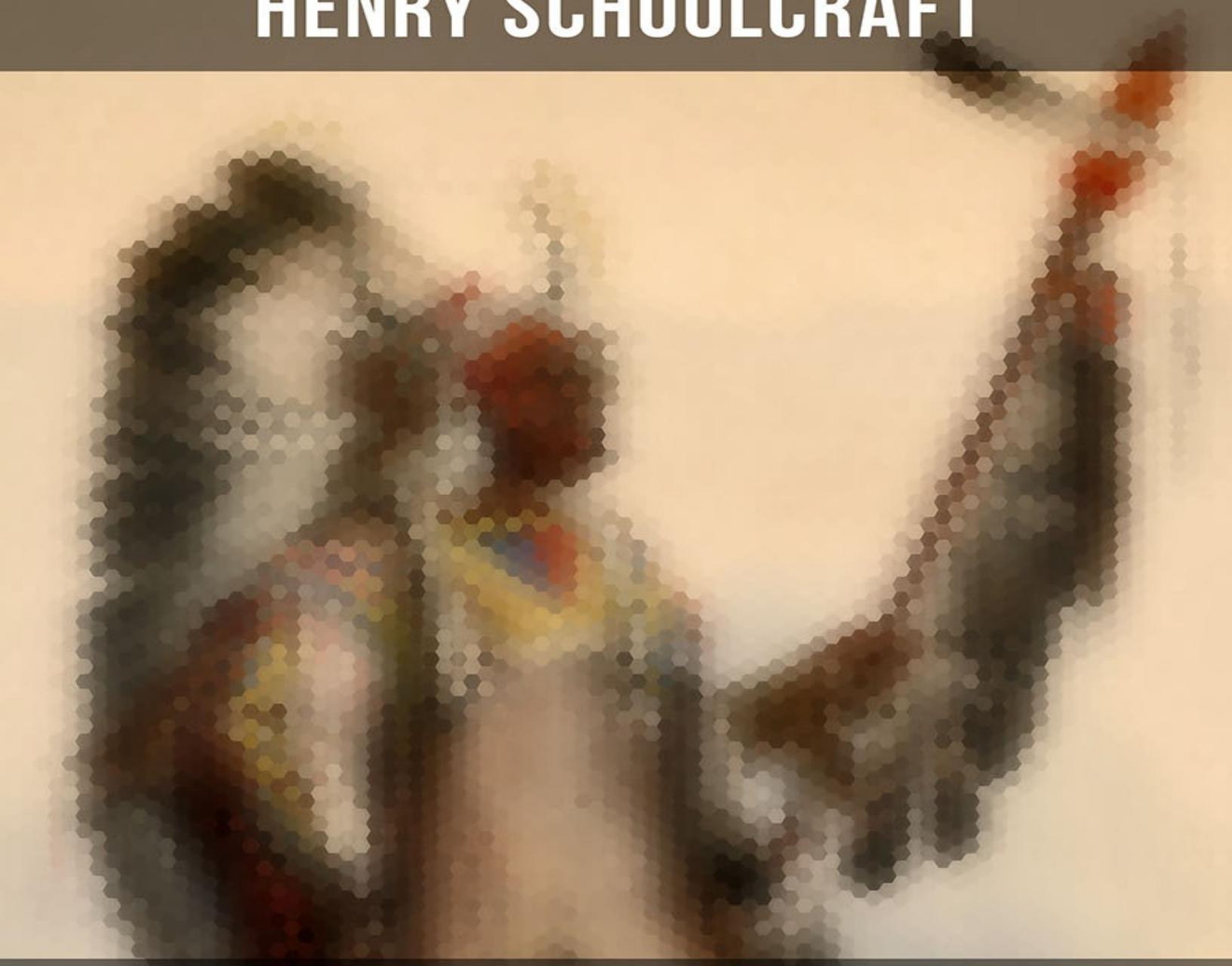
HENRY SCHOOLCRAFT



LIFE WITH THE INDIAN TRIBES ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIERS

Henry Schoolcraft

Life with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontiers

Published by
MUSAICUM
Books

- Advanced Digital Solutions & High-Quality eBook Formatting -

musaicumbooks@okpublishing.info

2021 OK Publishing

EAN 4066338115683

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PREFACE.

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Ten years ago I returned from the area of the Mississippi Valley to New York, my native State, after many years' residence and exploratory travels of that quarter of the Union. Having become extensively known, personally, and as an author, and my name having been associated with several distinguished actors in our western history, the wish has often been expressed to see some record of the events as they occurred. In yielding to this wish, it must not be supposed that the writer is about to submit an autobiography of himself; nor yet a methodical record of his times--tasks which, were he ever so well qualified for, he does not at all aspire to, and which, indeed, he has not now the leisure, if he had the desire, to undertake.

Still, his position on the frontiers, and especially in connection with the management of the Indian tribes, is believed to have been one of marked interest, and to have involved him in events and passages often of thrilling and general moment. And the recital of these, in the simple and unimposing forms of a diary, even in the instances where they may be thought to fail in awakening deep sympathy, or creating high excitement, will be found, he thinks, to possess a living moral *undertone*. In the perpetual conflict between civilized and barbaric life, during the settlement of the West, the recital will often recall incidents of toil and peril, and frequently show the open or concealed murderer, with his uplifted knife, or deadly gun. As a record of opinion, it will not be too much to say, that the author's approvals are ever on the side of virtue, honor, and right; that misconception is sometimes prevented by it, and truth always vindicated. If he has sometimes met bad men; if he has experienced detraction, or injustice; if even persons of

good general repute have sometimes persecuted him, it is only surprising, on general grounds, that the evils of this kind have not been greater or more frequent; but it is conceived that the record of such injustice would neither render mankind wiser nor the author happier. The "crooked" cannot be made "straight," and he who attempts it will often find that his inordinate toils only vex his own soul. He who does the ill in society is alone responsible for it, and if he chances not to be rebuked for it on this imperfect theatre of human action, yet he cannot flatter himself at all that he shall pass through a future state "scot free." The author views man ever as an accountable being, who lives, in a providential sense, that he may have an opportunity to bear record to the principles of truth, wherever he is, and this, it is perceived, can be as effectually done, so far as there are causes of action or reflection, in the recesses of the forest, as in the area of the drawing-room, or the purlieus of a court. It is believed that, in the present case, the printing of the diary could be more appropriately done, while most of those with whom the author has acted and corresponded, thought and felt, were still on the stage of life. The motives that, in a higher sphere, restrained a Wraxall and a Walpole in withholding their remarks on passing events, do not operate here; for if there be nothing intestimonial or faulty uttered, the power of a stern, high-willed government cannot be brought to bear, to crush independence of thought, or enslave the labors of intellect: for if there be a species of freedom in America more valuable than another, it is that of being pen-free.

It is Sismondi, I think, who says that "time prepares for a long flight, by relieving himself of every superfluous load, and by casting away everything that he possibly can." The author certainly would not ask him to carry an onerous weight. But, in the history of the settlement of such a country and such a population as this, there must be little, as well as great labors, before the result to be sent forward

to posterity can be prepared by the dignified pen of polished history; and the writer seeks nothing more than to furnish some illustrative memoranda for that ultimate task, whoever may perform it.

He originally went to the west for the purpose of science. His mineralogical rambles soon carried him into wide and untrodden fields; and the share he was called on to take in the exploration of the country, its geography, geology, and natural features, have thrown him in positions of excitement and peril, which furnish, it is supposed, an appropriate apology, if apology be necessary, for the publication of these memoirs.

But whatever degree of interest and originality may have been connected with his early observations and discoveries in science, geography, or antiquities, the circumstances which directed his attention to the Indian tribes--their history, manners and customs, languages, and general ethnology, have been deemed to lay his strongest claim to public respect. The long period during which these observations have been continued to be made, his intimate relations with the tribes, the favorable circumstances of his position and studies, and the ardor and assiduity with which he has availed himself of them, have created expectations in his case which few persons, it is believed, in our history, have excited.

It is under these circumstances that the following selections from his running journal are submitted. They form, as it were, a thread connecting acts through a long period, and are essential to their true understanding and development. A word may be said respecting the manner of the record which is thus exhibited:--

The time is fixed by quoting exactly the dates, and the names of persons are invariably given wherever they could, with propriety, be employed; often, indeed, in connection with what may be deemed trivial occurrences; but these were thought essential to the proper relief and

understanding of more important matters. Indeed, a large part of the journal consists of extracts from the letters of the individuals referred to; and in this way it is conceived that a good deal of the necessarily offensive character of the egotism of journalism is got rid of. No one will object to see his name in print while it is used to express a kind, just, or noble sentiment, or to advance the cause of truth; and, if private names are ever employed for a contrary purpose, I have failed in a designed cautiousness in this particular. Much that required disapprobation has been omitted, which a ripening judgment and more enlarged Christian and philosophic view has passed over; and much more that invited condemnation was never committed to paper. Should circumstances favor it, the passages which are omitted, but approved, to keep the work in a compact shape, will be hereafter added, with some pictorial illustrations of the scenery.

The period referred to, is one of considerable interest. It is the thirty years that succeeded the declaration of war by the United States, in 1812, against Great Britain, and embraces a large and important part of the time of the settlement of the Mississippi Valley, and the great lake basins. During this period ten States have been added to the Union. Many actors who now slumber in their graves are called up to bear witness. Some of the number were distinguished men; others the reverse. Red and white men alike express their opinions. Anecdotes and incidents succeed each other without any attempt at method. The story these incidentally tell, is the story of a people's settling the wilderness. It is the Anglo-Saxon people occupying the sites of the Indian wigwams. It is a field in which plumed sachems, farmers, legislators, statesmen, speculators, professional and scientific men, and missionaries of the gospel, figure in their respective capacities. Nobody seems to have set down to compose an

elaborate letter, and yet the result of the whole, viewed by the philosophic eye, is a broad field of elaboration.

HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT.
PHILADELPHIA, *Sept. 12th, 1851*.

SKETCHES OF THE LIFE OF HENRY A. SCHOOLCRAFT.

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The early period at which Mr. Schoolcraft entered the field of observation in the United States as a naturalist; the enterprise he has from the outset manifested in exploring the geography and geology of the Great West; and his subsequent researches as an ethnologist, in investigating the Indian languages and history, are well known to the public, and may be appropriately referred to as the grounds of the present design, in furnishing some brief and connected sketches of his life, family, studies, and literary labors. He is an example of what early and continued zeal, talent, and diligence, united with energy of character and consistent moral habits, may accomplish in the cause of letters and science, by the force of solitary application, without the advantage of hereditary wealth, the impulse of patronage, or the *prestige* of early academic honors. Ardent in the pursuit of whatever engaged his attention, quick in the observation of natural phenomena, and assiduous in the accumulation of facts; with an ever present sense of their practical and useful bearing--few men, in our modern history, have accomplished so much, in the lines of research he has chosen, to render science popular and letters honorable. To him we are indebted for our first accounts of the geological constitution, and the mineral wealth and resources of the great valley beyond the Alleghanies, and he is the discoverer of the actual source of the Mississippi River in Itasca Lake. For many years, beginning with 1817, he stirred up a zeal for natural history from one end of the land to the other, and, after his settlement in the West, he was a point of approach for correspondents, as his personal

memoirs denote, not only on these topics, but for all that relates to the Indian tribes, in consequence of which he has been emphatically pronounced "The Red Man's FRIEND."

Mr. Schoolcraft is a native of New York, and is the descendant in the third generation, by the paternal line, of an Englishman. James Calcraft had served with reputation in the armies of the Duke of Marlborough during the reign of Queen Anne, and was present in that general's celebrated triumphs on the continent, in one of which he lost an eye, from the premature explosion of the priming of a cannon. Owing to these military services he enjoyed and cherished a high reputation for bravery and loyalty.

He was a descendant of a family of that name, who came to England with William the Conqueror--and settled under grants from the crown in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire--three separate branches of the family having received the honor of knighthood for their military services.

In the reign of George the Second, consequently after 1727, he embarked at Liverpool in a detachment of veteran troops, intended to act against Canada. He was present in the operations connected with the building of Forts Anne and Edwards, on the North River, and Fort William Henry on Lake George.

At the conclusion of these campaigns he settled in Albany county, N.Y., which has continued to be the residence of the family for more than a century. Being a man of education, he at first devoted himself to the business of a land surveyor, in which capacity he was employed by Col. Vroman, to survey the boundaries of his tract of land in the then frontier settlement of Schoharie. At the latter place he married the only daughter and child of Christian Camerer, one of the Palatines--a body of determined Saxons who had emigrated from the Upper Rhine in 1712, under the assurance or expectation of a patent from Queen Anne.[1] this marriage he had eight

children--namely, James, Christian, John, Margaret, Elizabeth, Lawrence, William, and Helen.

For many years during his old age, he conducted a large school in this settlement, being the first English school that was taught in that then frontier part of the country. This appears to be the only tenable reason that has been assigned for the change of the family name from Calcraft to Schoolcraft.

When far advanced in life, he went to live with his son William, on the New York grants on Otter Creek, in the rich agricultural region south of Lake Champlain--which is now included in Vermont. Here he died at the great age of one hundred and two, having been universally esteemed for his loyalty to his king, his personal courage and energy, and the uprightness of his character.

After the death of his father, when the revolutionary troubles commenced, William, his youngest son, removed into Lower Canada. The other children all remained in Albany County, except Christian, who, when the jangling land disputes and conflicts of titles arose in Schoharie, followed Conrad Wiser, Esq. (a near relative), to the banks of the Susquehanna. He appears eventually to have pushed his way to Buchanan River, one of the sources of the Monongahela, in Lewis County, Virginia, where some of his descendants must still reside. It appears that they became deeply involved in the Indian wars which the Shawnees kept up on the frontiers of Virginia. In this struggle they took an active part, and were visited with the severest retribution by the marauding Indians. It is stated by Withers that, between 1770 and 1779, not less than fifteen of this family, men, women, and children, were killed or taken prisoners, and carried into captivity.[2]

Of the other children of the original progenitor, James, the eldest son, died a bachelor. Lawrence was the ancestor of the persons of this name in Schoharie County. Elizabeth

and Helen married, in that county, in the families of Rose and Haines, and, Margaret, the eldest daughter, married Col. Green Brush, of the British army, at the house of Gen. Bradstreet, Albany. Her daughter, Miss Francis Brush, married the celebrated Col. Ethan Allen, after his return from the Tower of London.

JOHN, the third son, settled in Watervleit, in the valley of the Norman's Kill--or, as the Indians called it, Towasentha--Albany County. He served in a winter's campaign against Oswego, in 1757, and took part also in the successful siege and storming of Fort Niagara, under Gen. Prideaux [3] and Sir William Johnson, in the summer of 1759. He married a Miss Anna Barbara Boss, by whom he had three children, namely, Anne, Lawrence, and John. He had the local reputation of great intrepidity, strong muscular power, and unyielding decision of character. He died at the age of 64. LAWRENCE, his eldest son, had entered his seventeenth year when the American Revolution broke out. He embraced the patriotic sentiments of that era with great ardor, and was in the first revolutionary procession that marched through and canvassed the settlement with martial music, and the Committee of Safety at its head, to determine who was Whig or Tory.

The military element had always commanded great respect in the family, and he did not wait to be older, but enrolled himself among the defenders of his country.

He was present, in 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was read to the troops drawn up in hollow square at Ticonderoga. He marched under Gen. Schuyler to the relief of Montgomery, at Quebec, and continued to be an indomitable actor in various positions, civil and military, in the great drama of the Revolution during its entire continuance.

In 1777, the darkest and most hopeless period of our revolutionary contest, he led a reinforcement from Albany to

Fort Stanwix, up the Mohawk Valley, then alive with hostile Indians and Tories, and escaped them all, and he was in this fort, under Col. Ganzevoort, during its long and close siege by Col. St. Leger and his infuriated Indian allies. The whole embodied militia of the Mohawk Valley marched to its relief, under the bold and patriotic Gen. Herkimer. They were met by the Mohawks, Onondagas, and Senecas, and British loyalists, lying in ambush on the banks of the Oriskany, eight miles from the fort. A dreadful battle ensued. Gen. Herkimer was soon wounded in the thigh, his leg broken, and his horse shot under him. With the coolness of a Blucher, he then directed his saddle to be placed on a small knoll, and, drawing out his tobacco-box, lit his pipe and calmly smoked while his brave and unconquerable men fought around him.

This was one of the most stoutly contested battles of the Revolution. Campbell says: "This battle made orphans of half the inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley." [4] It was a desperate struggle between neighbors, who were ranged on opposite sides as Whig and Tory, and it was a triumph, Herkimer remaining master of the field. During the hottest of the battle, Col. Willett stepped on to the esplanade of the fort, where the troops were paraded, and requested all who were willing to fight for liberty and join a party for the relief of Herkimer, to step forward one pace. Schoolcraft was the first to advance. Two hundred and fifty men followed him. An immediate sally was made. They carried the camp of Sir John Johnson; took all his baggage, military-chest, and papers; drove him through the Mohawk River; and then turned upon the howling Mohawks and swept and fired their camp. The results of this battle were brilliant. The plunder was immense. The lines of the besiegers, which had been thinned by the forces sent to Oriskany, were carried, and the noise of firing and rumors of a reinforcement, animated the hearts of the indomitable men of that day.

After the victory, Herkimer was carried by his men, in a litter, thirty or forty miles to his own house, below the present town of Herkimer, where he died, from an unskillful amputation, having just concluded reading to his family the 38th Psalm.

But the most dangerous enemy to the cause of freedom was not to be found in the field, but among neighbors who were lurking at midnight around the scenes of home. The districts of Albany and Schoharie was infested by Tories, and young Schoolcraft was ever on the *qui vive* to ferret out this most insidious and cruel of the enemy's power. On one occasion he detected a Tory, who had returned from Canada with a lieutenant's commission in his pocket. He immediately clapped spurs to his horse, and reported him to Gov. George Clinton, the Chairman of the Committee of Safety at Albany. Within three days the lieutenant was seized, tried, condemned and hanged. Indeed, a volume of anecdotes might be written of Lawrence Schoolcraft's revolutionary life; suffice it to say, that he was a devoted, enthusiastic, enterprizing soldier and patriot, and came out of the contest with an adjutant's commission and a high reputation for bravery.

About the close of the Revolutionary war, he married Miss Margaret Anne Barbara Rowe, a native of Fishkill, Duchess County, New York, by whom he had thirteen children.

His disciplinary knowledge and tact in the government of men, united to amenity of manners, led to his selection in 1802, by the Hon. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, as director of his extensive glass works at Hamilton, near Albany, which he conducted with high reputation so many years, during which time he bore several important civil and military trusts in the county. The importance of this manufacture to the new settlements at that early day, was deeply felt, and his ability and skill in the management of these extensive works were widely known and appreciated.

When the war of 1812 appeared inevitable, Gen. Ganzevoort, his old commanding officer at Fort Stanwix, who was now at the head of the U.S. army, placed him in command of the first regiment of uniformed volunteers, who were mustered into service for that conflict. His celebrity in the manufacture of glass, led capitalists in Western New York to offer him large inducements to remove there, where he first introduced this manufacture during the settlement of that new and attractive part of the State, in which a mania for manufactories was then rife. In this new field the sphere of his activity and skill were greatly enlarged, and he enjoyed the consideration and respect of his townsmen for many years. He died at Vernon, Oneida County, in 1840, at the age of eighty-four, having lived long to enjoy the success of that independence for which he had ardently thirsted and fought. A handsome monument on the banks of the Skenando bears the inscription

"A patriot, a Christian, and an honest man."

A man who was never governed by expediency but by right, and in all his expressions of opinion, original and fearless of consequences. These details of the life and character of Col. Lawrence Schoolcraft, appeared proper in proceeding to speak of one of his sons, who has for so considerable a period occupied the public attention as an actor in other fields, requiring not less energy, decision, enterprise and perseverance of character.

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was born in Albany County, on the 28th of March, 1793, during the second presidential term of Washington. His childhood and youth were spent in the village of Hamilton, a place once renowned for its prosperous manufactories, but which has long since verified the predictions of the bard--

"That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away."

Its location is on one of the beautiful and sparkling affluents of the Towasentha or Norman's Kill, popularly called the Hongerkill, which he has in one of his occasional publications called the Iósco, from an aboriginal term. That picturesque and lofty arm of the Catskills, which is called the Helderberg, bounds the landscape on the west and south, while the Pine Plains occupy the form of a crescent, between the Mohawk and the Hudson, bearing the cities of Albany and Schenectady respectively on its opposite edges. Across this crescent-like Plain of Pines, by a line of sixteen miles, was the ancient Iroquois war and trading path. The Towasentha lies on the south borders of this plain, and was, on the first settlement of the country, the seat of an Indian population. Here, during the official term of Gen. Hamilton, whose name the village bears, the capitalists of Albany planted a manufacturing village. The position is one where the arable forest and farming lands are bounded by the half arabic waste of the pine plains of the Honicroisa, whose deep gorges are still infested by the wolf and smaller animals. The whole valley of the Norman's Kill abounds in lovely and rural scenes, and quiet retreats and waterfalls, which are suited to nourish poetic tastes. In these he indulged from his thirteenth year, periodically writing, and as judgment ripened, destroying volumes of manuscripts, while at the same time he evinced uncommon diligence at his books and studies. The poetic talent was, indeed, strongly developed. His power of versification was early and well formed, and the pieces which were published anonymously at a maturer period, as "Geehale," and "The Iroquois," &c., have long been embodied without a name in our poetic literature. But this faculty, of which we have been permitted to see the manuscript of some elaborate and vigorous trains of thought, did not impede a decided

intellectual progress in sterner studies in the sciences and arts. His mind was early imbued with a thirst of knowledge, and he made such proficiency as to attract the notice of persons of education and taste. There was developed, too, in him, an early bias for the philosophy of language. Mr. Van Kleeck, a townsman, in a recent letter to Dr. R.W. Griswold, says:--

"I revert with great pleasure to the scenes of my residence, in the part of Albany County which was also the residence of Henry R. Schoolcraft. I went to reside at the village of Hamilton, in the town of Guilderland, in 1803. Col. Lawrence Schoolcraft, the father of Henry, had then the direction of the large manufactories of glass, for which that place was long noted. The standing of young Henry, I remember, at his school, for scholarship, was then very noted, and his reputation in the village most prominent. He was spoken of as a lad of great promise, and a very learned boy at twelve. Mr. Robert Buchanan, a Scotchman, and a man of learning, took much pride in his advances, and finally came to his father and told him that he had taught him all he knew. In Latin, I think he was taught by Cleanthus Felt. He was at this age very arduous and assiduous in the pursuit of knowledge. He discovered great mechanical ingenuity. He drew and painted in water colors, and attracted the notice of the Hon. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, Lt. Governor of the State, who became so much interested in his advancement, that he took the initial steps to have him placed with a master. At an early age he manifested a taste for mineralogy and natural science, which was then (I speak of about 1808) almost unknown in the country. He was generally to be found at home, at his studies, when other boys of his age were attending horseraces, cock-fights, and other vicious amusements for which the village was famous.

"At this time he organized with persevering effort, a literary society, in which discussions took place by the intelligent inhabitants on subjects of popular and learned

interests. At an early age, I think sixteen, he went to the west, and the first that was afterwards heard of him was his bringing to New York a splendid collection of the mineralogy and natural history of the west." [5]

In a part of the country where books were scarce, it was not easy to supply this want. He purchased several editions of English classics at the sale of the valuable library of Dirck Ten Broeck, Esq., of Albany, and his room in a short time showed the elements of a library and a cabinet of minerals, and drawings, which were arranged with the greatest care and neatness. Having finished his primary studies, with high reputation, he prepared, under an improved instructor, to enter Union College. It was at the age of fifteen that he set on foot, as Mr. Van Kleeck mentions, an association for mental improvement. These meetings drew together persons of literary tastes and acquirements in the vicinity. The late John V. Veeder, Wm. McKown, and L.L. Van Kleeck, Esqs., Mr. Robert Alsop, the late John Schoolcraft, Esq., G. Batterman, John Sloan, and other well-known gentlemen of the town, all of whom were his seniors in age, attended these meetings.

Mineralogy was at that time an almost unknown science in the United States. At first the heavy drift stratum of Albany County, as seen in the bed of Norman's Kill; and its deep cuttings in the slate and other rocks, were his field of mineralogical inquiries. Afterwards, while living at Lake Dunmore, in Addison County, Vermont, he revised and systematized the study under the teaching of Professor Hall, of Middlebury College, to which he added chemistry, natural philosophy and medicine. Having now the means, he erected a chemical furnace, and ordered books, apparatus, and tests from the city of New York. By these means he perfected the arts which were under his direction in the large way; and he made investigations of the phenomena of the fusion of various bodies, which he prepared for the press

under the name of Vitriology, an elaborate work of research. Amongst the facts brought to light, it is apprehended, were revealed the essential principles of an art which is said to have been discovered and lost in the days of Tiberius Caesar.

He taught himself the Hebrew and German, with the aid only of grammars and lexicons; and, with the assistance of instructors, the reading of French. His assiduity, his love of method, the great value he attached to time, and his perseverance in whatever study or research he undertook, were indeed indomitable, and serve to prove how far they will carry the mind, and how much surer tests they are of ultimate usefulness and attainment, than the most dazzling genius without these moral props. Self-dependent, self-acting, and self-taught, it is apprehended that few men, with so little means and few advantages, have been in so peculiar a sense the architect of their own fortunes.

He commenced writing for the newspapers and periodicals in 1808, in which year he also published a poetic tribute to a friend, which excited local notice, and was attributed to a person of literary celebrity. For, notwithstanding the gravity of his studies and researches, he had indulged an early poetic taste for a series of years, by compositions of an imaginative character, and might, it should seem, have attained distinction in that way. His remarks in the "*Literary and Philosophical Repertory*," on the evolvement of hydrogen gas from the strata of Western New York, under the name of Burning Springs, evinced an early aptitude for philosophical discussion. In a notice of some archaeological discoveries made in Hamburgh, Erie County, which were published at Utica in 1817, he first denoted the necessity of discriminating between the antique French and European, and the aboriginal period in our antiquities; for the want of which discrimination, casual observers and discoverers of articles in our tumuli are perpetually over-estimating the state of ancient art.

About 1816 he issued proposals, and made arrangements to publish his elaborated work on vitreology, which, so far as published, was favorably received.

In 1817 he was attracted to go to the Valley of the Mississippi. A new world appeared to be opening for American enterprise there. Its extent and resources seemed to point it out as the future residence of millions; and he determined to share in the exploration of its geography, geology, mineralogy and general ethnology, for in this latter respect also it offered, by its curious mounds and antiquities and existing Indian tribes, a field of peculiar and undeveloped interest.

He approached this field of observation by descending the Alleghany River from Western New York to the Ohio. He made Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville centres of observation. At the latter place he published in the papers an account of the discovery of a body of the black oxide of manganese, on the banks of the Great Sandy River of Kentucky, and watched the return papers from the old Atlantic States, to see whether notices of this kind would be copied and approved. Finding this test favorable, he felt encouraged in his mineralogical researches. Having descended the Ohio to its mouth one thousand miles, by its involutions below Pittsburgh, and entered the *Mississippi*, he urged his way up the strong and turbid channel of the latter, in barges, by slow stages of five or six miles a day, to St. Louis. This slowness of travel gave him an opportunity of exploring on foot the whole of the Missouri shore, so noted, from early Spanish and French days, for its mines. After visiting the mounds of Illinois, he recrossed the Mississippi into the mineral district of Missouri. Making Potosi the centre of his survey and the deposit of his collections, he executed a thorough examination of that district, where he found some seventy mines scattered over a large surface of the public domain, which yielded, at the utmost, by a very desultory process, about three millions of pounds of lead

annually. Having explored this region very minutely, he wished to ascertain its geological connection with the Ozark and other highland ranges, which spread at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and he planned an exploratory expedition into that region. This bold and hazardous journey he organized and commenced at Potosi early in the month of November, 1818, and prosecuted it under many disadvantages during that fall and the succeeding winter. Several expert and practiced woodsmen were to have been of this party, but when the time for setting out came all but two failed, under various excuses. One of these was finally obliged to turn back from *Mine au Breton* with a continued attack of fever and ague. Ardent in the plan, and with a strong desire to extend the dominions of science, he determined to push on with a single companion, and a single pack-horse, which bore the necessary camp conveniences, and was led alternately by each from day to day. A pocket compass guided their march by day, and they often slept in vast caverns in limestone cliffs at night. Gigantic springs of the purest crystaline water frequently gushed up from the soil or rocks. This track laid across highlands, which divide the confluent waters of the Missouri from those of the Mississippi. Indians, wild beasts, starvation, thirst, were the dangers of the way. This journey, which led into the vast and desolate parts of Arkansas, was replete with incidents and adventures of the highest interest.

While in Missouri, and after his return from this adventurous journey, he drew up a description of the mines, geology, and mineralogy of the country. Conceiving a plan for the better management of the lead mines as a part of the public domain, he determined to visit Washington, to submit it to the government. Packing up his collections of mineralogy and geology, he ordered them to the nearest point of embarkation on the Mississippi, and, getting on board a steamer at St. Genevieve, proceeded to New

Orleans. Thence he took shipping for New York, passing through the Straits of Florida, and reached his destination during the prevalence of the yellow fever in that city. He improved the time of his quarantine at Staten Island by exploring its mineralogy and geology, where he experienced a kind and appreciating reception from the health officer, Dr. De Witt.

His reception also from scientific men at New York was most favorable, and produced a strong sensation. Being the first person who had brought a collection of its scientific resources from the Mississippi Valley, its exhibition and diffusion in private cabinets gave an impulse to these studies in the country.

Men of science and gentlemen of enlarged minds welcomed him. Drs. Mitchell and Hosack, who were then at the summit of their influence, and many other leading and professional characters extended a hand of cordial encouragement and appreciation. Gov. De Witt Clinton was one of his earliest and most constant friends. The Lyceum of Natural History and the New York Historical Society admitted him to membership.

Late in the autumn of 1819, he published his work on the mines and mineral resources of Missouri, and with this publication as an exponent of his views, he proceeded to Washington, where he was favorably received by President Monroe, and by Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Crawford, members of his cabinet. At the request of the latter he drew up a memoir on the reorganization of the western mines, which was well received. Some legislation appeared necessary. Meantime Mr. Calhoun, who was struck by the earnestness of his views and scientific enterprise, offered him the situation of geologist and mineralogist to an exploring expedition, which the war department was about dispatching from Detroit to the sources of the Mississippi under the orders of Gen. Cass.

This he immediately accepted, and, after spending a few weeks at the capital, returned in Feb., 1820, to New York, to await the opening of the interior navigation. As soon as the lakes opened he proceeded to Detroit, and in the course of two or three weeks embarked on this celebrated tour of exploration. The great lake basins were visited and explored, the reported copper mines on Lake Superior examined, and the Upper Mississippi entered at Sandy Lake, and, after tracing it in its remote mazes to the highest practical point, he descended its channel by St. Anthony's Falls to Prairie du Chien and the Du Buque lead mines. The original outward track north-westward was then regained, through the valleys of the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers, and the extended shores of Lake Michigan and Huron elaborately traced. In this he was accompanied by the late Professor David B. Douglass, who collected the materials for a correct map of the great lakes and the sources of the Mississippi.

It was late in the autumn when Mr. Schoolcraft returned to his residence at New York, when he was solicited to publish his "narrative journal." This he completed early in the spring of 1821. This work, which evinces accurate and original powers of observation, established his reputation as a scientific and judicious traveler. Copies of it found their way to England, where it was praised by Sir Humphrey Davy and the veteran geographer, Major Rennel. His report to the Secretary of War on the copper mines of Lake Superior, was published in advance by the American Journal of Science, and by order of the Senate of the United States, and gives the earliest scientific account of the mineral affluence of the basin of that lake. His geological report to the same department made subsequently, traces the formations of that part of the continent, which gives origin to the Mississippi River, and denotes the latitudes where it is crossed by the primitive and volcanic rocks. The ardor and enthusiasm which he evinced in the cause of science, and his personal enterprise in traversing vast regions, awakened

a corresponding spirit; and the publication of his narratives had the effect to popularize the subject of mineralogy and geology throughout the country.

In 1821, he executed a very extensive journey through the Miami of the Lakes and the River Wabash, tracing those streams minutely to the entrance of the latter into the Ohio River. He then proceeded to explore the Oshawanoe Mountains, near Cave-in-Rock, with their deposits of the fluate of lime, galena, and other mineral treasures. From this range he crossed over the grand prairies of the Illinois to St. Louis, revisited the mineral district of Potosi, and ascended the Illinois River and its north-west fork, the *Des Plaines*, to Chicago, where a large body of Indians were congregated to confer on the cession of their lands. At these important conferences, he occupied the position of secretary. He published an account of the incidents of this exploratory journey, under the title of *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley*. He found, in passing up the river *Des Plaines*, a remarkably well characterized specimen of a fossil tree, completely converted to stone, of which he prepared a descriptive memoir, which had the effect further to direct the public mind to geological phenomena.

We are not prepared to pursue minutely these first steps of his energetic course in the early investigation of our natural history and geography. In 1822, while the lead-mine problem was under advisement at Washington, he was appointed by Mr. Monroe to the semi-diplomatic position of Agent for Indian Affairs on the North-west Frontiers. This opened a new field of inquiry, and, while it opposed no bar to the pursuits of natural science, it presented a broad area of historical and ethnological research. On this he entered with great ardor, and an event of generally controlling influence on human pursuits occurred to enlarge these studies, in his marriage to Miss Jane Johnston, a highly cultivated young lady, who was equally well versed in the English and Algonquin languages, being a descendant, by

the mother's side, of Wabojeeg, a celebrated war sachem, and ruling cacique of his nation. Her father, Mr. John Johnston, was a gentleman of the highest connections, fortune, and standing, from the north of Ireland, who had emigrated to America during the presidency of Washington. He possessed great enthusiasm and romance of character, united with poetic tastes, and became deeply enamored of the beautiful daughter of Wabojeeg, married her, and had eight children. His eldest daughter, Jane, was sent, at nine years of age, to Europe to be thoroughly educated under the care of his relatives there, and, when she returned to America, was placed at the head of her father's household, where her refined dignified manners and accomplishments attracted the notice and admiration of numerous visitors to that seat of noble hospitality. Mr. Schoolcraft was among the first suitors for her hand, and married her in October, 1823.

Mr. Johnston was a fine *belles lettres* scholar, and entered readily into the discussions arising from the principles of the Indian languages, and plans for their improvement.

Mr. Schoolcraft's marriage into an aboriginal family gave no small stimulus to these inquiries, which were pursued under such singularly excellent advantages, and with untiring ardor in the seclusion of Elmwood and Michilimackinack, for a period of nearly twenty years, and, until his wife's lamented death, which happened during a visit to her sister, at Dundas, Canada West, in the year 1842, and while he himself was absent on a visit to England. Mr. Schoolcraft has not, at any period of his life, sought advancement in political life, but executed with energy and interest various civic offices, which were freely offered to him. From 1828 to 1832, he was an efficient member of the Territorial Legislature, where he introduced a system of township and county names, formed on the basis of the aboriginal vocabulary, and also procured the incorporation of a historical society, and, besides managing the finances, as chairman of an appropriate committee, he introduced

and secured the passage of several laws respecting the treatment of the native tribes.

In 1828, the Navy Department offered him a prominent situation in the scientific corps of the United States Exploring Expedition to the South Seas. This was urged in several letters written to him at St. Mary's, by Mr. Reynolds, with the approbation of Mr. Southard, then Secretary of the Navy. However flattering such an offer was to his ambition, his domestic relations did not permit his acceptance of the place. He appeared to occupy his advanced position on the frontier solely to further the interests of natural history, American geography, and growing questions of philosophic moment.

These particulars will enable the reader to appreciate the advantages with which he commenced and pursued the study of the Indian languages, and American ethnology. He made a complete lexicon of the Algonquin language, and reduced its grammar to a philosophical system. "It is really surprising," says Gen. Cass, in a letter, in 1824, in view of these researches, "that so little valuable information has been given to the world on these subjects."

Mr. Duponceau, President of the American Philosophical Society, translated two of Mr. Schoolcraft's lectures before the Algic Society, on the grammatical structure of the Indian language, into French, for the National Institute of France, where the prize for the best essay on Algonquin language was awarded to him. He writes to Dr. James, in 1834, in reference to these lectures: "His description of the composition of words in the Chippewa language, is the most elegant I have yet seen. He is an able and most perspicuous writer, and treats his subject philosophically."

Approbation from these high sources had only the effect to lead him to renewed diligence and deeper exertions to further the interests of natural science, geography, and ethnology; and, while engaged in the active duties of an important government office, he maintained an extensive

correspondence with men of science, learning, and enterprise throughout the Union.

The American Philosophical, Geological, and Antiquarian Societies, with numerous state and local institutions, admitted him to membership. The Royal Geographical Society of London, the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries at Copenhagen, and the Ethnological Society of Paris, inscribed his name among their foreign members. In 1846, the College of Geneva conferred on him the degree of LL.D.

While the interests of learning and science thus occupied his private hours, the state of Indian affairs on the western frontiers called for continued exertions, and journeys, and expeditions through remote regions. The introduction of a fast accumulating population into the Mississippi Valley, and the great lake basins, continually subjected the Indian tribes to causes of uneasiness, and to a species of reflection, of which they had had no examples in the long centuries of their hunter state.

In 1825, 1826, and 1827, he attended convocations of the tribes at very remote points, which imposed the necessity of passing through forests, wildernesses, and wild portages, where none but the healthy, the robust, the fearless, and the enterprising can go.

In 1831, circumstances inclined the tribes on the Upper Mississippi to hostilities and extensive combinations. He was directed by the Government to conduct an expedition through the country lying south and west of Lake Superior, reaching from its banks, which have from the earliest dates been the fastnesses of numerous warlike tribes. This he accomplished satisfactorily, visiting the leading chiefs, and counseling them to the policy of peace.

In 1832, the Sauks and Foxes resolved to re-occupy lands which they had previously relinquished in the Rock River Valley. This brought them into collision with the citizens and militia of Illinois. The result was a general conflict, which, from its prominent Indian leader, has been called the Black

Hawk war. From accounts of the previous year, its combinations embraced *nine* of the leading tribes. It was uncertain how far they extended. Mr. Schoolcraft was selected by the Indian and War Department, to conduct a second expedition into the region embracing the entire Upper Mississippi, north and west of St. Anthony's Falls. He pursued this stream to the points to which it had been explored in 1806, by Lieut. Pike, and in 1820, by Gen. Cass; and finding the state of the water favorable for ascending, traced the river up to its ultimate forks, and to its actual source in Itasca Lake. This point he reached on the 23d July, 1832; but a fraction under 300 years after the discovery of its lower portions by De Soto. This was Mr. Schoolcraft's crowning geographical discovery, of which he published an account, with maps, in 1833. He is believed to be the only man in America who has seen the Mississippi from its source in Itasca Lake to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1839, he published his collection of oral legends from the Indian wigwams, under the general cognomen of *Algic Researches*. In these volumes is revealed an amount of the Indian idiosyncrasies, of what may be called their philosophy and mode of reasoning on life, death, and immortality, and their singular modes of reasoning and action, which makes this work one of the most unique and original contributions to American literature. His love of investigation has always been a characteristic trait.

The writer of this sketch, who is thoroughly acquainted with Mr. Schoolcraft's character, habits, and feelings, has long regarded him the complete embodiment of industry and temperance in all things. He rises early and retires early, eats moderately of simple food, never uses a drop of stimulant, and does not even smoke a cigar. In temperament he is among the happiest of human beings, always looks at the bright side of circumstances--loves to hear of the prosperity of his neighbors, and hopes for favorable turns of character, even in the most depraved.