**SOUTH WORCESTER**

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Historical Works and Commentary by

HOWSON A. HARTLEY

and

LELA M. GIBBS

**FOREWORD**

South Worcester is a small, quiet hamlet on the banks of the Charlotte River, a tributary of the Susquehanna River in central New York State's Town of Worcester, Otsego County. Today, the serene and modest character of the community belies its importance in the early American experience.

It is the oldest and most historic part of the Town, and some will say its most interesting. The Mohawk Indians called it the Adaquitangie. During the colonial period, Sir William Johnson, its Irish nobleman landowner, named it the Charlotte Country in honor of the Queen of England. It became one of the earliest settlements on the American frontier when the former German soldier Christopher Servos and his family appeared there, perhaps by 1740, establishing homes, farms, a trading post, mill and potashery -- far predating most of today's neighboring communities.

Skirmishes occurred there during the Revolution, featuring attacks on Patriot settlers by bands of Tories and Indians, and military expeditions and encampments by mixed regiments of Redcoats, German mercenaries, Iroquois braves and Loyalists led in part by the Mohawk War Chief Joseph Brant. These events came to a head in 1778 when raiders under the orders of George Washington shot and killed Servos' son, the Tory leader of the settlement, in his own home. Repopulation after the war, led by families named Becker, Multer, Strain, Mitchell, Dorwin and others, brought new houses, farms, stores, churches, primary and law schools, a hotel, blacksmith shop, library, bank, post office and a 60-room mansion in the nineteenth century. South Worcester is now a National Historic District.

The area is fortunate that a number of its residents were amateur local historians who left behind a legacy of accounts based on research, interviews, oral histories and personal reflections and commentaries. This booklet contains written works of two of those historians -- Howson A. Hartley, a World War II veteran, college instructor and Town Historian; and Lela M. Gibbs, a diarist, author and poet. Classic photographs from the collection of the eminent local historian Wm. Fern Ferguson grace the pages. These accounts are remarkable for their rich historical and personal flavor, and are presented here for their value to posterity.