PREFACE.

Sixty years ago, the territory now embraced in the wealthy and populous County of Jefferson, was an unexplored wilderness, and so little was known of its geography, that in a statistical work of that period,* Black River is said to rise "in the high country near the sources of Canada Creek, which falls into the Mohawk River, and takes its course north west, and then north east, until it discharges itself into the Cataraqui* or Iroquois River, not far from Swegauchee; it is said to be navigable for bateaux up to the lower falls, sixty miles, which is distant from the flourishing settlement of Whitestown twenty-five miles." On none of the early French or English maps is this important stream represented. The period embraced in the following pages, is therefore mostly within the memory of those still living.

The important duty of preserving local history, and recording the minor events that attend the origin of institutions and communities, it too often neglected until a period when truth becomes blended with fable, and the original materials one by one disappearing, leave the analysis of events involved in an impenetrable mist of conflicting traditions, In collecting the materials for this work, original sources of information have been sought, where these could be reached, always preferring to rely upon written or published statements, rather than unaided memory. In the course of these inquiries, the records of the county, and the several towns; of religious and other societies; the files of local papers, and the correspondence of prominent public citizens, the records and documents of land offices, and the archives of the state at Albany, have been consulted. Every town and village has been visited by the author, and personal interviews obtained with great numbers of prominent citizens and pioneers. The relative value to be attached to these several sources of information, has been carefully examined, with the earnest desire to arrive at a correct knowledge of the varied subjects that make up the following volume. While sectional, political, or personal interests have been carefully avoided,'it has been our highest ambition