schuyler

CHAPTER ONE The Province of New York The Hudson River Manors -The Schuyler Family

FROM the days when Philip Schuyler led his company of provincials in the forest fights of the French and Indian War, until he sat in the Senate of the United States as the representative of the State of New York, there elapsed about forty years.

These years were replete with momentous changes for his country, and with patriotic thought and action on the part of Schuyler.

The victory of Wolfe ended the long and bloody struggle between England and France for supremacy in North America.

Thenceforth the English Colonies, which yet only skirted the Atlantic coast, were free to carry westward their course of empire. And, what was even more important, the colonists, relieved from the threatening pressure of French aggression, were enabled to cast off the paralyzing reliance on the protection of the mother country.

They were inspired to determine reasonably and to assert courageously their rights as free men, finally to wring independence from the powerful England of Pitt, and to establish on enduring foundations a mighty nation.

Those stirring years called as much for high thinking as for gallant fighting, and a patriot in that time had many parts to play.

The province of New York, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was a fringe of settlements on the Hudson River, Manhattan Island and Long Island.

The town of New York, marked by nature as the principal seaport of the Atlantic coast, contained the mass of the population.

Along the banks of the Hudson River, scattered here and there through the

vast expanse of forest, wherever nature offered least resistance to man, rose the farmhouses of Dutch and English settlers.

At the northern end of the great watery highway stood Albany, the headquarters of the fur trade, the gateway to Canada and the western lakes.

As the boy is father to the man, the town of New York in its infancy of fourteen thousand inhabitants presented features which were destined to characterize the city throughout its magnificent growth.

While Boston and Philadelphia were English towns, New York was cosmopolitan from the first.

The Dutch predominated, followed by the English and French.

While the English tongue was steadily making its way as the language of the province, forcing the dominions to adopt it in their churches, Dutch and French were heard on every side.

The same variety prevailed in religion.

The Dutch Reformed, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians had their churches, and a synagogue was not wanting.

The different nationalities, still looking to Europe for their standards of life, kept up as they could the customs and ambitions of the fatherland.

The Dutchman, grown rich through the fur trade or the brewery, built his new house of brick with gable end to the street and roofed it with tiles imported from Holland.

The English merchant or landed proprietor adopted the style which we call colonial with its simple and beautiful front extended toward the street.

Within these doorways were to be found the furniture and the customs of the land still regarded as home. ~

At the foot of Broadway stood Government House, the political and usually the social center.

There the English Governor lived in some state and gathered about him was a little court composed of the provincial aristocracy, the proprietary families, the wealthier merchants, the lawyers, the clergymen and the officers of the garrison.

Among these people was no little social activity, and when, on Sundays and holidays, they gathered to take the air on the Battery or the Mall, the lesser sort were expected not to approach too near.

From this aristocratic circle the social scale descended through the tradesmen, the mechanics, the shifting crowd of laborers and sailors to the negro slaves.

As emigrants arrived, there was no lack of opportunity for employment, and the industrious soon made their way forward to comfort.

On the west side of Broadway, the pretty English and Dutch gardens of the principal houses sloped to the shore of the Hudson River.

The most thickly inhabited district lay on the east side, between the dwellings on Broadway and the warehouses on the East River.

But even here the buildings were detached, and the trees were so numerous that from the deck of the approaching vessel the town seemed built in a wood.

Above Maiden Lane extended farms and orchards, watered by ponds and running streams.

It was for material advancement that the seas had been crossed, and the pursuit of gain was the absorbing thought of the population.

Nothing, as we are told by an intelligent contemporary, was more neglected than reading and education.

While New England, with less wealth, had two colleges, it was not until 1754 that New York saw the founding of King's College.

In the absence of mental cultivation, as reached through books or the arts, the inhabitants had much to stimulate their intelligence.

The problems presented by life in a new country enclosed between the wilderness and the sea, the contest against nature and the effort to establish trade in the face of artificial obstacles, all tended to develop industry, perseverance and ingenuity.

Two great causes of division existed, provocative of much debate and tending to prepare the minds of men for the greater questions of public policy soon to be forced upon them.

These were the struggle for supremacy between aristocratic and democratic sentiments, and, akin to it, the contest between episcopacy and the other Protestant bodies.

The aristocratic traditions of the old world were adhered to by a majority of the upper classes, but some powerful families, like the Delanceys, and the mass of the people were becoming yearly more democratic.

The effort to make the Episcopal church the established religion of the province aroused the strenuous opposition of other religious denominations.

The party lines drawn on these subjects were not wholly decided by wealth.

The proprietor of land, whose ambition was to found a family of which the property and dignity should be entailed, might be a Presbyterian fighting the pretensions of episcopacy.

The Episcopal merchant, maintaining the desirability of a state church, might oppose the aristocratic tendencies of a lord of the manor.

The relations of the province to England contained much that was irritating, and the mental attitude of the people was constantly becoming more independent and self-reliant.

Even in the cabinet at Versailles it was foreseen that England would find it difficult to keep her colonies in subjection when the fall of New France removed the need of protection.

While the busy streets, fine houses and social amusements of New York made it seem a great capital to the country dweller, and a very seat of luxury to the trader emerging from the forest, Albany was a primitive Dutch town, in which homely labors and simple amusements were varied only by the excitements incidental to its frontier position.

The town stood on the side of the hill which formed the west bank of the Hudson, its few streets lined by gabled Dutch houses, some built with great solidity and no little beauty, all neatly kept.

From each roof extended a spout, which in rainy weather cast a small cascade upon the pedestrian.

Each house had the traditional stoop upon which the family sat in the evening exchanging salutations with the passers-by.

A crumbling fort, useless except against Indians, represented the military power.

The church stood prominent as the most important edifice, its windows adorned by the coats of arms of the principal families.

Christenings, marriages and funerals were the chief causes of social reunion or excitement.

The women were absorbed in the ceaseless round of household duties in which they maintained the hereditary standard of Dutch neatness.

Even in the wealthy families, there were no servants except the negro slaves, who were unequal to relieving their mistresses of more than the drudgery.

An ambitious young man took up the career which contained the greatest promise of reward, the fur trade.

For success, he needed all his hardihood and endurance.

It was his perilous task to paddle a canoe, laden with hatchets, blankets, gunpowder, and rum, through the watery highways and byways of the forest; to seek his trade among the distant and roving savages; to paddle homeward his load of peltries, never secure until the canoe floated again upon the safe waters of the Hudson.

When he did not return, his friends could only conjecture, whether the tomahawk of a covetous savage, or the whirling rapids, or the privations of the forest, had caused his end.

Success meant the building of a sloop, the extension of trade to New York, even to the West Indies, the investment of gains in tracts of wild land, which had to be cleared, settled and made a source of income to the now wealthy father of a family.

On the part of both women and men, the circumstances of life called for the cultivation of the qualities of industry and courage, while the intellectual and social side was of necessity neglected.

This was true, only in a less degree, of the aristocracy of the town, the Van Rensselaers, the Schuylers, the Ten Broecks, the Cuylers and other allied families.

It was a virtuous and orderly community, in which the domine had little to do but to expound the Gospel and comfort the sick.

The calm routine of Albany was rudely broken by the French and Indian War.

As the headquarters for northern operations, the town became the rendezvous of scarlet-coated regiments, of boat-builders and militia.

At times, the regular inhabitants seemed lost in the crowd, and the influx of rough men caused such disorders that the Mayor told the English commander that if he would take his men back to New York the Dutch would defend their frontiers themselves.

The dances and plays introduced into the staid society of the place by the officers in garrison upset all the preconceived ideas of propriety, and fears for the spiritual welfare of his flock hastened the death of old domine Frelinghuysen.

Connecting the frontier town of the province with its capital and seaport, flowed the majestic Hudson, the great, almost the only highway for transportation and travel, and the natural feature of the country of the highest interest to the inhabitants.

The sloops which tacked up and down its beautiful course fulfilled all the objects of railway, steamboat and telegraph.

The movement of lumber and produce between the settlements, the exchange of business or social visits sought the pathway of the great river.

It was with a sense of isolation that the inhabitants saw their road to market and to friends closed by the hand of winter; and in the spring, the distant boom which announced the breaking up of the ice was welcomed alike by the trader, the farmer and the inmates of the manor house, who sought a view of the frozen river to watch with pleasurable anticipations the cracking and motion of its surface.

In the cabinets of Versailles and of London, where ministers of state bent over the map of America, the Hudson River, how to use, to gain or to defend it, was the absorbing consideration.

The changes of time have altered the uses and the meaning of the Hudson.

Its beauties and its romance enshrined in the immortal words of Irving, its shores adorned by fruitful farms and noble country seats, the river flows on as of old, a source of pride and pleasure to the living, and a bond of association with the generations of the past who loved to live along its wooded slopes.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, there were four families in the province of New York whose intimate connection with each other and whose common interests on the Hudson River make them a part of the time and events which we are considering.

These were the Van Rensselaers, the Schuylers, the Van Cortlandts and the Livingstons.

The first three were Dutch; the ancestor of the fourth was Scotch, but his descendants had more Dutch than Scotch blood.

All were proprietary families, so connected by marriage, intimacy and business interests that their influence was usually exerted in harmony and was considerable in a community still dominated by aristocratic ideas.

Of these families, the first to be established in New York and the only one which had the advantage of any wealth in the beginning, was that of Van Rensselaer.

In 1629, the Dutch West India Company, which had planted the colony called New Netherland, realized its inability as a purely trading company to settle its territory with agricultural colonists whose presence would give value to the land.

As the population of Holland was not so exuberant as to cause a natural overflow, it was necessary to offer special inducements to emigrants.

The company hoped to shift upon individuals the expenses and risks involved, and in pursuance of that policy, invented the system of patroonships, founded on a national prejudice.

The wealthy Dutch burgher nourished the ambition to rise in the social scale by becoming a proprietor of land and attaining the dignity thereto associated.

In thickly settled Holland, the possibilities in this direction were exceedingly limited.

To this ambition the West India Company offered a feudal lordship in New Netherland on condition of planting and maintaining there a colony of actual settlers.

The offer was accepted in several cases, but in all, except in that of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, the attempt was unsuccessful; the system was soon disavowed by the company, who bought up or abolished the rights already granted to patroons.

They endeavored also to obtain possession of Rensselaerwyck, but were balked by the persistency of that family, who made the sole permanent establishment of a patroonship.

Rensselaerwyck was a tract of land beginning at the mouth of the Mohawk River, extending southward twenty-four miles along the banks of the Hudson, and on either side of that river twenty-four miles east and west.

It contained about seven hundred thousand acres; the present cities of Albany and Troy are within its limits.

The family afterwards became possessed of Claverack, sometimes called the Lower Manor, containing sixty-two thousand acres, the landing place of which is now the town of Hudson.

The territory of Rensselaerwyck was diminished from time to time from various causes, but it remained the largest estate in the province.

Kiliaen Van Rensselaer was a director in the West India Company and a merchant of Amsterdam whose family had formerly possessed a manorial estate in Guilderland, adjoining that of John of Barneveld's family.

He died in 1646 and never visited America.

Nor did his son Johannes, the second patroon, who died young, leaving a son Kiliaen, the third patroon, who came to Albany and received from the English government the patent which changed the patroonship in New Netherland into a manor in the province of New York.

Two years later, in 1687, he died without children.

During the life of the first patroon, the colony was managed by his cousin, Arent Van Corlear, whose dealings with the Indians were so tactful and just that for more than a century afterwards the inhabitants of Albany were personified in their language by the word "Corlear."

He was succeeded by VanSchlechtenhorst, a man who needed all his rude courage to maintain the rights of the patroon against the assaults of Peter Stuyvesant, who, as director general of New Netherland, was hostile to the semi-independence of Rensselaerwyck.

The feudal sovereignty claimed by the patroon and the consequent quarrels with the government at New Amsterdam are illustrated rather amusingly by the following incident.

Govert Lookermans, a well known citizen of NewAmsterdam, brother-in-law of Oloff Stevense VanCortlandt, had been up to the Mohawk River trading with the Indians. On his return he sat smoking at the helm of his little sloop as she drifted slowly by the fort at Rensselaerwyck.

One Nicholas Koorn, lately appointed "watchmeeister", bawled at him from the palisades.

"Strike your Flag!"

"For whom shall I strike?", inquired Lookermans.

"For the staple right of Rensselaerstein!"

"I strike for no man," replied Lookermans contemptuously, "but the Prince of Orange and those by whom I am employed."

Before he could pass out of range a cannon boomed and a shot struck the "princely flag" just above his head.

The wrath of Lookermans lost no strength during the days which elapsed before his peltry laden sloop came to anchor in the East River, and at the report which he carried to the governor, old Stuyvesant stamped his wooden leg with rage.

Three of the younger sons of the first patroon acted in turn as agents.

One of these, Jeremias, lived at Rensselaerwyck for seventeen years and died there.

He married the daughter of Oloff Stevense Van Cortlandt, and one of his daughters married Peter Schuyler.

Until 1695, Rensselaerwyck remained part of the first patroon's undivided estate.

In that year the representative of the older branch of the family in Holland, named Kiliaen, came out to Albany, met the representative of the younger branch, also named Kiliaen, and together they agreed that the older branch should take all the property in Holland and the younger all that in America.

Thus, Rensselaerwyck came into the possession of the children of Jeremias, younger son of the first patroon.

These were Kiliaen, Hendrick and two daughters. Kiliaen, as eldest son, took Rensselaerwyck proper, becoming fourth patroon and second lord of the manor.

Hendrick took the estate of Claverack, and the daughters each received a farm.

When Kiliaen Van Rensselaer came out from Holland to make a settlement with his cousin Kiliaen in America, he was no doubt well pleased with the result.

When he contrasted his life in the advanced civilization of Amsterdam with the problems of existence amidst the forests of the new world, he must have been glad to leave their solution to his relations.

The American Van Rensselaers, although possessing privileges and a vast domain, were far from being placed beyond the common cares and efforts of their fellow colonists.

The land was unproductive without the labor of man.

Slowly tenants were induced to settle at a nominal rent, who would fell the trees, plant wheat among the stumps and raise human dwellings through the hunting grounds of the savage.

Gradually the elk and the deer became less frequent; year by year, the sound of the axe was heard deeper in the forest; one wild stream after another was set to work and its pleasant voice lost in the rasping of the saw.

The colony founded by the enterprising merchant of Amsterdam yielded no profit to him.

The descendants of his younger son reaped the advantage of the efforts and growth of a long series of years.

By the middle of the eighteenth century Rensselaerwyck and Claverack contained many fine farms and a numerous tenantry.

The proprietors lived quiet and uneventful lives, possessing much influence, but taking little part in public affairs.

The Dutch title of patroon clung to the head of the family until 1839, a curious survival of an outgrown past.

Philip Schuyler married a Van Rensselaer of Claverack, his daughter the last patroon, and his son the patroon's sister.

When the ship "Haring" cast anchor off the fort at New Amsterdam in 1637, with supplies and a garrison for the little trading settlement, there landed among the common soldiers one called Oloff Stevense, afterwards known as Van Cortlandt.

Young, poor, ambitious, he had sailed away from Holland to carve out for himself in a distant wilderness a career and a fortune of which he saw small prospect at home.

He soon left his messmates in the fort and entered the civil service of the company, where his education and industry caused his promotion to be keeper of the stores.

The ready money saved in this employment enabled him to begin business for himself.

Trade in furs increased his resources; he established a brewery in Whitehall Street and soon became a leading man, respected as much for his character as for his wealth.

He was successively captain of the train band, one of the Nine Men, the first representative body in the colony, a signer of the Remonstrance to the States General against the tyranny of Stuyvesant, burgomaster, a delegate to Hartford in 1663 to settle the New England boundaries, and one of the commissioners chosen to negotiate with Governor Nichols the surrender of the province to England in 1664.

Before his death, in 1684, he had reached the goal of his ambition, as regarded both his own position and that of his children.

His daughter married Frederick Philipse, the proprietor of the manor at Philipsburg, now Yonkers.

His second son, Jacobus, married Eve Philipse, the heiress of extensive lands in Westchester County, and their daughter was the mother of John Jay.

The eldest son, Stephanus, the founder of the manor of Cortlandt, married Gertruyd, the daughter of Philip Pieterse Schuyler.

Like his father, Stephanus was a man of energy, force and breadth of character, ready to serve his country as well as himself.

He accumulated a considerable property of his own independently of that left him by his father.

In 1677, when thirty-four years old, he was appointed Mayor of New York and was the first native born citizen to hold that office.

In 1680, he became a member of the King's Council and retained his seat until his death, except during the two years of Leisler's usurpation, during which exciting period he was obliged to seek refuge in turn at Albany, in New England and New Jersey.

The absence of legal education in the province caused the appointment of intelligent laymen to judicial positions, and Van Cortlandt sat on the bench as justice of the Supreme Court and as the first judge of the Court of Common Pleas of King's County.

He was always a valued adviser of the English governors, and for many years was entrusted by them with the collection of the provincial revenues.

As soon as his means allowed, Stephanus Van Cortlandt gratified his ambition to become the proprietor of a manor.

He purchased from the Indians a tract on the east side of the Hudson, beginning at the mouth of the Croton River, extending northward to Anthony's Nose and to the eastward twenty miles into the woods, for which he received a patent from William III.

The old manor house still stands, protected by a hill from the north winds and looking southward for many miles over the Tappan zee.

It has always been inhabited by descendants of the founder of the manor, and its hospitality was ever the dependence of travelers journeying up and down the river.

From its veranda George Whitefield preached.

During the Revolution, Franklin, Washington, Rochambeau, Lafayette and Luzerne were its guests.

It is probably the best example of a colonial house built for defense as well as for residence.

Its thick stone walls pierced by loop holes for musketry, the Indian arrow heads which are picked up in its beautiful garden, make it an interesting relic of the past.

Stephanus Van Cortlandt had numerous children who married into the Van Rensselaer, Schuyler, de Peyster, de Lancey, Bayard and Beeckman families.

His youngest daughter, Cornelia, was the mother of General Philip Schuyler.

At the time of the Revolution, the proprietor of the manor was Pierre Van Cortlandt, who, with his son Pierre, rejected the overtures of Governor Tryon and supported with energy the patriot cause.

The father was a member of the first provincial Congress and president of the Committee of Public Safety.

The son became a lieutenant colonel in the continental service.

The Van Rensselaer, Schuyler and Van Cortlandt families had been established for many years in the province when Robert Livingston arrived in 1674, at the same time that Governor Andros came to manage the colony for the Duke of York.

Of worldly goods he brought little or nothing, but a great store of ambition and industry.

His great-grandfather, his grandfather and his father were ministers of the church of Scotland.

His father, banished for nonconformity, passed the last years of his life at Rotterdam, where Robert obtained the familiarity with the Dutch language and people which was so useful to him in America.

Although he was imbued with the religion of his ancestors, its profession did not appeal to his adventurous and acquisitive character.

It was at the age of twenty that he ascended the Hudson River to the frontier town of Albany, and obtained the position of secretary to the commissioners to whom was entrusted the local government.

With a thrift both Scotch and Dutch, he saved enough from his salary and fees to begin trading.

In nine years he was sufficiently well off to make his first purchase of land on the east bank of the Hudson; and in 1683, he married Alyda, daughter of Philip Pieterse Schuyler, and widow of Rev. Nicholas Van Rensselaer.

In 1686, he received the patent erecting his lands into the manor of Livingston.

In 1692, he built a small house above Livingston Creek, but he did not begin to live there until 1711, his official duties requiring his presence at Albany.

He died in 1728.

At the time of the Revolution, several descendants of his were men of exceptional distinction and influence.

These included, William Livingston, of New Jersey; Philip, signer of the Declaration of Independence; Robert R., the chancellor of New York; and Edward, the author of the Louisiana Code.

During the earlier years of the province of New York, before the issues involved in the Revolution were raised, the most important public interest of the inhabitants-the danger which touched them most nearly-was the attitude toward them of the Indian Confederacy called the Six Nations.

Intelligent, ferocious, and jealous of encroachment, these savages lived at the very doors of the province.

They barred the road to the West and were capable of overwhelming the settlements about Albany and on the Hudson River.

Moreover, the almost continuous hostility between the French in Canada and the English colonists gave to this Confederacy a balance of power of which they recognized the full value.

They were able to make the northern portions of the province uninhabitable for white men, and had they given to the French their active alliance, and had they joined the scalping knife of the Iroquois to the cannon of the trained soldier in a united attack, the plans of Frontenac might have been carried out.

The French Governor writing to Versailles, the English to London, bore the same testimony to the efficacy of the barrier between the rival nations which was formed by the Indian Confederacy.

That this bulwark against French invasion was maintained, that good relations with the savages were kept up, that the fur trader could reach the western lakes, and that the Dutchman could sleep securely in Albany, were benefits due chiefly, before 1745, to members of the Schuyler family.

In the wars and the diplomacy of the frontier, that name was most frequently heard, and men who bore it were most conspicuous in the public service.

In 1650, Philip Pieterse Schuyler, the founder of the family, emigrated from Amsterdam to Rensselaerwyck, and soon after married the daughter of Van Schlechtenhorst, the patroon's agent. In 1652, occurred one of the periodical conflicts between the West India Company's soldiers at Fort Orange and the representatives of the patroon.

A son of Van Schlechtenhorst was dragged through the street by soldiers, while the company's commissary stood by, crying, "Let him have it now and the devil take him!"

At this juncture young Schuyler appeared, threw himself lustily into the fight and rescued his brother-in-law in spite of the odds.

His hardihood, enterprise and faith in the future of his adopted country made him a leading and prosperous man.

His pursuit of the fur trade was carried on not only with profit, but with a justice and intelligence which established relations of peculiar confidence between his family and the savage tribes.

His house at The Flatts, a few miles north of Albany, lay directly in the path of the Indians on their way to the town by land or river.

At the house they found a willing hospitality, and on the floor of the barn their dusky forms were stretched almost nightly.

Thus Schuyler and his sons acquired a familiarity with their character and a facility in dealing with them which proved of great value to the province.

A personal feeling of friendship arose on the part of the Indians to which was due the fact that through all the disorders of the border no person at The Flatts, unprotected as it was, received harm from the savages.

The success of Philip Pieterse Schuyler 's business operations can be judged by his investments.

The great possessions of the Van Rensselaers made it necessary for a purchaser of land to go to a considerable distance.

But Philip Pieterse Schuyler secured two fine tracts within the manor; The Flatts which he bought of Richard Van Rensselaer when he returned to Holland, and the large farm on the east side of the Hudson which Joanna de Laet had received from Jeremiah Van Rensselaer in liquidation of her claims to a share of Rensselaerwyck.

In Albany he owned a number of lots besides his house on North Pearl Street.

He had a tract on the Mohawk River and another at Esopus, now Kingston.

He even extended his investments to New York.

There he owned two houses on the corner of Exchange Place and Broadway, one being a great new house, the other a small old one, and the lot on the corner of Rector Street and Broadway.

These properties he gave to his son Brandt and his daughter Gertruyd when they married Cornelia and Stephanus Van Cortlandt.

Philip Pieterse Schuyler died in 1683, and was buried from the old Dutch church where his arms were emblazoned on one of the windows.

Although one of his daughters married the founder of the manor of Livingston, another that of the manor of Cortlandt, and his eldest son the granddaughter of the first patroon, neither he nor his sons seem to have had a similar aristocratic ambition.

According to Dutch traditions, his property was divided equally among all his children, with the full consent of Peter, the eldest, who, under the English law, might have claimed all the lands.

Among the sons and grandsons of Philip Pieterse Schuyler were many who figure in the provincial annals and especially in the records of forest war and negotiation.

The name occurs frequently and always creditably in the stirring narratives of Francis Parkman.

The most distinguished was Peter, who, during the forty years from 1684 to 1724, constantly played a leading part.

Judge of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Mayor of Albany and chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, he was not only a force in his native town, but as a member of the council in New York and three times acting governor, his influence extended over the whole province.

The familiarity with the language and character of the Indians which he acquired as a boy at The Flatts was the basis of a power in dealing with the tribes which had no rival in his time and afterwards was equaled only by the ability of Sir William Johnson.

In the provincial records we often see the figure of this sturdy and tactful Dutchman, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by his brother-in-law, Livingston, and by Van Cortlandt, seated about the council fire, smoking the calumet and punctuating with belts of wampum the figurative oratory of the forest.

The famous Jesuit Joncaire, naturalized among the Senecas and devoting his life to winning over the Six Nations to the interests of France, could not prevail against Peter Schuyler, ascending the Mohawk in his birchbark canoe, following the trail through the wilderness and in every village, "keeping bright the chain of friendship"

From the savages who enjoyed the hospitality of The Flatts; Schuyler obtained information of the ceaseless intrigues of the French, and more than once was able to warn the frontiers of New England of approaching danger.

A picturesque incident in his career occurred in 1710, when, partly to impress the Six Nations with the power of England and partly to excite English interest in the provincial struggles, Schuyler took four Mohawk chiefs to London.

Received as the guests of the nation, fantastically attired by a theatrical costumer, introduced as Kings to Queen Anne by the Earl of Shrewsbury, driven through the streets in royal carriages and made the subject of essays by Steele and Addison, they formed the sensation of the day.

Peter Schuyler could fight as well as negotiate, could lead his savage allies on the warpath as well as hold their allegiance by persuasion.

The annals of the time reveal him enduring the hardships of partisan warfare, crouching at night in a hole scooped out of the snow, before a fire which lit up the faces of companions where ferocity was always present and treachery always to be dreaded.

On one of these occasions, when in pursuit of a Canadian raiding party in the depth of winter, starvation was added to exposure and the danger of hostile rifles.

The hungry Schuyler rose from his bed of hemlock boughs and was searching in the snow for a breakfast of nuts, when he was called to a camp fire where his red allies sat feasting about a steaming kettle.

The kind of men which he had both to command and to fight was shown when a human hand ladled out of the kettle betrayed to Schuyler that a Frenchman slain in the previous day's encounter had furnished the savage meal.

In 1691, when aggressive measures against Frontenac became necessary, Major Schuyler gathered together a force of English, Dutch, Mohawks and Mohegans, in all two hundred and sixty-six men.

He followed that warpath so long familiar to the colonists and often afterwards to be trodden in the French War and the Revolution-up the Hudson, through Lakes George and Champlain and down the Richelieu River to the waters of the St. Lawrence.

The little army built their canoes and fashioned their paddles in the woods, subsisting on the deer, elk and bear which their hunting parties brought into camp.

Leaving his canoes hidden and guarded on the banks of the Richelieu, Schuyler followed the forest trails to La Prairie on the St. Lawrence.

His plans were known to the French, who concerted measures to destroy him.

While the French commander, Callieres, awaited his attack at La Prairie with the greatly superior force of seven hundred men, another body of Canadians and Indians equal to Schuyler's in number, under Valrenne, allowed him to pass by unmolested in the woods, and then, posting themselves on the return path to his canoes, prepared to cut to pieces what might remain of his retreating army.

Between the two hostile forces, Schuyler must win two victories or be utterly destroyed.

It was an hour before daylight when he reached La Prairie.

A French sentinel perceived the shadowy forms of men gliding from tree to tree, shouted "Qui Vive," fired his musket and ran in shouting the alarm.

Callieres was ill and his men seem to have indulged in too much brandy the evening before.

On one side of the fort were encamped the Canadians and Indians, on the other the French regulars.

The former were first attacked and driven with loss into the fort.

The regulars then rushed upon Schuyler's men, who met them with a volley which killed fifty and drove the rest to cover.

Forming again, they made another attack, were again repulsed by a telling fire and were forced to take refuge with the Canadians and Indians in the fort.

Having accomplished his object of inflicting loss and defeat upon a force which he now perceived to be largely superior to his own, Schuyler retreated slowly, cutting down the growing corn as he went, and entered again upon the forest trail which led to his canoes on the Richelieu.

His men had marched all night, had fought their fight in the early dawn, and now at nine o'clock, as they picked their way through the bushes and trees, the forest ahead suddenly resounded with war whoops.

Schuyler's scouts had met those of Valrenne's ambushed force.

Upon a rocky ridge which crossed the trail, the French officer had posted his men, lying three deep behind fallen trees and hidden by bushes.

The charge ordered by Schuyler met with such volleys of musketry as to betray the great strength of the enemy.

Then Schuyler realized the extent of his danger, between the semi-circle of rifles which barred his advance and the avenging enemy which was surely following.

"I encouraged my men," says his terse account, "and told them there was no other choice, fight or die they must, the enemy being between us and our canoes."

The conflict which ensued was reported by Frontenac himself as the most hotly contested ever fought on the border.

Charge after charge was desperately made and furiously repelled, until the combatants mingled together and fought hand to hand.

Many Indians on both sides took to their heels, and the battle was fought out by the whites and the bravest of their savage allies.

"We broke through the middle of their body," reported Schuyler, "until we got into their rear, trampling upon their dead; then faced about them, and fought them until we made them give way; then drove them, by strength of arm, four hundred paces before us; and to say the truth we were all glad to see them retreat."

And it was time, for the forces of La Prairie were approaching to avenge their discomfiture of the morning.

Leaving the dead, the knapsacks and a flag behind them, Schuyler's party reached their canoes with the wounded, and after waiting for stragglers, of whom five came in, they paddled back to Albany.

To the Six Nations, Peter Schuyler was known under the name of "Quider."

According to the Indian habit of impersonating nations and collective powers, the name Corlear was always used to indicate the Dutch or English Governor in New York, and the authorities at Albany continued to be described, long after Schuyler's death, by the word Quider.

The individuals changed, but the treaties were still discussed and concluded with Corlear and Quider.

At the opening of the Revolutionary War, the committee of the continental congress, in seeking the neutrality of the Six Nations, found it expedient to address them as, "We, the representatives of the Congress and the descendants of Quider."

Thus, at this distant and momentous juncture, was Peter Schuyler's departed spirit still present at the council fire in the silent service of his country.

Johannes, a younger son of Philip Pieterse Schuyler, was only less active in public affairs than his distinguished brother Peter.

Indian Commissioner, Mayor of Albany, the envoy of Governor Bellomont to Frontenac in 1798, member of the Colonial Assembly from 1705 to 1713, he was also a fighter.

When Winthrop's expedition against Canada was abandoned, Captain Johannes Schuyler resolved that at least one blow should be struck; and with a party of volunteers he made a successful attack upon La Prairie.

After the fight there, he sat with his band of raiders at dinner in the forest, while the French alarm cannon boomed from fort to fort.

"We thanked the governor of Canada," he wrote in his journal, " for his salute of heavy artillery during our meal."

Johannes Schuyler was the grandfather of General Schuyler and father of the "American Lady" whose memoirs were written by Mrs. Grant of Laggan.

His eldest son, Philip, was living on the family lands at Saratoga, where he was occupied in clearing and settling the surrounding wilderness.

In November, 1745, the French officer Marin, leading a considerable force of Canadians and Indians, made a descent upon the English frontiers.

They approached Saratoga at night, when the inhabitants were unsuspecting of danger, and sleeping.

While the body of the invaders scattered to attack the different houses, a party under an officer named Beauvais surrounded Schuyler's dwelling.

The subsequent occurrences are related in a French manuscript written by a member of the expedition.

"We went to the house of a man named Philip Schuyler, a brave man who would have given us much trouble if he had had with him a dozen men as valiant as himself."

Beauvais, who knew and liked him, went up to the house first, told him his name and asked him to surrender and save himself.

The other replied that he was a dog and that he would kill him, and then fired upon him.

Beauvais repeated his request to surrender, to which Philip answered by firing again.

At last Beauvais, weary of receiving his fire, shot and killed him.

We entered immediately, and everything was pillaged in an instant.

This house was of brick, pierced with loop holes to the ground floor.

Some servants were made prisoners, and it was said that some people who had taken refuge in the cellar were burned.

This Philip was the uncle of General Schuyler, from whom he inherited the Saratoga lands.

Another military Schuyler was Peter, a nephew of Quider, whose father Arent had left him an extensive estate now comprised in the city of Newark, New Jersey.

He was colonel of militia in 1746, and commanded the regiment called the Jersey Blues in the French War.

In 1756, while stationed at Oswego, the outpost on Lake Ontario, he was captured by Montcalm, escaped the Indian massacre which occurred there, and was sent a prisoner to Quebec.

There he distinguished himself by his generosity and kindness to his fellow captives, among whom was Israel Putnam, who had escaped as by a miracle from the slow fire which his savage captors had kindled around him.

Peter served under General Amherst and was present at the events ending in the conquest of Canada.

Although some of the Schuylers established themselves elsewhere, like Arent in New Jersey and Brandt in New York City, the family continued to be identified with Albany.

There were six mayors of the name before 1750.

The original Dutch house of old Quider remained on the corner of State and North Pearl Streets until recent years.

The homestead called The Flatts which Philip Pieterse Schuyler had bought from the Van Rensselaers has never ceased to be inhabited by descendants of his.

The name was derived from the fertile stretch of level meadow land which extends north of Albany along the west bank of the Hudson.

The original house was burned more than a hundred years ago, but portions of the brick walls were left standing, and being rebuilt on the same lines, the house still appears very much as it was.

The frame of the barn is the same as when the Iroquois made it their favorite lodging.

The grounds about the house were the rendezvous of the military parties which the Schuylers led against Canada.

By the door marched the armies in the French War and the Revolution. There were entertained Howe, Abercrombie and Amherst, besides numberless other officers.

There was passed the interesting and hospitable life of Aunt Schuyler, so pleasingly portrayed in the Memoirs of an American Lady.

A few rods to the north of the house is the old family burying ground.

As the visitor enters it, he finds himself in a dense wood.

Unused for many years, nature has been allowed to resume her sway.

Forest trees have grown to maturity; their spreading roots have overthrown headstones and unsettled the foundations of monuments.

A thick undergrowth hides the moss-covered slabs beneath which sleep Quider and his hardy kinsmen.

As the visitor parts the branches to read the names of the dead, he finds here a colonel and there a captain.

In the forest their battles were fought, and now in a forest they lie, close by the banks of their beloved river.