

**NEW YORK CITY DURING THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION:
BEING A COLLECTION OF
ORIGINAL PAPERS**

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New York City During the American Revolution: Being a Collection of Original Papers by The Mercantile Library Association of N. Y. City

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THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF N. Y. CITY

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NEW YORK CITY

DURING THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

BEING

A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL PAPERS

(NOW FIRST PUBLISHED)

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P R E F A C E .

THE accompanying work, which bears for its title "New York City during the American Revolution," may be considered in some degree as a free-will offering on the part of the Mercantile Library Association to those of our Members and Citizens who, by their contributions, have secured to the Library the possession of those Historical Manuscripts and Documents known as the *Tomlinson Collection*.

It was considered fitting that those whose liberality had been thus displayed toward us, should themselves be made partakers of the benefits they had conferred, and no more appropriate way presented itself to those who had the matter in charge than publishing a few of the documents themselves and putting them in a convenient form for preservation.

For this purpose, such of the papers have been selected as pertained almost exclusively to the city of New York, and by means of them, a series of panoramic views are given of the city, from the Stamp Act Riot in 1765, to the Evacuation by the British in 1783.

During the former part of this time—until September, 1776—the city was the scene of no ordinary excitement. Patriots and loyalists dwelt here together, but the lines which distinguished them were fast being drawn. The British soldiers and the Sons of Liberty were mutually exasperating each other, and their feelings could not be wholly kept in check. It was not then, indeed, that the struggle against foreign usurpation first commenced in this city. It had been going on for well nigh a century. But it was now taking that determined form which was to lead to victory and independence.

During the last seven years of the above period, the city was in the occupancy of the British army. The glimpse that we get of it, at this time, imperfect though it be, has a peculiar interest. Would that some truthful record of all that transpired here during these eventful years might be found and given to the public.

There remains now but to thank those who have contributed in any manner to the interest of the volume. To Mr. Henry B. Dawson, the Historian, is especial credit due for the valuable Introductory Chapter, which embodies a description of the most important localities of New York city and island at the time the volume commences; and to the same gentleman is the reader indebted for, with few exceptions, the historical notes which accompany the several papers.

Interesting biographical sketches have been contributed by John L. Curtenius, Esq., of Buffalo, S. S. Purple, M. D., of New York, and Henry T. Drowne, Esq., also of this city. To Mr. Drowne we are further indebted for copies of several interesting letters written from the city by his grandfather, Dr. Solomon Drowne, of Rhode Island, contributed with the most unaffected modesty and generosity.

To D. T. Valentine, Esq., the invaluable clerk of our Common Council, we are under obligations for the use of the map engraved for one of the annual issues of his "Manual."

The historical student will appreciate the fidelity with

which the original Documents have been followed by the Printer, as regards the spelling, punctuation, and even the manifest errors, which are retained; while the general reader will catch the spirit of the times all the more faithfully from the very want of artificial elegance, which these unpretending letters and narratives display.

MERCANTILE LIBRARY, CLINTON HALL,
JUNE 20, 1861.

NOTE.—The “Tomlinson Collection,” from which the materials for this volume have been drawn, consists of several hundred historical papers relating chiefly to the American Revolution and events immediately connected with it. These documents, comprising public and private correspondence, army rolls, orderly books, and other matter of like nature, with appropriate illustrations, have been brought together, during several years of research, by Mr. Abraham Tomlinson of this city, with the design of having them ultimately placed in some public institution.

The whole collection was offered to the Mercantile Library Association on such terms that it was thought desirable to secure it for the inspection and perusal of its members; and this result has been accomplished through the liberality of friends of the Association. It is proposed, when opportunity favors, to have the most interesting portions of the collection arranged in such a manner as that they can be easily seen and studied.

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