

## CHAPTER V.

### COLONIAL OFFICERS.

1720-1762.

**M**OST conspicuous of the topographical features of the territory of Dutchess County—so named in 1683 in honor of the duchess of York and Albany—is the range of mountains early called the High Lands which border it on the south.<sup>1</sup> The longest of the streams meandering through its fertile valleys to the Hudson River is the creek originally specialized in letters-patent by the name of the Fresh Kill and subsequently called by the Dutch the *Visch Kill* (Fish Creek), flowing into the Hudson about seven miles south of the mouth of Wappinger Creek. Two miles north of the last-named stream is a smaller watercourse once familiarly known as Jan Casper's Kill.

It was early and is still a Dutch custom to measure distance on land by the space of time in which an able-bodied man can walk it. In Holland, at the intersection of roads one may see finger-boards pointing in the direction of localities through which the several highways pass and bearing inscriptions of the hours going (*uren gaans*) to them. One hour's walk (*een uur gaans*) is considered by Netherlanders as equaling three English miles. (See *half uur gaans* on map, page 3.)

The first persons to acquire legal tenure to land included within the later territorial bounds of Dutchess County were François Rombout and Gulian Verplanck, who at the time were engaged as a firm in merchandising in the city of New York. Having solicited Governor Thomas Dongan to permit them to buy from the native Indians a tract of land comprising about eighty-five thousand acres, they were duly licensed, on February 28, 1683, to purchase it.

On August 14, that year, twenty-two warriors of the Wappinger tribe of Indians, in the name of their sachem, "Megriesken," conveyed to the two

<sup>1</sup> In the act erecting the county and other similar divisions of the territory of the province of New York it is titled "the Dutchesses County."