

THE TOWN OF ROOT.

This town was formed from the towns of Charleston and Canajoharie, January 27, 1823, by an act of the Legislature, and named after General Erastus Root, of Delaware county, who was a State senator at the time.

Root has an area of 31,652 acres. Within or upon its borders are the most striking features of the notable scenery which makes Montgomery county, perhaps, the most picturesque section of the Mohawk valley. The hills bordering on the river rise abruptly to a height of six hundred and thirty feet, and from their summits the country spreads out into an undulating upland. The bold promontories below "Spraker's," on opposite sides of the river, have from the earliest times been called the Noses. At this point the Erie Canal and the highway have barely space for their passage between the river and the base of the lofty and romantic steep, whose stony front is but partly covered by vines and evergreens, feebly supported by the scanty soil in the cavities and gorges of the rocks.

The principal streams in the town are tributaries of the Mohawk. Of these Yatesville, (which in a land grant, dated 1727, is called by the Indian name Wasontha,) and Flat creeks are the longest. On the former, one mile below Rural Grove, occurs what is known as Vrooman's Falls, a perpendicular cataract of twenty or twenty-five feet, which, when the stream is in full flow, constitutes a powerful attraction to the admirers of nature. Here many years ago stood the grist-mill of a Mr. Vrooman, whose name is perpetuated in the natural water-power that turned his mill-wheel. The building was carried off bodily by a flood in 1813 and dashed to pieces against a large elm.

A small portion of the course of Flat creek corresponds with its name, while other parts present bolder and more interesting features. The stream flows past an imposing declivity of slate and gravel, and running through romantic ravines, reaches, a mile above Spraker's, a point known as Hamilton's (latterly Sutphen's,) Hollow, where it makes a fall of sixty-five feet. Several persons have prospected for valuable minerals along the creek, and an ore has been found containing fifty per cent. of lead and fifteen of silver, as assayed by the State geologist.

East creek flows into Flat creek from the east, several miles from the Mohawk. On its banks are two saw-mills, and a cheese box, lath, shingle and broom-stick factory. Fly creek flows eastwardly through the southeastern part of the town, and empties into the Schoharie.

In the southern part of the town is situated what is known as the Bear Swamp, covering about forty acres. Out of it issue toward the east and west two streams of about equal volume, one of which once furnished the power for a saw-mill. The swamp contains several dangerous sink holes. It produces—bountifully in some years—whortleberries of a quality elsewhere unknown, growing on bushes from five to seven feet high.

VILLAGES OF THE TOWN.

CURRYTOWN, named from the patentee of Corry's patent, on which it stood, is the oldest center of population within the limits of Root. The sufferings of this unfortunate community during the Revolution, have been elsewhere referred to, especially the remarkable cases of the Dievendorff boys, who survived being scalped and, as was supposed, killed at the time of Doxtader's murderous raid upon the settlement in 1781. Other sufferers by the same attack were the Kellers, Myerses, Bellingers, Tanners and Lewises, who, with the Dievendorffs, were the first settlers in the town. Beside the girl Mary Miller and the boy Jacob Dievendorff, a negro, also named Jacob, two lads named Bellingier, Jacob Myers and his son, and two others were among the prisoners taken by the savages, and upon whom the

tomahawk fell when the retreat of the marauders began. The Indians burned all the buildings but the fort, (which was a stockade enclosing the residence of Henry Lewis,) a log school-house, and the house of a tory named David Lewis, where Henry Voorhees has since lived—about a dozen in all. The oldest son of Rudolf Keller, who lived too far from the fort to think of gaining it, found safety with his family in the woods, though from their retreat they saw the destruction of their home. Peter Bellingier escaped by riding away toward the Mohawk on one of the horses with which he was plowing. A party of savages sharply pursued him and, though they did not overtake the horseman, killed and scalped Jacob Moyer and his father who were cutting timber in the woods. Jacob Dievendorff, father of the boys who showed such wonderful vitality, escaped by throwing himself behind and partly under a log, over which his pursuers passed without seeing him. Of the younger Jacob Dievendorff, who so long survived the loss of his scalp, Mr. Lossing thus speaks in his Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, published in 1851:

"We reached Currytown, a small village nearly four miles south of Canajoharie, at about noon. The principal object of my visit there was to see the venerable Jacob Dievendorff, who with his family was among the sufferers when that settlement was destroyed by Indians and Tories in July, 1781. Accompanied by his son-in-law (Dr. Snow, of Currytown,) we found the old patriot busily engaged in his barn threshing grain; and although nearly eighty years of age he seemed almost as vigorous and active as most men are at sixty. His sight and hearing are somewhat defective, but his intellect, as exhibited by his clear remembrance of the circumstances of his early life, had lost but little of its strength. He is one of the largest landholders in Montgomery county, owning one thousand fertile acres lying in a single tract, where the scenes of his sufferings in early life occurred. In an orchard a short distance from his dwelling the house was still standing which was stockaded and used as a fort. It is fast decaying, but the venerable owner allows time alone to work its destruction, and will not suffer a board to be taken from it."

The venerable man here spoken of died Oct. 8, 1854, at the age of 84, the most wealthy resident of the town. His remains lie in the family burial place with those of his parents, on the homestead farm, which he bequeathed to his grandson, Jacob Dievendorff.

The first post office in this region was at Currytown, and was supplied by a post rider. The first postmaster was Daniel Cuck, the second Walter Conkling, and the third John Bowdish, who received his appointment from President Jackson, in 1832, (when the post office was moved to Rural Grove), and has held the position ever since—an extraordinary tenure of office, singularly at variance with the principles of the President who made the appointment, and speaking well for the merits of the official who received it.

A "Dutch" Reformed church was organized at Currytown about 1790, and a house of worship built in 1809, being dedicated on the 3d of September in that year. The interior of the building was materially changed in 1849, according to the taste of the day, and the spire, which was decaying, was replaced by one of more modern style. A large number of clergymen have officiated in the desk. The present pastor is Rev. E. G. Ackerson, a graduate both of Rutgers College and Theological Institute, New Brunswick, N. J.

At an early period a store was established by John McKernan in the building now owned by Miss Keller, on the corner opposite the residence of the late Dr. Snow. Retiring from mercantile pursuits, Mr. McKernan engaged, about 1820, in the enterprise of building a bridge across the Mohawk at the point now known as Randall. A few months after its com-

pletion a flood floated the structure from its foundations, which are still to be seen in the river when the water is low.

The resident physician at Currytown more than half a century ago, was Daniel Cuck, who owned and occupied the present home of J. D. Snow, and was a popular practitioner of the old school, when the resources of the profession were the lancet and mercury. He was the owner of the first one-horse wagon in this vicinity, which at the time was a great novelty. Dr. Cuck was also engaged in mercantile business in company with C. C. Hubbard. They were also manufacturers of potash from house ashes. Their store was thought to be an extensive institution, though a small affair compared with many mercantile houses of the present. Walter Conkling was for a long period at the head of a country store, doing a flourishing business in the western part of the hamlet.

James Lewis kept a hotel on the site of the residence of the late Dr. S. Snow, fronting the highway leading to Yatesville.

John Hoff for many years carried on the business of manufacturing leather, boots and shoes; John Hicks made farming mills and cabinet ware; F. B. Brumbley was a wagon-maker, and blacksmith shops were equal to the wants of the people.

John G. Ecker officiated as "knight of the goose and shears," cutting wardrobes that vested the farmers in homespun attire from cloth made by the good wives and daughters of sixty years ago.

For many years the village was the central point of town business, where elections and lawsuits were usually held at the leading hotel, kept by Richard Hoff, Boyd Beverly and others. Every branch of business once centering here has been swept away by the ravages of time, and the place is now noted only for its fine farm buildings.

RURAL GROVE is located in the southeasterly part of the town, five miles from the Mohawk, on the Yatesville creek, or "the brook called Wasontha," as it is referred to in an ancient deed. The place was founded by Abram H. Vanderveer, who formed a partnership with Henry Stowits in the year 1828, erecting a dwelling and subsequently a large building for a tannery, which stood on the site of the new residence of Hon. John Bowdish. When the frame of the tannery building was raised, the place was christened by Henry Stowits, who, from the apex of the structure, before throwing the bottle, as then customary on such occasions, named the infant village Unionville. This euphonious title was soon forgotten, and a lady suggested the graceless name of Leatherville, by which the hamlet was known for many years. In the same year a building was erected by Isaac B. Walker, as a hotel, which was kept by him as such for a number of years, and is still a public house, now kept by Henry Van Buren, who has materially improved the buildings.

William A. Covenhoven erected a building for a store, in which John Bowdish and Isaac S. Frost, on the 2d of June, 1829, began the mercantile business. The building is now the property of Mr. Bowdish, who has enlarged it and greatly improved its appearance, and still occupies it as a store with George J. Gove in partnership, the senior partner having held a continuous interest in the business from the beginning, a period of more than forty-eight years.

When the leather manufacture was discontinued, the name which it had given the place became a misnomer. In 1850, a resident began dating his correspondence from Rural Grove, the name being suggested by the grove of elms on the western border of the village. The example was generally followed, and in 1872 the name of the post office was changed from Root to Rural Grove. The office has been held for more than forty-five years by Mr. John Bowdish, and its business has increased with the growth of population and intelligence. Newspapers have multiplied from a mere score to hundreds, and thousands of letters pass through the mails where hundreds did.

Rural Grove is the most important business center in the town. It contains upward of seventy buildings, among them two churches, a school-house, a hotel, a general store, a tin factory and hardware store, two boot and shoe stores and shops, three blacksmith, one carriage, one joiner's and one cooper shop; a buggy-gearing factory, a feed mill, a saw mill, and a cheese factory. It is a pleasant village in a beautiful country.

A Methodist church organization early existed in this vicinity, supplied by itinerant preachers, including Rev. W. H. Starks, and the Rev. Mr. Emerson. In 1845 a church edifice was built by the society, the pulpit of which was at first supplied by the Rev. Mr. Mosher, of Canajoharie. A second Methodist church was built in 1860, three miles distant, and services have always been conducted there by the Rural Grove pastor, who also

ministers to an M. E. church at Argusville, which was organized by Rev. C. A. S. Heath. Rev. Le Grand Jones is the present pastor, living in a parsonage owned by the society.

The "Christian" church of Rural Grove was organized in March, 1854, with Elias Yates, Thomas J. Vanderveer, Jacob I. Vanderveer, Henry C. Hamilton, John Dopp and Henry Shibley as trustees. The church edifice was built in the summer of 1854, and dedicated Nov. 8 of that year, Rev. Obadiah E. Morrell preaching the sermon. Rev. John Ross was the first pastor, and either he or an assistant supplied the pulpit until Dec. 28, 1865, when the church was reorganized upon the accession of 77 members from Charleston Four Corners, who had been dismissed from the church there at their own request. Revs. John Ross and J. J. Twiller officiated on the occasion. Of the new organization Rev. A. A. Lason was first pastor; Ira J. Carr and H. C. Hamilton, deacons; and George J. Gove, clerk. A parsonage was built in 1866. In the spring of 1874 the church was enlarged and improved, at an expense of about \$800, and re-dedicated June 11, the pastor, Rev. J. C. Burgdurf, preaching the sermon. The church has now a membership of 153. The pastor is Rev. R. G. Fenton. A Sabbath-school was organized May 5, 1861, with 65 scholars; present number, 75. Ira J. Carr is superintendent.

SPRAKER'S BASIN.—Among the early settlers south of the Mohawk and west of Flat creek was Maj. George Spraker, who acquired a title to the land on which the village stands from his father, Jost Spraker, and built a tavern which, after his retirement, was kept by a succession of landlords, closing with a Mr. Hart, who was in possession when the building was destroyed by fire. Its foundation walls are still to be seen.

The completion of the Erie Canal was properly the birthday of the village. Trade was introduced by Daniel Spraker, who built a store and warehouse in 1822 and 1823, and engaged in trading and forwarding, officiating in the transfer of freight from this place to a point below the Nose while the canal was incomplete at this spot. A second store was established by Joseph Spencer, near by on the canal, where a formidable business was carried on. Mr. Spencer retiring, John L. Bevins became his successor. When the canal was enlarged, he erected a commodious stone building on its southern bank, where he did business for a number of years, when the property passed into the hands of the Messrs. Cohen, whose descendants still carry on business at the old stand. Not to be left high and dry, as it were, by the change in the line of the canal at its enlargement, Mr. Spraker removed his store to match. After a mercantile life of twenty-eight years he retired, and was succeeded by David Quack-embush.

The present village has four stores, two hotels, two blacksmith, one wagon, two shoemakers', and one harness shop; an insurance agency, a telegraph office, a post office and a church. The latter was built in 1858, on a lot given by the late George Spraker. The village is connected by ferry with the railroad at Spraker's Station. A charter for a bridge was granted several years since, but the capital was not forthcoming. Many years ago, the village had a saw-mill, a carding machine and a fulling-mill.

SUTPHEN'S HOLLOW is a hamlet at the high falls on Flat creek. The place is reached from the east by a rugged declivity. It was originally called Hamilton's Hollow, from Solomon Hamilton, who carried on an extensive business here. In its best days the place had a flouring-mill, a saw-mill, a carding-mill, works for cloth-dressing, a distillery and a number of dwellings. The business establishments were all carried on by Mr. Hamilton, except the distillery, in which Adam Smith, a merchant of Charleston, was interested. The hamlet passed its prime half a century ago, and its present business enterprise is limited to a saw-mill.

FLAT CREEK derived its name from the stream passing along its border. It was for a long time a point where much of the business of the town centred. Years ago, a store was kept by Hibbard & Wessels. Subsequently, John Burns, jr., was in trade here for a number of years. There were for many years one or two hotels, but there is none at present. A Free Will Baptist church is located here, but has no settled ministry. The place has a post office, a school-house, a blacksmith shop, a tannery, a shoe shop, saw and feed mills, a cheese factory and a grocery store; proprietor James M. Wessels, whose house is open to the public on temperance principles.

STONE RIDGE is a collection of houses so called from an elevation near the east border of the town, where cobble-stones have been deposited in such profusion that large quantities have been shipped by canal to different localities, to be used in paving streets.

LYKER'S CORNERS is the name of a group of buildings where for a number of years Cornelius Lyker kept store. A hotel was also built, and managed by Barney Martin, and by others after him. It is now a private residence, and a portion of the other buildings have been converted into a cheese-factory. Elijah Bundy has for a number of years been doing a mercantile business in the place, where there is also a blacksmith and wagon shop. A steam saw-mill, which for a number of years added materially to the business character of the hamlet, has been removed.

BROWN'S HOLLOW is a little village in the southeast part of the town. Here was early erected, by Henry Lyker, a flouring-mill on Flat creek. John Brown bought the concern, and at large expense increased the water-power by building a tunnel a thousand feet in length through the hill, lining it with stone work, which is still in good preservation. The mill was burned many years ago, and rebuilt by Mr. Brown, with three run of stones. It has since had several owners, and is now doing a small business. Half a century ago this was quite a business centre, the most important establishment being an alcohol distillery carried on by A. Ladieu. There were also a saw-mill, a linseed oil mill, a carding-machine and fulling-mill for dressing fabrics made in private houses, and later a store was kept for years by Ira Hoag and others. Only the grist-mill remains.

YATESVILLE is a hamlet on the Erie Canal, in the northeastern part of the town, important chiefly as a point for the shipment of hay, which is sent in great quantities from this town, as also from Glen. Three thousand tons, made in the neighborhood, were shipped from Yatesville during the past year to eastern markets. The place has a grocery store, a school-house, a blacksmith shop and a post office, which is called Randall. In early times John P. Yates, James G. Van Voast and Job B. Hoag were merchants at this point.

BUNDY'S CORNERS is a cluster of buildings taking its name from Stephen Bundy, an old citizen who early established a store, and opened a hotel where Charles Hovey and Stephen Moulton afterward engaged in trade. Barney Vrooman subsequently opened a small store. The business of the hamlet has passed away.

SUPERVISORS.

The supervisors of the town of Root, in the order and with the length of their service as such, have been as follows: David C. Hubbs (who was elected in 1823), five years; Henry Lyker, two; Joshua Young, one; Geo. Spraker, three; John Burns, jr., two; Jacob Vosburgh, two; William C. Hubbs, two; Simeon Snow, two; John L. Bevins, two; Robert Yates, two; Charles Hubbs, nine; Frederick J. Starin, two; Abram Gardinier, one; John Bowdish, two; James W. Lyker, two; Geo. I. E. Lasher, two; Gamaliel Bowdish, two; David Quackenbush, two; Wm. B. Dievendorff, two; Ira J. Carr, two; Samuel Morell, one; Freeman P. Moulton, four; Miles Yates (the present incumbent), one.

HOUSES BOMBARDED WITH ROCKS.

A spur of the Mayfield mountain crosses the Mohawk between the towns of Palatine and Root, and through it the river seems to have cut its way. Between the water's edge and the "Nose" on the west side there is but a limited space, which is occupied by the canal and the highway. At the lower end of the Nose there formerly stood, between the road and the canal, a two-story building, with a small barn, which was erected prior to 1820, as supposed, for hotel purposes, and was occupied by a Mrs. Barrows while the canal was being constructed. To the inmates of this solitary house—for it was the only one for some distance under the mountain—the sun always set at an early hour of the afternoon, and was, indeed, invisible at all hours during the winter months. About 1820 a fragment of rock, weighing perhaps a ton, relaxed its hold a hundred feet above, came thundering down the declivity, and, passing through the side of the house, sank through the floor into the cellar. This happened in the day-time, forty or fifty years ago. A woman stood but a few feet from the path of the bold intruder, working over a wash-tub; though much frightened, she was not injured. Mr. Simms speaks of entering the cellar many years ago to see the reckless visitor. The house remained tenantless for many years, and has finally disappeared.

A few rods above the site of this luckless building, in a bold projection of the bare rock, at least a hundred feet above the road, and unapproach-

able from above or below, was an opening where for many years dwelt, and perhaps still dwells, a large colony of bees. Their safe retreat was a source of no little conversation on canal packet boats forty years ago. It is not known that any one ever had the hardihood to attempt an approach to this unique home of the busy bee.

About a mile below the residence of Barrows, lived a neighbor named Benjamin Willie, whose house was also under a mountain's brow. During the construction of the canal a tremendous blast on the adjacent height sent a heavy fragment of rock upon the roof of Willie's dwelling, which passed down through the floors into the cellar. In its descent it harmlessly swept past Mrs. Willie, who stood at a table kneading bread. Another projectile, from the same blast, fell upon the oven, an out-of-doors affair, then heating to receive the baking, and totally demolished it.

At these points fragments of rock sometimes tumbled into the canal, in the spring, and in its original shallow condition impeded or injured boats; such accidents are not heard of since the enlargement.

A MEMENTO OF NORTHERN SLAVERY.

Among the early records of Root is the following relic of the latter days of slavery in this State:

"Whereas I, Dericke Yates, widow and administratrix of Robert Yates, deceased, am the owner and possessor of a certain black man named George, aged about thirty-five years; and whereas the said George was born a slave by the laws of the State, and is desirous of becoming manumitted, and obtain his freedom: now, therefore, for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to me in hand paid, the receipt whereof I hereby confess and acknowledge, and in conformity to the act entitled 'An Act relating to slaves and servants,' passed March 31st, 1817, I have manumitted and set free the said George, and freely exonerate him from all claims I have or may have to his services hereafter. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this fifth day of April, in the year of our Lord 1835.

her
"DERICKE X YATES. L.S."
mark

"Witness, ISAIAH DEPUY."

MITCHELL'S CAVE.

BY J. R. SIMMS.

Horatio Gates Spafford published in his Gazetteer in 1824 a notice of this cave. The entrance to the cavern was in the margin of woods on Nose Hill, nearly a mile southeast of the Barrows dwelling, then standing under the mountain, and perhaps a mile and a half from Spraker's Basin; the entrance to it was gained by an oval or egg-shaped hole in the rocks. Mr. Spafford said it was named after the late Professor Samuel L. Mitchell, of New York, and the party whose description he copied visited it in July 1821. He says they descended into it by ropes sixteen feet, to an opening eleven feet by thirty, and thirteen feet high; and then through another passage of about twenty feet to another room, and so on to the tenth apartment, which with lateral rooms made thirteen or fourteen in all; and that they supposed they had descended 500 feet. Distance, as I know from experience, seems long in such a place; of course they did not go to any such perpendicular depth from the surface.

The late Captain Beach, principal engineer in constructing this division of the Erie Canal, assured me some twenty years ago, that one or more of his assistant engineers were with the first exploring party. I have at different times conversed with quite a number of persons who have explored this cavern in whole or in part. The most satisfactory description I ever had of it was from Martin Carson, who, with Doctors Reid and Antis, and several other persons, visited it in 1837. His account and that of several others were given to the writer in 1853. All visitors agree that the entrance is small and the passage to the first landing, sloping northward, was difficult, and made by the aid of a rope or a pole. Some parties have carried a coil of rope in exploring it, but we are not certain that the one named did so; and although some have complained that their lights burned dimly in some parts of it, others experienced no difficulty. Rails, branches of trees, etc., were used by early visitors to aid in bridging or passing difficult and dangerous parts of the cavern. In the first room many bats were found.

Said Carson, the passage leading from the second to the third room was the most difficult and dangerous part of the whole descent, there being between those rooms on the north side of the passage, which led along a shelving rock ever wet and slippery, a deep, narrow and perpendicular chasm, which reminded them of the bottomless pit; as stones cast into it sent back their flinty echoes from a depth which they feared to calculate. Great care was necessary in passing this dangerous opening. The exploration of this party, said my informant, ended in the thirteenth room; which was the largest in the cavern, it being a large rotunda with a magnificent dome studded with stalactites, but all of an ashen hue, the characteristic color of all similar formations in this case. The rock formation is gneiss, and only compact dark lime stone affords pure white alabaster concretions from the percolation of water. Carson and friends heard running water, as have other explorers, but met with no water except in little pools in cavities, from which they slaked their thirst. He supposed the rotunda about on a level with the bed of the Mohawk, and two or three hundred feet below the earth's surface.

Here is the account of another party, which visited Mitchell's Cave about forty years ago, whose narrative I also obtained in 1853: The "State scow," with about a dozen hands, had been engaged one forenoon of a warm summer's day in the canal directly below the Nose, wading in the water (then four feet deep), while searching for leaks, such as muskrats might make, and for boulders, which sometimes loosened upon the mountain side and found a lodgment in the canal beneath. Such stone often injured and occasionally sunk a loaded boat at the period under consideration, calling for damages from the State. The captain proposed, after an unpleasant duty, to give his hands the afternoon, and with them explore the mooted wonder of the mountain; a proposition readily accepted. The party not long after rallied at the cave's mouth, and, provided with candles and means to light them, descended by the aid of a pole to the first landing, with the exception of Richard Quackinbush, whose aldermanic dimensions prevented his descent. "Come down, Dick!" shouted his comrades. "I'm coming!" responded the hero of Stone Ridge, but it was no go; and Dick witnessed with sorrow the shadow of his lost brother sailor recede from his view.

After descending with no little hazard and difficulty to the fourth room, which was 18 or 20 feet square, several of their lights were extinguished by the draft, or, as they feared, impurity of the air, and only three of the party, who were provided with a globe lamp—Charles Redgate, James Quant and Noah Fletcher—had the temerity to advance. As they did so, they heard a distant waterfall. Descending for a considerable distance through a narrow passage, said Fletcher, they crawled through a hole about the size of a barrel-head, and emerged on the brink of what, from the light cast upon it by a single lamp, appeared to be a deep and rapid stream, which went thundering far below. At this point, which they supposed was the extent to which any visitor could go, they retraced their steps to join their comrades on *terra firma*, where the Stone Ridge alderman was anxiously awaiting their arrival. Fletcher did not count the number of rooms they visited, nor did he speak of the rotunda, but supposed they had gone down nearly or quite to the bed of the river, a distance of several hundred feet.

It is possible that after severe rains, some rooms in this cavern may be filled with water, which for a time prevents their exploration. Several visitors have spoken to us of the large room or rotunda. Peter I. Newkirk, at the period when it was a fashionable place of resort, in company with Andrew Cromwell, Benjamin Sammons, Daniel Quackinbush, Joseph U. Smith, and others, swelling the number to eleven, explored this cave; six of the number going to the bottom. He saw the names of earlier visitors, which had been written with their fingers in one of the rooms, on the soft coating upon the wall. He spoke of the fourth room as being large, and having in its ceiling or dome a large rock, which seemed threatening to fall. He remembered counting seven rooms, and in the lower one—several hundred feet down—he saw a pool of water. The party with him carried a coil of rope, to use if needed.

When this cave was arresting public attention, Dr. John Laucks, then of Schoharie county, visited it in the hope of getting some fine formations; but was only rewarded with a few ash-colored stalactites, a small specimen of which he presented to the writer. His account agreed with that of others, that a part of it was explored with danger on account of deep chasms, into which if one should fall he would bring up far on his journey toward "Symmes' Hole;" that it contained many apartments of interest to the naturalist, and, like all similar institutions, was only to be explored at the hazard of a sponged coat, with a specimen of the soil thrown in.

Carson, mentioned above, shot a bear in December, 1836, on the Nose, a little south of the Barrows dwelling. Bruin had strayed from the northern wilds, and drawn upon his trail an army of merciless foes. He crossed the Mohawk river for safety, but was no better off, for Carson got on his

track and laid him low. This was one of the last bears killed on the south side of the river, though they have been not infrequently killed in Fulton county within a few years.

ENOCH AMBLER, INVENTOR OF THE MOWING MACHINE.

Enoch Ambler, formerly a resident of the town of Root, has in his possession letters patent granted December 23, 1834, and executed by Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, securing to him the sole right to a machine of his invention for "cutting hay and grain." His discovery embraced nearly all the most important principles embodied in the machines now sold. The driving-wheel, crank-movement and guards protecting the knife were as now produced, but the knife itself was a straight edged blade, instead of the more efficient saw-toothed scythe of the modern machines. Mr. Ambler unfortunately had less success in introducing his machine than in constructing it, and, himself hardly aware of its immense value, allowed his patent to expire without availing himself of it. The invention was revived, and the great fortune and greater fame which the inventor deserved went to another than Mr. Ambler, who is now an humble resident of Fulton county.

A TOWN INSURANCE COMPANY.

The Farmers' Mutual Insurance Association of the town of Root was organized in 1876. Its first officers were: President, William B. Dievendorff; vice president, James P. Van Evera; secretary, Jacob D. Snow; directors, W. B. Dievendorff, Henry D. Riggs, John L. Lipe, J. P. Van Evera, Isaac Reynolds, J. J. Finkell, Jacob D. Snow, Phinnick Winne and John W. Lasher. Amount of property insured, \$410,000, which forms the capital; the stock of the company is subject to taxation for payment of losses; the company's address is Rural Grove.

ANTI-HORSE THIEF SOCIETY.

A society by this title was organized at Rural Grove, Aug. 27, 1870, to protect its members from horse thieves, by procuring their arrest and punishment. In 1875 the society was extended to the towns of Glen and Charleston. It has a written constitution and by-laws. Its present officers are: Jacob M. Stowits, president; John Gordon, vice president; Daniel Spraker, jr., secretary, and John Bowdish, treasurer. The society has a large membership, and a paid in fund to meet expenses.

CHEESE FACTORIES

The Root Cheese Factory, at Rural Grove, is carried on by an association organized Dec. 21, 1866, with a capital of \$4,500, in \$50 shares. The first officers, who have also been re-elected at each succeeding election, were: Ira J. Carr, president; Lewis Bauder, vice president; and Jacob D. Snow, secretary. The factory is a fine wooden building and has a capacity for manufacturing the milk of eight hundred cows, which, however, is considerably above its actual average. The total product of cheese has been 1,560,255 pounds, ranking in quality with that made by the best factories in the county. It has always been well managed and prosperous.

The Flat Creek Factory was built in 1865, by John I. Brown, and was bought in 1867 by a company having a capital of \$3,100, in seventy shares, and governed by nine trustees. Wm. A. Dievendorff is president. The factory is capable of using the milk of seven hundred cows. It is in a flourishing condition, and the stockholders comprise some of the wealthiest men in the town.

Beside the above the Elm Dale and Lyker's Corners factories may be mentioned.

PERSONAL SKETCHES.

HON. CHARLES HUBBS, of Rural Grove, has been town clerk of Root two years, supervisor nine years, justice of the peace twelve years, and was a member of the Assembly in 1850. He is now a notary public, and general scribe and counselor for the people, being well qualified to act as such by his knowledge of business, and the laws relating to it, as well as by the fidelity with which he discharges every trust.

HON. FREEMAN P. MOULTON, of Flat Creek, is one of the self-made men of the town. Though his opportunities for education were limited, his talents and industry were such that he made the most of them, and was appointed by the Board of Supervisors the first superintendent of the public schools in the county. He held the first teachers' institute in the State at Palatine Bridge in 1841. He has been justice of the peace twenty-eight years, supervisor four years, and was in the Legislature in 1863. His official life has been mainly devoted to the interests of the common schools.

DANIEL SPRAKER, jr., of Spraker's Basin, unites a ready business capacity with a literary taste and ability. He has been justice of the peace eight years, justice of sessions three years, and clerk of the Board of Supervisors four years. He is the author of many pleasing contributions to the press, signed "Reporter," "Quill-driver," and "Goosequill." He occupies his father's homestead, a commanding stone house beside the canal at Spraker's Basin.