

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PATENTEES OF MAGHAGHKEMECK.

1696-1756.

THE early occupation of land in the province of New York remote from the Hudson River was effected by certain colonists in order that they might enjoy the advantage of bartering with the Indians for the skins of fur-bearing animals in localities contiguous to the hunting and trapping grounds of the savages. At such places these enterprising frontiersmen were farther removed from the observation and competition of the agents of the fur-merchants, called by the French runners of the woods (*courriers du bois*), and by the Dutch *bosh-loopers*, who, by promises of numerous gifts and compensatory goods, had for many years enticed the Indians to carry their beaver, otter, mink, and other skins to the peltry dealers' stores at Albany, Kingston, or New York.

In the ninth decade of the seventeenth century, the western part of the present territory of Orange County, New York, was so vaguely known under the descriptive name of "*Minnessinck*" or "the Land of Bacham" (*Minnessinck ofte 't Landt van Bacham*), that a person unacquainted with the county's later geographical area would fail to comprehend with any clearness the situation of that part of the South or Delaware River which was then regarded as forming its western limit. As described in the act of Assembly of November 1, 1683, erecting it, Orange County stretched from the Hudson River along the "bounds of East and West Jersey," and extended "westward into the woods as far as Delaware River." The same want of comprehension would exist regarding the situation of the southern boundary of Orange County, for at that time the northern limits of East Jersey were still undetermined.

As delineated on the map of New Netherland made in 1656 (page 64), the *Zoudt Rivier* (the Delaware) had its rise in the country of "*Minnessinck*," or the Land of Bacham, "and had represented the Great Esopus River (*Groote Esopus Rivier*), as a tributary, but which, as now better known as Esopus Creek, did not flow into the Delaware, but into the Hudson. This frontier region, which had obtained the name of "*Minnessinck*" (Zinc-Mines)