

now to carry to their captors new tokens of their fidelity and allegiance. In truth, no warrior, no soldier, in war or in peace, no itinerant, no discoverer, nor army of any nationality could move to the right or left without passing the field about us, and thus the site we would this day perpetuate. It was the natural and traditional path. The original trail from the brambles and bushes of the Mohawk here terminated, and also the trail which led from the higher grounds and the thicker forests at the west.

Referring to the topographical features of our immediate neighborhood, in early days, two trails or paths lay on either side of the river; one leading to Fort William at the west, the other to a route by the wooded banks of the Black River and thence to Canada. Along this latter trail the French traveled in their overland incursions aimed at the expulsion of the settlers on our northwestern frontiers. As it branched off some ten miles or so to the northwest towards Fort William, it made a more circuitous route to this part of our State than the trail on the south side of the river; of which our own Genesee street, with its numerous stores and palatial houses is merely the development. A few rods to the east of us a little rivulet flowed, and it still flows bearing the present name of Ballou creek; or, as it was called by our Dutch fathers, *Schweïn Fresser Kill*, making its outlet in yonder curve in the broader current of the Mohawk; while a hundred or more feet to the west, on the north bank of the river, Reels creek emptied its babbling waters. Insignificant tributaries to the Mohawk! True, but in their day though secondary streams they had a historic import quite equivalent to the early Tiber, or to the more pellucid current of the Tagus. If the waters of the Adonis were esteemed sacred by the Asiatics, and the Phrygians rendered honors to the Marsyas and the Meander, and the conquering Greek, previous to his ruffling the surface of the Sinde, poured libations into it from golden goblets, every lover of freedom should hold most dear yon streams for the services they have rendered to American growth and to American glory. The meeting of these two humble rivulets, coming down from the cooling springs born in yonder hills, laden with sand and gravel, and entering the river nearly opposite each other, made the Mohawk fordable; and I need hardly say it was the fordableness of the river that constituted the place where we are now assembled the highway of this valley. On the angle of land formed by the south bank of the river, and the west shore of Schweïn Fresser Kill the Fort was located, whose site we this day would mark. Consequently it guarded not merely the river itself,