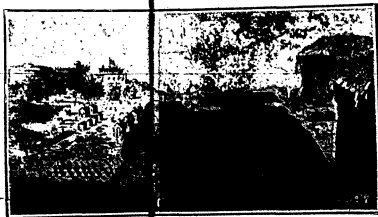


VIEW OF OSWEGO LOOKING NORTH

OSWEGO PAST AND PRESENT

INTERESTING HISTORY OF A HISTORIC PLACE

Views Recalling the Past and Showing the Present



OSWEGO IN 1755

Five years before the pilgrim fathers sailed away from England in 1620, to find a new home where they could worship their religion unmolested, and landed at Plymouth Rock, Samuel de Champlain passed through this section. Whether he stopped at the place which Oswego city covers is not known for a certainty, but he was

soon as their hunting and fishing grounds were taken possession of by the whites. So it is no more than fair that Oswego should claim these Indians as the original settlers of this city and date its origin from that time. From the time of the arrival of Father La Moine and his followers, Oswego has been much in



BRIDGE STREET LOOKING EAST

line between the two, so closely are the events interwoven.

Sieur Du Puys and a band of fifty Frenchmen followed Father La Moine in 1656 and established themselves at Oswego and also penetrated the wilderness as far south as where Syracuse now stands. For some reason the expedition was a failure and returned to Montreal in 1658. The next event was in 1684, when an expedition was ordered against the Senecas, and this is the first instance where a distinguishing name was given to the territory surrounding the mouth of the Oswego river. It was called Choueguen or Ochoueguen.

The first military post was established here in 1724 by the English. It was not a real post, more like a traders' station, and it angered the French, who claimed this territory as their own, and De Louguenil was sent out to order the English away. When



BRIDGE STREET LOOKING WEST

he arrived he found 100 English at a portage four leagues from Lake Ontario, now Fulton, but shortly afterward they left. For many years after this Oswego was a bone of contention between these two nations. Much blood was shed and many lives were lost in the struggle which followed.

The English had had one glance of the deep-flowing river, its natural harbor and its vantage point for trade with the West, and prepared to lay claim to the territory. In 1726 Governor Burnot sent men here to build a stone house and trading post and with this fortification was able to retain possession until 1744. In 1741 £600 was appropriated to build a stone wall and block houses here.

In 1744, when France and England declared war, Oswego was deserted and neither the French or the English had possession for



HARBOR—1892

was quick to see the advantages of holding this port and was among its strongest advocates in the years which followed. In 1748 peace was declared between France and England and Oswego

Another war-cloud was seen to be approaching in 1755 and General Shirley, who came here, left Colonel Mercer in charge with instructions to build two new forts, one on the high ground on the



HARBOR—1775

at that time, but Governor Clinton being aware of the importance of this place, sent Lieutenant John Linsley, founder of Cherry Valley, and a company of soldiers here, and for five years he maintained this post.

In 1745 Sir William Johnson made his first visit here and this noted trader and Indian fighter

became one of the most important ports on the frontier. In 1752 £500 were appropriated for repairs here.

Johnson came here again in 1750, when he was made superintendent of Indian affairs, and in 1754 got an appropriation of £1,300 for repairs and built a fleet of boats here.

east side of the river, to be called Fort Ontario, and the other on the hill top, southwest of the first fortification, which was called Fort Oswego, Choueguen, or Fort Peppersell, and to call it New Fort Oswego or Fort George.

Mercer set to work and his men carried out the instructions of General Shirley to the best of



HARBOR—1869

in this vicinity, and was the first white man to place his foot upon the soil of Oswego county. There is no record that Champlain or any other white man came through here from that time until 1655, when Father La Moine and other members of the Jesuit order were on their way from Montreal to go among the Indians in the interior to convert them to Christianity.

Father La Moine did not know at what place he landed. But the description which this noted priest gives would make one almost certain that their frail bark canoes, when they grounded on the pebbly beach, had found their haven at Oswego. His notes of the trip say it was at a river emptying into the great lake, and that the river was from 100 to 120 paces wide and at its mouth was a village of Indian fishermen. This village was never destroyed until the white man came in numbers and the Indians gave way and fell back into the wilderness, the same as they continued to do in all parts of the United States as

evidence. It has taken a most prominent part in the making of the history of this country, and has been held as the lawful possession of two kingdoms and one republic. It has been the center of military and commercial strife and from 1655 until 1796 it is impossible to draw a distinguishing



OSWEGO IN 1860



HARBOR—1853

their ability. Fort Ontario was completed in 1755, it was 800 feet in circumference, with walls fourteen feet high, a ditch fourteen feet wide and ten feet deep, with barracks for 300 men. Fort George was located where the Allen castle now stands, corner Montcalm and Van Buren streets, but was never completed. It was 170 feet on each of its four sides, with a rampart of masonry and earth twenty feet thick, twelve feet high.

War was declared and Marquis de Montcalm was sent out by the French Governor in Canada to attack and take Oswego. His spies had informed him of the new fortifications which had been erected during the winter and spring



VIEW OF THE WATER, POWER AND MANUFACTURIES ALONG THE OSWEGO RIVER