

**WHEATLAND, MONROE
COUNTY, NEW
YORK: A BRIEF
SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY**

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Wheatland, Monroe County, New York: A Brief Sketch of Its History by George E. Slocum

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Geo. E. Stearns



WHEATLAND,

MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY.

BY

GEORGE E. SLOCUM.



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PREFACE.



The greater part of this History of the Town of Wheatland was ready for printing before the death of the author, which occurred on November 13th, 1906. His friends had often urged that the manuscript be sent to the printer, but he had delayed its publication for the reason that he considered it incomplete, especially in regard to the history of Mumford, Beulah and the west end of the town in general.

Since his death additions to some of the chapters have been made from the author's notes and from other authentic sources, and contributions to the early history of Mumford have been given by Miss Margaret Armstrong and Mr. Oliver Allen, Jr., while additional matter relating to Beulah has been prepared by Mrs. Eugene E. Harmon, to all of whom the thanks of the editors are due for their courteous assistance.

While the matter presented in this volume does not give in every respect a full and detailed account of Wheatland and of Wheatland's people, yet it is believed to be accurate as far as it goes and sufficiently complete to warrant publication, if for no other purpose than to gratify the author's many friends, and to serve as a solid foundation for some later historian to build upon.

SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

George Engs Slocum, author of the following historical sketch, was a resident of Scottsville for more than fifty-seven years. He was of mingled English and Dutch ancestry. His father, Matthew B. Slocum, was an Albany merchant in 1817. Later the family moved to Delphi, Onondaga County, New York, where the father continued the business of storekeeper for many years, and where the subject of this sketch was born, June 20, 1824. He was one of a family of eleven children. The necessary outlay for the support of so large a family left a small margin for their education. One of the boys, Henry W. Slocum, secured an appointment to the Military Academy at West Point, and later illustrated the wisdom of the nation in maintaining a school for free military instruction, by four years devoted and brilliant service in his country's defense during the civil war. The other children were not so fortunate in the matter of education, and the boy who later developed a love of historical research and not a little skill in the writing of history, was compelled by force of circumstances to cut short his education, so far as education is dependent upon the training of the schools, at the age of twelve years. He was early put to work to learn the trade of tinsmith in the village of Homer, Cortland County, New York, and in his nineteenth year came to Rochester, New York, and secured employment at his trade.

He lived in Rochester for six years. On December 27, 1848, he married, at Fabius, Onondaga County, Lydia A. Fort. The young couple immediately began housekeeping in Rochester, but in the spring of 1849 they removed to Scottsville, coming by packet-boat on the Genesee Valley canal. Here were born to them four sons, Earl H., G. Fort, Le Roy M. and Mors O., and here they lived together, in mutual helpfulness, for upward of fifty-five years, until the death of Mrs. Slocum on April 22, 1904. To his wife's wise and frugal management of her household, and

to her untiring ministry to her husband's health and comfort, Mr. Slocum justly attributed a large measure of his own success. Mr. Slocum survived her about two and one half years, his death occurring on November 13, 1906, in the 83rd year of his age.

Mr. Slocum early came to realize the importance of an education; like many another man whose opportunities for schooling in early life were meagre, he resolved to educate himself, and it is not too much to say that without the aid of schools, by steady purpose, close application, and extended study and reading, he made himself a well educated man.

He was one of the founders of the Scottsville Literary Society; he was faithful in attendance upon its meetings, and a frequent participant in its proceedings. He never shirked, in the Literary Society or elsewhere. By diligent study, by careful preparation, and by regular participation in the discussions of the Society, he acquired a skill in the presentation of his views, which, added to a certain vein of quiet humor, an occasional quaintness of expression, and a dignified, earnest but genial manner, made his addresses both entertaining and instructive.

Mr. Slocum built up a substantial business as a tinsmith and dealer in stoves and hardware. He retired from active business about 1890, and devoted the latter years of his life to the gathering and arranging of material for the present publication.

Mr. Slocum's knowledge of local history was probably unsurpassed by that of any of his contemporaries. He gave the historical address at the centennial anniversary, in 1889, of the settlement of the town of Wheatland, and in 1899 read a paper on "Rochester in the Forties" before the Rochester Historical Society, of which he was for several years a member. He served the public as collector of tolls on the Genesee Valley canal, as town assessor and as justice of the peace. For many years he was clerk of the Scottsville School district. He was for a time a vestryman and clerk of the vestry of Grace Episcopal Church,

and had also been trustee and treasurer of the Oatka Cemetery Association.

In manner, Mr. Slocum was gentle, courteous and refined. His extreme modesty, both as to his own ability and as to the quality of his work, was a characteristic by which he will be longest and most affectionately remembered.

He did his literary work, as he did all his work, with great care and deliberation, spending much time in revision. He was extremely methodical in his work, as indeed one must be to succeed, even in a modest way, as a writer of history.

His literary style speaks for itself in the following pages. An appreciative estimate of his merit as a writer is embodied in the memorial resolutions adopted by the Scottsville Literary Society. " Earnest, conscientious and painstaking in everything he did, his literary work had a finished quality and showed superior ability. His style was concise and clear, his language well chosen and graceful."

G. F. S.