



## SOME JOTTINGS FROM POUGH- WAGTENOCK.

AUNT JUDY JACKSON.

Now that we have started to write about this Poughwagtenock neighborhood we are reminded that our memorandum concerning Aunt Judy Jackson and her recollections of her childhood days in this neighborhood is still lying in the upper right hand pigeon hole in our desk, where it has been for months. No better time than the present for writing it up for publication!

Aunt Judy Jackson has had her home for a year past with Charles Bershear whose wife is a relative.— She tells us that she is ninety-three years of age. She has a good memory and her general health was good until recently. Her husband, Tom Jackson, has been dead for some years. They lived for a long time at Clintondale. She also lived for a while at Ardonia and when she was a young woman she was a slave in the family of Andries P. LeFevre at Kettleboro. Mr. LeFevre's father Philip bought her of Jeremiah Merritt and gave her to his son Andries P. when he got married. Aunt Judy was at that time about fourteen years of age and it is of the stories that she tells of what happened while she was a girl in Jeremiah Merritt's family at Poughwage-

nock that we will speak in this paper.

Now it must be remembered that the last slaves did not become free in this State until in 1827. Consequently Aunt Judy was twenty-five years of age when she became a free woman. She was first the property of a family named Kortright, who lived on the other side of the mountain. When she was about two years old she and her mother and sister were purchased by Jeremiah Merritt and the Poughwagtenock neighborhood was her home for the next dozen years.

Merritt owned and occupied what is now the county house farm. His brother, Thomas Merritt, lived nearby in a house the site of which is marked only by a well. Here he kept the town poor and Aunt Judy relates that the town poor in those days fared very poorly as compared with present times.

Aunt Judy's life as a slave in the Merritt family was subject to vicissitudes. After a couple of years her mother was sold to another master. Her mistress was subject to the drink habit and would become intoxicated sometimes but did not treat her unkindly. The Merritts were English speaking people and when Aunt Judy was sold to Andries P. LeFevre and moved to Kettleborough, where the Dutch language was still the common speech, it seemed very strange to

her.

When Aunt Judy was a child of about ten years of age the second war between England and the United States broke out. One day as she was driving the cows a detachment of our army, on the way no doubt to Canada, passed along the road. She was terribly frightened at the sight of the soldiers and jumped over the fence but did not run. She stood still, dropping courtesies, as well mannered girls in those days were taught to do. Some of the soldiers spoke teasingly to her but the officer in command spoke kindly and said "You are a good little girl."

Another incident of the time of the war of 1812 Aunt Judy relates with great animation. Her master in the fall had taken her behind him on horseback and started for the mountain to bring up the cattle which had been running at large in the woods. It was growing late in the fall and it was time to bring up the stock for the winter.

Suddenly as they were riding along they came upon an Indian wigwam. Merritt jumped off the horse which he left in her charge and entered the hut. He remained there a long, long time. At last she grew tired and moving up to the wigwam pushed open the door. There were about a dozen Indians sitting on the floor engaged in making baskets. One man who seemed to be the chief had a ring hanging from his nose. Merritt was talking with the Indians and did not go to the mountains to get the cattle that day. Aunt Judy is positive that those Indians were spies who had come to get information they could in the interest of the English Government. She says moreover that Merritt was a Tory and this accounted

(Government). She says moreover that Merritt was a Tory and this accounted for the long talk he was having with the Indians in the wigwam. The visit of the Indians attracted great attention and the people from all the country around went to see them.

We must give hereafter Aunt Judy's recollections of Kettleborough and the ten families of LeFevres who lived there in her young days. We will say this much in advance: that according to her account they were good people.

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- taken from the *New Paltz Independent*, May 18, 1894