



OLD HELLEBERGH
Land of Bitter Conflict
Between Patriot and Tory
Known Later as West Guilderland,
Knowersville and Altamont

STATE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT 1952

Marker #30

Neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother, Patriot against Tory, the lands of West Guilderland were "nests of robbers and hatcheries of treasonable design" (Gregg). More dangerous than the King's Army was the presence of the enemy within the local boundaries of the community, as these furnished information and supplies to the enemy.

When the Revolutionary War looked its bleakest for the Continental Army, the Tories were overt, but as the tide changed many of those faithful to the British Crown tried to climb aboard the Patriot band-wagon. Several Tories even tried to join the local militia in order to be on the winning side.

But the Committee of Correspondence and Safety, set up early in the war years to draft and equip troops and to detect and imprison disaffected Tory spies, recorded in the minutes of their May 2, 1777 meeting: "This Committee having received information that a number of disaffected Persons skulk in and about the Helleburgh and by various insidious means induce many misguided inhabitants to enter into Combinations against the Liberties and Independence of the United States...."

Men from Guilderland in the Third Albany Regiment were empowered to detect suspected Tories and bring them to "Gaol (jail) of Albany County to defeat the proceedings of such Tories." Serving in the Albany Regiment under the command of Colonel Phillip Schuyler to help the cause of freedom and to defeat the Tories were familiar Altamont names: Capt. Jacob VanAernam; Capt. John Groot; Lt. Levi VanAuken; Ensign John VanAernam; Private Michael Berkley; Sgt. Philip Crounse; Ensign Frederick Crounse; Pvt. John W. VanAernam; Pvt. Evert VanAernam; Pvt. Wm. VanAernam; Pvt. Henry VanAuken; Pvt. Peter Westfall; Pvt. John Severse; Pvt. John VanAernam Jr.; Pvt. Peter Lowenstein; Pvt. Claas Sives.

The blue and gold marker honoring the men from Altamont who served their country has disappeared from the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue. The names, however, are permanently etched in the Guilderland landscape.