

INDEX
TO THE
BURIAL PLACES
OF
REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOTS
IN AND AROUND
ONTARIO COUNTY,
NEW YORK

Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION

After the American Revolution, the land now included in Ontario County was sold by the Iroquois to two military and civil service veterans: Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham. Almost immediately, other Revolutionary patriots entered upon the land as real estate agents, farmers, merchants, and craftsmen. It has been conventional wisdom that many veterans of the Sullivan-Clinton expedition (1779) remembered the quality of this land they devastated and returned after the war to live upon it. As a consequence, many patriots of the Revolution were eventually laid to rest within the present boundaries of Ontario County.

Early local histories reveal that there has always been some interest in Revolutionary patriots. Late in the 1800's that interest increased tremendously with the founding of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York. At the turn of the century, renewed interest in the colonial era fortified interest in the Revolution generally. As a result, there have been periodic attempts to locate, preserve, or replace burial markers of Revolutionary patriots. Unfortunately, much of the information about known patriots and their graves has been

buried in local historical or patriotic society archives. Some information has been virtually lost. In a few cases, Revolutionary patriots went to their graves with their deeds almost forgotten.

From time to time, various municipal historians in Ontario County attempted to make a list of the burial places of known patriots of the Revolution. Until the publication of this index, however, the lists have covered no more than a handful of towns and were often incomplete. While there are, undoubtedly, Revolutionary patriots overlooked by this index, it is by far the most comprehensive tool of its kind ever produced for Ontario County. The credit for this accomplishment belongs entirely to the many municipal historians, volunteers and society members who diligently searched their records and furnished the information.

This index provides as much specific information as it was possible to include without unduly cluttering the format. Additional information on most of the individuals listed is available from several sources: The County Historian or Town Historian concerned, the patriotic societies, the National Archives, and a wide variety of published sources including genealogies. Several historical societies in Ontario County maintain extensive archives which may include information on one or more of the people named in this index. The Ontario County Historical Society (Canandaigua) and the Geneva Historical Society have large libraries and full-time staff members who may be of service. The East Bloomfield Historical Society (Bloomfield) has a growing library of family history information and is open-part time. In addition, several public libraries in and around Ontario County hold references which will assist family historical researchers. These libraries can also obtain other books and references, including published genealogies, through interlibrary loan.

In Ontario County, legal records, including deeds, court records, probate documents, and pension records filed locally, are deposited in the Ontario County Records Center and Archive. The Records Center is open to the public during normal business hours and is located on the county complex, County Road #46, in the Town of Hopewell.

This index was produced not only to document the final resting places of Revolutionary patriots, but also to encourage visits to the sites by the general public. It is now more than 200 years since the people listed here contributed the service which insured the independence of the United States. Later, these same people assisted in carving a new culture out of the wilderness. Visiting these grave sites, protecting them, and drawing them to the attention of our children, is one way of repaying the debt we owe the people who rest there.

LIMITATIONS

This index has several limitations. The most important of these is the fact that in the majority of cases, no absolute proof was found (vital statistics, records, etc.) to link a named individual beyond question to a known Revolutionary patriot of the same name. It is believed, on best available evidence, that the people named in this index are patriots. The County Historian's Office did not have the manpower, or funding, to research every name conclusively. This index, in other words, is based on best evidence and ancient testimony. It is not without errors. Corrections are always welcome. The corrections contained in two "addenda" (Nov. 86; Jul. 87) to the first edition of this index are now incorporated in this new edition.

Secondly, there are many patriots of the Revolution buried in Ontario County whose graves are yet unknown. In most cases, existing tombstones do not mention patriotic service. The facts of such service have to be discovered in other sources and the person cited must be traced to a grave. We probably have many tombstones for people whose Revolutionary service has not yet been ascertained. Users of

this index who discover new names are asked to notify the County Historian.

For some Revolutionary patriots, there are no stones to find. Many Revolutionary patriots died almost indigent and were buried in poorly marked graves, often in back lots. The march of time has also taken its toll. Tombstones have often been removed from rural cemeteries for use in building construction, sold as antiques, or vandalized. The weather has been unmerciful to slate and marble stones despite the valiant efforts of local historical societies and municipalities. In a few cases, noted at the back of this index, entire cemeteries have disappeared from view.

Native Americans played an important role in the American Revolution. In the late 1700's and early 1800's, however, their custom did not include the marking of individual graves. We, therefore, have no way of knowing the resting places of Indian veterans of the Revolution, of either side (most in this area sided with the British), beyond the probability of their interment in known burial grounds.

In a few cases, individuals have been included in this list whose graves sites were once visible, but now are not. Where past cemetery readings seemed reliable, and included mention of the grave, it was included in this index. In an effort to minimize this problem in the future, most of the graves listed in this index have been photographed. In some cases, those photographed are in such poor condition that they also will be illegible within a year. The County Historian has copies of the photographs.

It should be noted that there are no female patriots listed in this index. For the first edition of this index, a patriot was defined as anyone who served in the state or Continental forces, or militia, or who served on a Committee of Safety or other official committee, or served as a civil officer or delegate from 1775 to 1783. Rarely did women fit that definition. Patriotism has always constituted more than such outward service, however. Therefore, although no women are included in this index, nominations for future indexes will be accepted on behalf of anyone who rendered "patriotic service" as usually defined by patriotic societies like the DAR, SAR, Colonial Dames, etc. A good starting point for understanding what such "patriotic service" might include is Charles Claghorn's book, *Women Patriots of the American Revolution: a biographical dictionary*. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1991)

Earlier, it was mentioned that this index includes patriots who are interred in Ontario County as it is delineated today. Where a grave is located just across the county line, it is included. However, users should be aware that old documents many mention the service of a veteran from Ontario County when, in fact, the area is not now part of the county. In 1789, Ontario County included all of New York west of Seneca Lake. Consequently, information on a veteran who died in "Lima, Ontario County," for example, might be better located in Livingston County archives.

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