1952

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of the

Oswego
County Historical Society

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LIST OF OFFICERS

1952

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January—"Willard Straight," Dr. Norman Whitten, Oswego State Teachers College.

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March—"The Story of American Lighting Devices," Dr. Adelbert C. Abbott, Syracuse, New York.

April—"Oneida Lake Navigation," Mr. J. Elet Milton, Brewerton.

May—"Dr. Mary Walker," Mr. Fred P. Wright, Oswego.

October—"A Combat Soldier's View of the Civil War," Dr. C. M. Snyder, Oswego State Teachers College.

November—"The Refugees at Fort Ontario," Mr. Carl Palmitesso, Oswego.

THOMAS A. CLOUTIER

"Lest We Forget"

Thomas A. Cloutier

A NATIVE of the State of Maine, but a New Yorker by adoption, Thomas A. Cloutier has for more than a quarter of a century been one of Oswego County's most loyal sons. For nearly 15 years he has been one of the most enthusiastic and active members of Oswego County Historical Society to the service of which he has devoted much of his leisure time unselfishly and without thought of compensation or other reward than a consciousness of having performed faithfully and well the duties of the important office of secretary of the society. When he was first elected to that office in 1941 the membership of the society was under 200 persons and the duty of mailing out post card notices of meetings to the membership eight or ten times a year was not too burdensome. When he retired from the office, declining another re-election in 1951, the number of members of the society approximated 700, and the task of mailing out meeting notices had become burdensome indeed—so much so, that the duties of the office have since been divided to relieve the secretary of the duty of sending out notices of meetings and of mailing out bills for dues to those members of the society who do not pay personally their dues on the occasion of the annual meetings held in January of each year.

Besides mailing to members notices of meetings and sending out the membership bills and letters to delinquents Mr. Cloutier kept the minutes not only of all meetings of the society held during his term of office, but also of all meetings as well of its Board of Managers. In addition he made time in his busy life to serve on important committees of the society and to perform special tasks in its behalf requiring constant exercise of tact and judgment.

Born at Sanford, Maine, December 16, 1904, Mr. Cloutier was graduated from Bowdoin College with the class of 1926. He spent the following summer attending Harvard University Summer School. In the fall he came to Oswego to accept a position in the circulation department of the Oswego Palladium-Times. He has since been identified with the newspaper successively as a circulator, reporter, manager of its Fulton office and as assistant business manager. For 13 years he served as secretary of the Fulton Rotary Club following 1936. He was a charter member of the Oswego-Fulton Torch Club in 1939 and has since served as its secretary, and more recently as its treasurer as well. He has been a director of the Security Building and Loan Association of Oswego since 1943. He is a member of the Fulton and Oswego Chambers of Commerce, a member of the Advisory Board of the Oswego branch of the Salvation Army, and a member of the Fortnightly Club of Oswego.

"In recognition of Mr. Cloutier's sustained zeal in the interest of Oswego County Historical Society through many years of devoted duty and vigorous effort and of his many contributions to its work, the Board of Managers of the Society formally dedicates this volume to him."

Annual Report of The President

THE PROGRAM for 1952 included regular meetings each month during the fall, winter, and spring, and a Summer Tour in July. At these meetings nine papers were given, the texts of which appear within these covers. Open-House Sunday afternoons from 3 to 6 were held during the spring, summer, and fall. Hundreds of persons from all parts of the County, from New York and many other states visited Headquarters House and inspected the Museum.

Special fund-raising activities included a benefit card party at the Headquarters House, and a scrap-metal drive to finance the construction of museum exhibits.

Hundreds of school children brought by their teachers through special arrangement with the officers were taken on guided tours of the House and Museum. In an endeavor to widen the educational services of the society, the officers invited Dr. William J. Tyrrell, educational specialist of the Division of Archives and History at Albany, to conduct a special meeting December 2, for the benefit of the social studies teachers of the County.

The Society's Committee on Historic sites in collaboration with the Division of Archives and History, organized and administered a Trading Post service at Fort Ontario. This feature of the Fort Ontario Historic Site proved most popular among the thousands of visitors who flocked to the Fort this past year.

The Barnes Estate property was sold and the proceeds deposited in the Endowment Fund, and placed at interest for the benefit of the Society. Mrs. James Riggs, widow of Dr. Riggs past president of the Oswego County Historical Society, donated several hundred historical maps of Northern New York to the society. These maps were drawn and edited by Dr. Riggs following his retirement from the presidency of Oswego State Teachers College. The maps are for sale at fifty cents each for the benefit of the general fund.

The Society is unique in that the ambitious program and varied activities are carried on exclusively by the voluntary work of its members. Hundreds of man-hours went into the work of the curator and his assistants, the work of the treasurer, secretaries, and assist-

ant secretaries, the entertainment activities of the Auxiliary Committee, the successful efforts of the committee to dispose of the Barnes property, the reconditioning of the drapes in the Reception and Drawing Rooms by the House Committee, and the money-raising project of the Ways and Means Committee. A large number of members devoted a Sunday afternoon to serve as hosts at Open-House. Others served as guides and lecturers to groups of school children. The strength of the Society lies in the interest and work of so many of its members.

The point has been reached, however, where the Society can no longer meet the demands placed upon it, and continue to broaden its educational and other public services on the basis of volunteer help alone. Complete realization of the full possibilities of the Museum and other activities of the Society calls for a part-time worker and executive secretary to perform the jobs that need to be done from day to day and week to week. A modest sum each year to prepare exhibits for the maximum display purposes would be money well spent.

This fine old Victorian mansion was turned over to the Society six years ago in a splendid state of repair. The exterior should be painted within the next few years. This past year several unbudgeted and rather expensive items of repair developed. It will require several hundred dollars each year from now on to maintain the Headquarters House in the same fine state of preservation in which it was received.

A substantial part of the budget on which we operate comes from dues of members at two dollars per year. Members die, move away, or otherwise become inactive. We need to replace these losses and add new ones. We can boast between five and six hundred members but there is no reason why this number should not be doubled. Two dollars is a small investment to make for anyone who feels the history of the Greater Oswego Community is interesting and worth preserving for the benefit of future generations.

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Society Mourns Edwin M. Waterbury

THE community was shocked by the sudden death of Edwin M. Waterbury December 30th, 1952. Under his leadership and through his great energy and foresight the Oswego County Historical Society evolved and developed to win the unique position it holds today among local historical societies. His place in our society can never be filled; his deep interest and devotion to things historical in and about Oswego has seldom been equalled.

The Citation to the Oswego County Historical Society by the American Association for State and Local History, September 1949, is in reality a personal citation to Mr. Waterbury. The Citation was granted for: "Reactivating an historical society and greatly increasing its membership, for developing county-wide interest by holding meetings in various communities, by summer tours, and by a system of representation of small communities among the officers of the society; for leadership in the preservation of Fort Ontario as an historic site; for the establishment of a museum; for an extensive and successful fund-raising campaign; for publication of a yearbook; and for close relations with the press, the schools, civic groups, and all local celebrations of an historical nature."

Mr. Waterbury was an historian of considerable stature. Over a period of years he delivered a number of papers not only before the local Society but also before a number of state and national groups. He made some particularly significant contributions in the field of colonial history. His leadership in this field was recognized by his election to the presidency of the Society for Colonial History. For a number of years he served as a trustee of the New York State Historical Society.

The officers of the Society are sponsoring a special memorial to Mr. Waterbury. Friends are invited to contribute to the Edwin M. Waterbury Historical Endowment Fund. The proceeds will be devoted to some fitting recognition of his work as an historian and his efforts in behalf of our own society and the cause of local history throughout the State.

The Business Activities of Gerrit Smith

(Paper Given Before the Oswego County Historical Society by Dr. Charles McC. Snyder, Oswego State Teachers College, January 8, 1952)

On a July day in 1827 two young men joined the throng which was assembling at the water-front in Oswego to witness the auction of state lands on the east side of the Oswego River. One was Gerrit Smith, 30-year-old financier from Peterboro, N. Y., the son of Peter Smith, prominent land holder and speculator. Eight years earlier, a little more than a year after his graduation from Hamilton College, Gerrit Smith found himself the possessor of his father's properties—properties so numerous and scattered, that it required several years to complete an inventory of them. The contract which Smith entered into with his father was not without heavy obligations: $25,000 to be paid in five annual installments, starting at once; and then $100,000 to be paid in 10 annual installments, with interest payable annually. Added to these payments were annuities to be paid to Gerrit's sister, Cornelia Cochrane, and his brother, Peter Skenandoah Smith.

After fifteen years the estate was to be divided: Gerrit to receive one-half of the total, and the remainder to go to Cornelia and Peter Skenandoah, for whom Gerrit and his uncle, Daniel Cady, were to act as trustees. The responsibilities thus undertaken must have staggered the young capitalist, a situation rendered even more difficult since the first year of his stewardship fell in the panic year of 1819. However, it enabled him to conduct his business affairs on a broad stage, and to obtain credit when needed to enlarge and develop his holdings. For example, it provided the collateral to borrow $300,000 in 1837, another panic year, at a time when he was hard-pressed, and might otherwise have been forced to follow numerous other business men into bankruptcy.

Edwards A Canaler

The second young man at the above mentioned auction was John Benjamin Edwards, a 25-year-old canal worker. Edwards was born on May 23, 1802, near Old Tenant Church in south-central New Jersey. At the age of five he moved with his family to Lyons, Wayne Co., N. Y., a location which put him in the pathway of the Erie Canal, and eventually led him to follow the canal to Oswego. Edwards worked briefly as a laborer on the Erie Canal; then as a sub-contractor, and finally as a superintendent at the age of 20. The lack of trained engineers at that time afforded an opportunity to those who could profit from their experience, and in 1824 Edwards came to Oswego to superintend the construction of the Oswego Canal Company's hydraulic canal built along the east bank of the Oswego River. He purchased a farm in the Hamilton Gore district, but continued to engage in construction work on the canal and docks. Hence his interest in the auction.

When the auction bidding was finished Smith had purchased the property for a sum of $14,000, and staked his future upon the growth of Oswego. A short time later he purchased controlling in-

terest in the Oswego Canal Co., thus enlarging and diversifying his property holdings in Oswego.

The writer has been unable to determine just when Smith and Edwards met for the first time. From a note of the latter written 38 years after the auction, it would appear that they were not personally acquainted at this time. "I saw you there," Edwards recalled, "you was (sic) a brilliant looking young man. You foresaw that land on the east side of the river was about as valuable as the west side, notwithstanding it sold at about 3 times as much on the west side as it did on the east." (Edwards to Smith, July 21, 1865, Gerrit Smith Miller manuscripts, Library of Syracuse University. All Edwards and Smith letters cited are in this collection unless otherwise indicated.)

Promoters View Oswego

Smith proceeded to sub-divide his property into lots, and to lease and sell them. In 1830 in conjunction with Samuel Stocking and Abraham Varick, he offered much of his land at auction, reserving, however, lots near the water-front. The advertisement for this sale furnishes a description of Oswego as seen through the eyes of these promoters: The Oswego River, it declared, had as much water as the Hudson at Albany, with a descent in the last mile of 20 feet supplying immense hydraulic power. It was well situated for flour milling. Two mills, it observed, were already in operation, and another under construction. "An elegant and substantial pier" had recently been built by the United States government at the mouth of the river, and a spacious harbor provided adequate facilities for the transfer of grain from Onario, and by way of the Welland Canal, "for 1,000 miles of Lakes beyond it." The population of the village was about 2,400, having trebled in 3 years. (Oswego Palladium & Chronicle, Feb. 1, 1830.)

While Smith participated in this sale, and toyed with the thought of auctioning off his properties on numerous other occasions, he resisted these temptations to convert his holdings into cash, and continued instead to buy new property as he sold his earlier purchases piece-meal. In general he tended to sell lots in residential areas, and to retain and lease lots in the business sections and along the water-front.

In 1830, three years after his initial purchase of Oswego lands, Smith leased the Cove on the east river bank, a property which had been turned over to the village by the state a few months earlier. This area, situated north of Bridge Street at a point where East Schuyler Street, if extended westward, would reach the river, consisted of a stagnant pool of water which became a channel or "gut" when high water ran through it. After selling a half interest to David S. Jones, a New York City financier, Smith undertook extensive improvements for the purpose of making it into a docking area for the transfer of lake cargoes to the canal and vice versa. Its significance to the budding village was recorded in an editorial of the "Palladium and Chronicle", July 7, 1830, headed:

"Village Improvement"

Among the many important improvements which are making in and about our village, we are gratified to learn that the lot in East Oswego, commonly called the Cove Lot, which has lately been acquired from the state by our energetic corporation, is now in progress of rapid improvement. The lot has been leased by the corporation to Gerrit Smith, Esq., and this hitherto sink of filth and source of contagion is now becoming rapidly renovated. A channel sufficiently large for any of the lake vessels is now almost completed through it, and instead of a pool of standing water, a portion of the pure water of the river will be conducted through

it, on which, we understand, it is the intention of the enterprising lessor to erect a dry dock, wharves, and other conveniences for business.

The development of the Cove property brought home to Smith the disadvantages of absenteeism, and a realization that success or failure depended upon finding the right kind of agent to handle his affairs. In some respects the following account of the building of the Cove Property suggests a much more famous incident in the Civil War: That of Lincoln finding a General!

Constructing The Cove

At the outset, responsibility for the project was undertaken by Peter Sken. Smith, Gerrit's brother mentioned above, who had located in Oswego. Peter Sken. was buying and selling Oswego lots in his own right, acting as broker and agent for other speculators, practicing law, and active in local politics. In handling his brother's affairs he displayed an abundance of energy and enthusiasm, but his judgment was frequently at variance with his employer's, and he found it difficult to postpone decisions while awaiting instructions. His letters reporting upon the project serve the dual purpose of illustrating these difficulties and giving the reader a picture of the work in progress.

A certain Mr. Burkle arrived from New York City, who was eager to buy a share in the Cove, but who refused to be associated with D. S. Jones, Smith's partner. Peter Sken. and Burkle agreed upon terms, and Burkle engaged a contractor from Montezuma—all without waiting for Gerrit Smith's approval. (P. S. Smith to G. Smith, June 9, 1831.) By the time the contractor, Asher P. Osborne, arrived with his labor force, Burkle, who seems to have been, as mercurial as Peter Sken., was dissatisfied with Smith's original plans, which he considered to represent but a partial improvement; and to confuse the situation further, Gerrit Smith disapproved of Burkle's contract. Consequently, Osborne was forced to mark time, submitting meanwhile a bill of $2,000 for "the note of preparation, collecting hands, provisions, expenses, etc." (P. S. Smith to G. Smith, June 25, 1831.)

The bottle-neck was eased when Burkle paid Osborne $750 to be let off from his contract and promptly left town, and Peter Sken. engaged Osborne to excavate the cove by the foot. Work began early in July, 1831, but this arrangement was soon terminated, also, and for another brief period Peter Sken., J. S. Glover, an Oswego attorney, and his son headed up the operation. On September 3, Peter Sken. indicated that the work was going well. One hundred fifty men were digging and carting, and they were dredging and excavating under water with "Campbell's Patent Excavator," obtained by the resourceful "Judge" Glover at Seneca Falls. "We are now advancing well at every point," he wrote, "and we endeavor to have it all done to the best advantage. We may err in judgment but I hope not in vigilance and scrutiny. We do all to prevent your being 'wronged' that we could do in such a body of laborers for ourselves. The Judge is on the ground every morning at day break, where he remains til I join him there on the course of my before breakfast ride. Young Mr. Glover keeps the accounts and makes payment, a very laborious operation requiring constant attention, and also he visits the work several times a day in common with the Judge and myself, and unites with us in improvements and suggestions, etc." (P. S. Smith to G. Smith, Sept. 10, 1831.) Two months later Peter Sken. reported that the job was nearly finished; but his optimism proved to be unfounded, and he

and the Glovers were superceded by John B. Edwards.

Edwards Takes Charge

Peter Sken. did not withdraw without a struggle, however. When Edwards, hampered by heavy snow and severe weather which "froze the buckets," and defeated their efforts to keep the excavations clear of water, halted operations in December, Peter Sken. jumped into the breech, engaging contractors Hovey and Van Alstyne to finish the job for $500, without consulting brother Gerrit. It was the last straw. Gerrit denounced the arrangement, and ordered Peter Sken. not to meddle with his concerns. The latter admitted to yielding to his heart in jobbing the remains of the cove bank, and promised not to interfere again. Deeply mortified, he begged Gerrit not to reveal his displeasure to the Judge. "It would break the old man's heart," for he advised the letting to those "vagabond creatures", Hovey and Van Alstyne. But in concluding the above note the irrepressible Peter Sken. bounced back to observe with unveiled sarcasm that the "vagabonds" were almost finished, having expended between seven and eight hundred dollars, for which they would receive five hundred. (P. S. Smith to G. Smith, Dec. 24, 1831, Jan. 4, 25, 1832.)

The writer was unable to find a detailed description of the Cove Property as it appeared at its completion in the spring of 1832. It was enlarged as early as 1835, and altered substantially on several other occasions. There is a sketch drawn by Peter Sken. while the work was under construction, which must have been quite similar to it, though possibly more elaborate. The southwestern channel or inlet from the river was about 40 feet wide and 10 or 12 feet deep. It led the water into a rectangular basin, which was divided into two sections, one for sloops and the other for smaller craft. On the southeastern or inland side was a lock, and beyond it a drydock connected to the hydraulic canal of the Oswego Canal Co. This latter feature does not appear to have been completed. Leading out of the basin to the northwest was a second channel connecting it with the river. The basin was lined with wharves, and beyond them was a street, appropriately termed Basin Street. A conveyance with goods designed for a ship in the basin might proceed northward on East First Street to Basin Street and the wharves. A drawbridge connected the "island", i. e., the section between the inlet and outlet channels, to Basin Street.

Stimulation For Commerce

The completion of the Cove Property or Basin or Smith Cove inaugurated there a flourishing forwarding business, where generation after generation of Oswego merchants exchanged products of the West for the merchandise of the East, and where ships were overhauled and stored during winter months when navigation was closed on the lakes. Older residents of the Oswego area will recall having heard of such business houses as: Hamilton Littlefield, James Platt, Miller and Trowbridge, D. Talcott and Son, Merrick and Davis, Bates and Smith, M. P. Hatch, Edward and Thomas Wentworth—all of whom leased frontage on the Cove during the early years.

Returning to the two principals of this account, Smith and Edwards, you will recall that the latter was engaged in constructing the Cove Property during the final months. Either Edwards' handling of this responsibility or his work for the Oswego Canal Co., or both, favorably impressed the absentee property holder. Possibly Henry Fitzhugh, Oswego forwarder and miller, and brother-in-law of Smith, recommended Edwards to him. In any event, Smith engaged Edwards as his Oswego agent on December 2,

1831, while the latter was directing the construction of the Cove. On an anniversary of the event years later Edwards recalled that it was just 27 years ago that evening since he received from Mr. Smith at Mr. Fitzhugh's house, "your papers and your instructions for my beginning in your business." (Edwards to Smith, Dec. 2, 1858). There was apparently no public announcement of the business association. Peter Sken. continued to handle his brother's property until January 31, 1832, when Gerrit ordered him to cease forthwith. The chagrined Peter Sken. replied that it was his first intimation "that Edwards is your land agent at Oswego! ! ! ....You never told me Edwards was agent for your lands! ! ! I am glad to hear and know it." It requires little reading between the lines to observe that Peter Sken. looked upon Edwards as a novice; Gerrit's decision to employ him as agent must have seemed incredible.

Edwards Becomes Agent

Peter Sken. was anything but an impartial judge, smarting as he was under his brother's criticisms. Yet, Edwards was wholely lacking in experience as a land agent, and Smith must have been willing to overlook this deficiency because of his value in the maintenance of the canal and the cove.

For Edwards, it was an opportunity—an opportunity to grow under the tutelage of one of the most remarkable Americans of the era. Each week he read one, two, or more letters from Smith devoted chiefly to Oswego property, but interspersed with Smith's views on religion, abolition, temperance, philanthropy, politics and many other current subjects. Smith also supplied him with copies of his speeches and tracts, which he ground out in seemingly inexhaustible numbers and varieties. It amounted to a correspondence course in many interesting, though sometimes tedious and obstruse, lessons. These letters have apparently been lost, but Edwards' letters to his employer supply us with a yard-stick to measure his progress.

His spelling, for example, at first consisted largely of phonetics, and he seldom commented on anything except business. But as time went on his spelling improved and his written vocabulary expanded; and as the business relationship broadened and deepened into a close personal friendship, he frequently referred to family matters, and of even more general interest, to community activities, including local politics, church news, population trends, fires, storms and epidemics; in fact few major occurrences, whether political economic or social in nature, were not recorded. Comments on state and national issues, particularly those in which Smith happened to be engaged at the time, were also discussed; as were his speeches and tracts.

Edwards' Interests Broaden

Edwards' views, it might be noted, usually coincided with those of Smith, and were formulated under the latter's influence. Smith stimulated Edwards' interest in abolition, the under-ground railroad and the Liberty Party; in temperance, and in non-denominationalism in religion. He also fostered in him a skepticism for the major political parties and politics generally. Some men would have undoubtedly resented Smith's tendency to preach and moralize; others would have become mere "rubber stamps" so as to "get along with the boss." But Edwards' personality enabled him to transform causes emanating from Smith into convictions and a way of life; and contemporaries respected him for his strength of character, and not simply as a mouthpiece of Smith. The latter must have sometimes opened doors for him, but it would not

have sustained him through his long and active career.

But to return to the business activities of Smith and his agent; Edwards' duties in the early years included: First, the maintenance of the hydraulic canal, the leasing and the collection of rentals on it, and the duties of the office of secretary-treasurer of the company. Second, the maintenance of the Cove Property, the handling of leases and collections, and the construction and up-keep of piers and wharves along the east bank of the river. Third, leasing of lands and buildings in the business area, and the sale of building lots; also the purchasing of properties, which were frequently bid in at tax sales. While most of Smith's land sales and purchases were in the Oswego area, and particularly on the east side, many were scattered across northern New York State, requiring for Edwards numerous trips westward to Cayuga and Wayne counties, northward to St. Lawrence and Jefferson counties, and occasionally to points as distant as Rochester, Lewiston on the Niagara River, and Buffalo. One trip found him in Oberlin and Cleveland, Ohio. One of Edwards' most persistent problems was the rental of the Fitzhugh Hotel which stood at the southeast corner of East First and Bridge Streets. Ordinarily it would have been just another property, but a hotel of Gerrit Smith's was a temperance house, and proprietors of temperance hotels who could pay rent were a rare breed.

Lot Sales On Easy Terms

Such were Edwards' duties; a word about the business climate in which he worked. Through the purchase of land and canal stock, and the building of the Cove Property just prior to or immediately after 1830, Smith had gotten in on the ground floor. When the Oswego and Welland canals opened a new chapter in Oswego's commercial history, i. e., the grain trade and flour milling, Smith had the water power and the mill sites to lease. He also had docks for the carrying trade. Only on the east side of his land could lake vessels discharge their cargoes of grain directly to warehouses where it might be milled, then forwarded as flour via the canal. Activity along the waterfront stimulated business on the east side, which was at the time connected to the west side of the village by a single toll bridge. The business section moved eastward on Smith's land on Bridge Street, and north and south on East First Street, then on East Second Street. Beyond the latter, Smith, through Edwards, made lots available to the most affluent and the poorest Irish immigrants. Edwards' correspondence contains hundred of entries representing monthly or quarterly payments of $10 and $5, and sums as small as $1. Cause and effect are not easily separated, but Oswego's new commercial prominence and Smith's land and business promotions led to a rapid expansion on the east side. Starting with a population of less than one-half that on the west side of the village, the growth of the east side matched that of the west, decade after decade, in this era.

Returning to Edwards' duties, mentioned above, the writer would now like to trace the highlights under each heading.

Oswego Hydraulic Canal

When Edwards assumed his responsibilities in 1831, a single flour mill and a handful of other users made up the lessees of the Oswego Canal Co. By 1836 a second grist mill, a lumber mill, and cotton factory had been added to the list, now numbering 19; and annual collections totaled $2,786. Two tenants were paying $500 or more: Henry Fitzhugh & Co., flour milling, and the Daniel Hugunin Saw Mill. Rentals fell off during the panic years after 1837, but equaled $5,843 by 1846. (Edwards to Smith, June 20, 1846). In 1855 Edwards appraised the

property at $100,000. The canal was a consistent money maker, but had its headaches particularly when the water in the river was too high or too low. In 1831, for example, the problem was too much water—the strong current breaking the wall in the wing dam guarding the entrance to the canal. Before the canal could be tapped, the flood broke through the bank above Bridge Street, and poured back into the stream. Several months were required to complete the repairs. Brother Peter Sken. who was still handling business matters for Gerrit reassured the latter, "I intend seeing our editors and keeping the accident out of print. It can do no good . " (P. S. Smith to G. Smith, April 8, 1831). In April, 1836, a breech let the whole head of the pond into the canal. Again the bank burst forcing extensive repairs It was the same story in 1849, when 80 feet of the bank was carried away.

Squabbles Over Water

In 1832 the problem was low water, with Edwards seeking to divert as much water as possible into the canal, and users on the west side attempting to tap it on that side. The ensuing quarrel centered on the retention of flash boards atop the State Dam, which controlled the flow of water. Richard L. DeZeng working with Abraham Varick removed the boards on the west side, barely escaping from going over the dam, Edwards reported. The latter proceeded to put them back, and the former to remove them. Both contestants then turned to the law, and Varick sued Edwards for trespassing on the State Dam. The results were inconclusive, with higher water postponing the issue until a later day.

Smith and Edwards also had the problem of regulating the usage of water by their own lessees. Water rights were measured in runs, but since the rate of flow was regulated inside the mills, the lessor found it difficult and sometimes exasperating in dry seasons to conserve water along the upper portions of the canal, so that there was some left for the lowest user. The attitude of the lessees, particularly the millers who became the largest consumers, may be appreciated, if you will recall that the business was highly speculative. Grain was purchased during a brief period. and flour was delivered in New York City when the market was favorable. A miller might see his potential profits turn into losses even though the price of flour was high, if his water power was inadequate to turn his wheels. Smith and Edwards, along with a good many other Oswegonians, looked upon the millers with a certain disapprobation, referring to them as "speculators" and even "monopolists." Possibly this attitude stemmed in part from the handsome profits realized by them in good years. In any event, the millers were frequently targets for criticism.

Editorial Comments

When the Panic of 1837 had lowered the demand for flour and depressed its price, an editorial in the "Oswego Commercial Herald" observed:

> "The flour speculators are in a sorry pickle, and we are not sorry. As soon as the navigation closes, all the flour in market is usually monopolized by a few dealers and held at enormous prices for home consumption. The immense importation of foreign wheat this winter will give the holders of flour a considerable sweat. The article is down to $8 in New York and will probably go lower—the game is up with them for this year." (Feb. 14, 1838).

To suggest that the above criticism was not an isolated one, a year later the "Oswego County Whig's" editor, Richard Oliphant, fulminated in an editorial entitled "Extortion":

> The millers, it observed, had been taxing their own in-

habitants $2 per barrel for flour more than New York prices, despite the fact that the flour was milled in Oswego and shipped to New York. It declared it to be a pleasure to announce that Mr. Cheney Ames supplied himself elsewhere, and would supply other families at a price 8 shillings below the millers' price. A few weeks later the same paper acknowledged that the millers were absorbing heavy losses. "We do not exult in the misfortune of any class of men.. ..When the people were suffering for the 'staff of life' these men, because they could monopolize the article through the unjust favoritism of the banks .. put on a price that was fictitious, exorbitant and cruel. When the people groaned and complained of the prices, they were bidden to go elsewhere for their supplies And there are men in this village, who have oppressed the poor with such an iron hand, that should they be bankrupt tomorrow, they would not have one person to mourn their misfortunes, unless indeed it should be their creditors." The outlook was not entirely dark however; C. J. and E. R. Burckle, it noted, had reduced their prices, and Messrs. Tallcot and Bond were starting at the new figure; and there was a report that Fitzhugh and Platt, had also adopted current prices. (May 21, July 16, 1839).

When water was low in 1841, and C. J. Burckle spoke of suing the Canal Company, Smith retorted that while the millers grumbled because they had only enough water to do half work, they were better off than those in such dry times who could do no work. If Burckle carried out his threat to publish their company, "it would not be the first time he had tried to bite his own nose off." (G. Smith to Alvin Bronson, Sept. 24. 1841).

In 1847 this situation was reversed, with the Canal Company going to court to prevent its lessees, and in particular Henry Matthews, from using more water than their contracts specified. Edwards estimated that the millers were making 100-125 barrels of flour per day per run—which more than doubled the customary volume. "Millers and shippers," he added, were "rolling up wealth at a wonderful rate now... The commercial business increases astonishingly." (Edwards to Smith, May 1, 22, 1847).

Two Power Canals Complete

By the next year, the continued low water brought the east side-west side competition for water to a head. To review the background briefly it should be noted that Abraham Varick had purchased the Burt property on the west bank of the river adjacent to the old State Dam, and had constructed the Varick Canal between 1833-1835, which ran parallel to the river from the dam to Utica Street. He leased the property including water power to the millers and other users. Upon his death the canal was sold to F. T. Carrington and Myron Pardee, who operated it in 1848.

In June the water was low and Edwards at the Canal Company's expense, was putting on flash boards and plugging holes in the dam. The water continued to fall, and by September he had restricted mills below the bridge on the east side to but 8 runs at a time: but this was not sufficient to permit navigation on the canal. (The hydraulic canal and the Oswego boat canal used the same canal bed at this time). Meanwhile, Edwards reported to Smith that 6 mills were in operation on the Varick Canal—consuming twice the amount of water used on the east side. The superintendent of the Oswego Canal, he continued, "has made several attempts to shut and keep shut part of their gates at the head of their canal. but they resist him by bringing

on a larger number of men than he has. And Myron Pardee had him arrested yesterday by our recorder's court and put under a $500 bond to keep the peace. He (the superintendent) is now determined to forthwith make a dam across their canal at the head of it. The lessees on the east side are obedient to his requirements." (Edwards to Smith, Sept. 4, 1848).

A few weeks later the millers on the east side were so pressed for water that they allowed Edwards, backed by the second class users, to examine the spouts in their mills where the water struck the wheels. Using the Truman Wyman mill as a standard (17"x6¾"), due to the uncertainty surrounding just what a "run" should measure, Edwards found that Doolittle & Mollison and Fitzhugh & Co. were using more than double this capacity to a run, and that Penfield, Lyon & Co. were using 1½ times normal capacity. Edwards planned to close these spouts to conform to Wyman's, but the solution, he believed, lay in selling the canal to the millers, and allowing them to handle the distribution of the power. (Edwards to Smith, Sept. 19, 1848). This particular crisis was eased by the return of F. T. Carrington to the city, who persuaded his partner to withdraw his suits. (P. S.: There was a flood the following winter).

Water Power Uncertain

But the following summer found the contestants sparring again. Water was low, despite the winter freshet. Edwards went to Rochester to try to find a workable definition of a "run," but apparently failed to find one. James Platt, served an injunction on W. J. Pardee for running a second class "run" when he could not operate his elevator with a first class "run," and Edwards paid the Wilbers $7 per day not to operate their saw mill so as to conserve the supply for others. (Edw. to Smith, July 3, 21, 1849). By August all mills were operating on a part-time basis; and when Henry Matthews placed a temporary dam between his flume and that of Fitzhugh's, blocking the water from the latter, Edwards instituted legal proceedings. (Edwards to Smith, Sept. 1, 1849). But justice moved slowly. It required another 10 months to get the engineer's report (Wm. Pierson Judson) on Matthews—a report which indicated that he had used approximately three times the quantity allowed by his lease. In his final letter dealing with this incident Edwards was trying to persuade Matthews to show him his copy of his lease, which defined his water rights, after he had failed to find it at the county clerk's office. A. P. Grant, Matthews' lawyer was advising him to refuse Edwards' request, and the latter was weighing use of an injunction. By this time it was June, 1850, and water was again plentiful! (Edwards to Smith, June 13, 1850).

Despite these rather hectic lessee-lessor relations the canal continued to pay dividends. About 1855 Edwards was relieved of his duties with the Oswego Canal Co., which, with the exception of the actual maintenance, were shifted to an Oswego attorney, Charles Rhodes, who assumed Edwards' title, secretary-treasurer. Years later after Smith, and Alvin Bronson, who had been the company's president for many years, had died, Edwards returned to the company as its president, to represent there, the interests of the Smith heirs.

The Cove Property

The building of the Cove Property has already been described. It was scarcely finished before demands for additional wharves led the owners to enlarge it. In 1833 Smith and his partner, D. S. Jones, purchased the Cove Property from the Village of Oswego for $5,000, a sale sponsored by east side residents to provide funds to improve the streets. The

purchase saved the owners an annual rental of $300, though taxes soon nullified this advantage. It appeared, nonetheless, to be a bargain to Peter Sken. who questioned "whether as much property changed hands in the state in 20 years for $5,000." (P. S. Smith to G. Smith. June 8, 1833). He wouldn't exchange it at the moment, if it were his, he affirmed, for "all the water power above the bridge, east and west." Nevertheless, Smith in one of his selling moods planned in 1835 to sell it at auction, along with most of his Oswego property. Edwards at Smith's bidding advertised the sale in the Oswego papers, but with real estate prices advancing rapidly, he advised his employer not to quote minimum prices or to sell at once. (Edwards to Smith, Aug. 7, 17, 1835). Smith subsequently changed his mind, and instead of selling, purchased Jones' interest in the Cove.

It was a wise reversal, since property values sky-rocketed during the fall of 1835 and the winter of 1836. Oswego and Buffalo became centers of a speculative orgy which swept the nation. Rumors of a railroad to Utica, a new bank, a Niagara ship canal, spurred the boom. On March 15, 1836 Edwards reported: "I should judge that property has advanced full fifty percent perhaps nearer seventy-five since you was (sic.) here in December. This shows that your wealth is greatly increased by not selling ½ of the cove and canal.... Mr. Fitzhugh thinks the cove improvement better be made as early as it can be done and then sell." In such a situation it is not surprising that Smith should have reappraised his properties. In the spirit of the times he placed a price tag of $1,000,000 on his Oswego property. There were no offers.

But the Cove Property's role changed quickly. By the fall of 1836 the bubble had burst. Trade slowed down; then virtually stopped, and the enlargement, conceived as a means of satisfying the demand for footage on the water-front, became "bread and butter" for hungry men seeking employment. When Edwards began the job during the boom period, he found labor to be scarce. "They have got a notion that they will not work but 10 hours of the day and must have $1 for that," he reported. To obtain a labor force after some men had "turned out" he raised wages from 6-6 (6 shillings, 6 pence, or about 81c) to 7- (87c), on the condition that they work all day. (April 18, 1836). But the following spring Edwards observed that there were many poor who were anxious to procure a means of support. Conditions had changed so drastically that he was undecided about the wage rate. Money was scarce and provisions very dear. He began by paying 7- per day, but thought he might advance it to 8- if money became plentiful and provisions remained high.

Provided Work For Needy

To provide additional employment Edwards improved the streets around the Cove. "This will enable me to employ some more of the poor men that are begging for work—it is a great charity to employ and pay the poor laborers at this time." (Edwards to Smith, April 7, 11, 1837). Edwards was employing at this time about 80 men and 15 wagons on the Basin, and 25 men and 15 teams on the street, at a cost of about $150 per day. Work was progressing rapidly; the men were working hard and appeared to be "perfectly satisfied with the wages." (April 28, 1837). But dwindling collections soon brought the wages down to 6- per day, and Edwards discontinued work on the streets, employing as many of the men as he could use on the Basin. "One reason why I discontinued this work," he explained, "was that there is no horse feed to be obtained here. None of the mills here have done anything this spring except Mr.

Fitzhugh a little, and his mill stops." When Smith proposed a second cut in wages, Edwards advised against it. Provisions continued to be high, with flour at $9 a barrel and potatoes 7- per bushel. A wage cut, he believed, would retard the progress of the work. (May 16, 22, 29, 1837).

The Cove similarly to other Oswego investments languished during the Panic of 1837, and it was not until the early 1840's that a revival occurred. By 1845, however, shipping was expanding again, and this growth was sustained until the Panic of 1857. In 1846 the Cove was again enlarged by widening and deepening the southwest passage. Larger ships could thereby be accommodated and additional wharves constructed on both sides of the passage. Rentals were going up; several tenants were paying annual rentals of $500, and one, Bates and Smith, more than $800. (Edwards to Smith, Aug. 29, Dec. 16, 1846).

Cove Deepened, Widened

In the winter of 1868-69 another major alteration was made upon the Cove. The basin was deepened to 14 feet, and the passage widened to 93 feet. A day's wage was now 14-, reflecting the inflationary trend during the Civil War. High water and boisterous winds hampered the operation to such a degree that a 3 months' job stretched through the winter and spring, and work had to be suspended in June so that the tenants might use the wharves. Twenty thousand dollars had been expended with little to show for it. Edwards found some consolation from the fact that no man or animal had been hurt on the job. The following November found Edwards back at work, and by February it was finally completed at a cost of an additional $14,000. (Edwards to Smith, Jan. 12, May 1, June 30, Nov. 12, 1869; Feb. 26, 1870).

Despite the numerous alterations, the Cove Property like the Canal earned attractive profits. In 1855 Edwards appraised it at $200,000. During the balmy years, before and after the Civil War, rentals reached the sum of $25,000 annually, and even when the grain trade declined after 1861 leases to two companies of cove wharves for (coal) trestles (Oswego Midland Railroad; New York Central Railroad) continued to yield a steady income for the Smith heirs after 1875.

Grampus Bay Development

Meanwhile, the limited space available around the Cove led Smith to organize the Oswego Pier and Dock Co. or Grampus Bay property, with Smith holding a 13-16ths, Fitzhugh and D. C. Littlejohn a 2-16ths, and Edwards a 1-16ths interest. The project consisted of piers and slips on the east side of the river just north of the Cove Property, on land owned by the state of New York, but until this time thought to be a part of Fort Ontario. The state turned it over to the City of Oswego, and the city in turn leased it to Smith and his associates. The major part of the work was completed in 1852-53 under Edwards' direction at a cost of about $60,000. (Edwards to Smith, Dec. 10, 1852, May 25, 1853).

When completed it consisted of 6 piers extending east-west from the shore into the river; a seventh pier, north of the others, jutted beyond them into the river, and then turning at right angles to the south and continuing southward in the stream for 900 feet, shielded the other piers from the river currents and the rough waters of the harbor. Providing more than 3,400 feet of wharf frontage and an extensive storage area, the property was well suited for the lumber business which was replacing grain as Oswego's leading article of trade.

Despite gales which broke away considerable portions of the river pier, which served as a breakwater as well as a wharf—a storm in January, 1864, took

away 450 feet, and another two weeks later, an even larger section, Grampus Bay was soon paying dividends. (Edwards to Smith, Jan. 4, 18, 1864). Edwards appraised it in 1855 at $300,000. In 1868 collections equaled $26,000: Smith & Post were paying the largest rental, $10,800; five others were paying $2,000 or more annually: S. Miller & Co., A. S. Page, L. A. Card, O. M. Bond, G. M. Johnson. (Edwards to Smith, Dec. 1, 1868).

Great Lumber Market

In 1870 Grampus Bay owners purchased the land under their piers from the city for $15,000. As in the case of the Cove Property, mentioned above, substituting thereby a tax for a rental. It was hardly a money saver, bearing an assessment in 1872 of $90,000.

Grampus Bay was a bee-hive of activity in the 1860's and 1870's, when during most years more than 200,000,000 board feet of lumber entered Oswego harbor. The peak year was 1872 when the total climbed to 292,919,283 feet. Thereafter, the Panic of 1873 and the gradual decline in lumbering in the Province of Ontario reduced the volume of trade at Grampus Bay. The last letter of Edwards in the Smith collection reflects this situation. Written at the age of 89, in a handwriting extremely irregular, but quite legible, he described to Smith's grandson, Gerrit Miller, his efforts to have the assessors cut the valuation of the property. He pointed out that the company was assessed at a "plump 1½ times its value." Then in his last poignant sentence he declared, "I talked a little about the present and prospective future worthlessness of the property, and the expense of keeping up 1700 feet of pier." (July 16, 1891). Today irregular mounds of stone extending into the river are all that remain of the $90,000 assessment, the $26,000 in annual rentals, and what Edwards termed admiringly, "Our great wharves."

In the earlier years Smith's income was derived chiefly from land sales. Collectively there were hundreds of transactions, involving thousands of individual payments. A typical transaction might appear as follows: The north one-half of lot number ——, in block ——' for $90, to be paid $10 down and the balance in four annual payments of $20, with "legal" interest of .07 percent. Some payments were stretched over considerably longer periods; payment in full, in cash, was exceptional.

Smith was soon operating as a land bank without the formality of an incorporation. When payments lagged or when taxes went unpaid, he frequently had a given piece of property for disposal a second or even third time. Finding tax sales difficult to resist, he occasionally bought up new properties as he sold off others. He sometimes acquired properties, also, through the extension of credits to other speculators. Peter Sken. Smith, Fitzhugh, D. C. Littlejohn, and Hamilton Littlefield, e. g., recipients of credit from Smith, turned over sizeable holdings to him after finding it impossible to extricate themselves from their financial burdens. In the course of time, however, Smith sold off the bulk of his property, and he derived his income in greater proportion from the canal, Cove, Grampus Bay, and other business properties.

In his handling of the latter, he preferred to lease the land, leaving the responsibility for building and improvements to the lessee. This occasionally back-fired when he was forced to buy the buildings in order to salvage unpaid rentals. In business blocks, however, he sometimes built store rooms for lease.

Borrows $500,000 From Astor

One of the rather surprising features of the business life of Oswego was the degree to which transactions were handled on credit. We sometimes assume that

installment buying was a creation of the 1920's and 1930's, but an inspection of the middle years of the 19th century reveals its widespread usage then. A superficial glance would suggest that every one owed every one else! Smith at one time owed approximately a half million dollars, the bulk of it to John Jacob Astor, who had been a partner of his father, an obligation which placed him in difficult straits during the Panic of 1837, leading him for a time to move from his mansion into a cottage, and to replace hired employees in his land office with members of his family. In Oswego, on the other hand, Smith's debtors were legion. Since banks were small and few in number, and other credit agencies extremely limited, Smith supplied credit directly. There was little choice. To have insisted on a "cash and carry" basis would have brought an early termination to his business in Oswego. It was not a question of credit, but rather, how much credit? Henry Fitzhugh went bankrupt in 1840 with a loss to Smith which may have reached $150,000. Edwards, buying and selling land with his own capital, overreached himself in the same period, and was saved from a similar fate by Smith's endorsements. If Smith prospered through the years where others failed, it was due in considerable part to his ability to strike a balance between too much and too little credit. It is true, of course, that his extensive property enabled him to obtain loans outside of the Oswego area in order to offset temporary losses—a situation denied to most of his Oswego contemporaries.

How Library Was Built

This shortage of cash affected the manner in which Smith financed his obligations. He rarely had more than a few thousand dollars—cash in hand. Whether the project was the digging of the Cove or building Grampus Bay, the money was obtained as required in comparatively small sums from week to week and even day to day. When he donated the library building to the City of Oswego in 1854, he provided no ready cash for its construction. Instead, he directed Edwards to pay the bills from current Oswego collections. "So you think you will have to depend on me to pay the $25,000 for the library," Edwards replied. "I can probably do a considerable of it but I do not now see how I can all—in addition to the about $7,000 that we shall yet have to expend on the Great Property (Grampus Bay)." (January 7, 1854). That Edwards was not unduly pessimistic was revealed two months later when he secured a short term loan from "Luther Wright's Bank" for $5,000 to purchase the lot.

Edwards received a respite when the library trustees, of which he was one, delayed for a year in accepting a building plan, a situation which hardly distressed the donor. "So you are content to have a lingering in commencing the library," Edwards noted. (Edwards to Smith, May 16, 1855). Six months later Edwards reported an expenditure to date, including the lot, of $11.082.10. Meanwhile Smith was pressing him for money to be applied to Smith's credit at Syracuse. Eight months later Edwards had spent $15,000, and was trying to accumulate $5,000 for books and $2,000 for unpaid bills. Six months later—this was three years after the beginning of the project—Edwards had spent a total of $23,000, and was seeking an additional thousand earmarked for books. Six years later Smith provided $1,000 for books, and six years after that date a mortgage and additional cash to equal $4,000, Smith's final gift, I believe, to that institution. (Edwards to Smith, letters between Jan. 7, 1854 and Feb. 5, 1868).

Gave To Many Causes

Smith was a humanitarian, giv-

ing thousands of dollars to many causes, but his humanitarianism would have lagged if he had not first made a success of his business. It would have taken a fortune many times that of his own to have granted requests of business associates and favor seekers. Hence a healthy skepticism in a period noted for its extremes was a necessity. His investments in Oswego railroads might be used to illustrate this point. Adequate rail connections were vital to Oswego's growth, and Smith became an active promoter of the Oswego and Syracuse line, the first to reach the city. He subscribed to 200 shares of stock amounting to $10,000, wrote to eastern financiers to encourage stock sales, and helped to defray the expenses of agents, lobbyists, etc., as required. (Edwards to Smith, letters through 1845-48).

Railroad Investments

The road was completed in 1848 and from the start was a financial success. However, it did not cross the river to the east side; and east side residents were soon promoting a Troy-Oswego line. Smith again cooperated, subscribing to $50,000 in stock, of which he appears to have paid $5,000 when the venture failed. He purchased $20,000 in the stock of the Binghamton and Syracuse route, planned to open the anthracite coal trade to Oswego via the east side. It also got into financial difficulties after a short struggle, and Smith escaped with a loss of about $500. (Edwards to Smith, June 27, Aug. 9, 1861). Next it was the Oswego and Rome Railroad. Smith invested $25,000 and the east side celebrated its completion in December, 1865. He also put $18,500 into the Lake Shore Railroad promotion, designed to link Oswego to the west via Rochester. Having supported connections to the east, west and south, he resisted involvement in further schemes. When D. C. Littlejohn and Delos De Wolf promoted the New York and Oswego Midland, with a route which rambled considerably from the most direct line, or as Smith described it, went "wildly out of its way," zigzagging after bonds and local traffic, he refused to add to an early subscription of $3,000, and spoke out against it. (Printed letters, Smith to Edwards, Oct. 10, 1867; See also Ralph V. Harlow, Gerrit Smith, 279). In Oswego, meanwhile, people had become "infatuated" with the idea, and the city as well as the towns on its path prepared to subscribe bond issues to the cause. The latter must have further solidified the opposition of Oswego's largest tax payer. In any event, Smith offered to pay the city $20,000 if it rejected the Midland on the proposed route. In such an atmosphere the proposal was extremely unpopular. Edwards was hard-pressed to defend his employer, and the latter was charged in the local press with "doing nothing for Oswego". (Edwards to Smith, Oct. 5, 1867, Mar. 12, 1868; Oswego "Advertiser & Times", issues in February, 1868).

But Smith's course soon proved to be valid. The Midland was completed; but saddled with debts, it was soon in the hands of receivers. Bankruptcy continued to haunt it through the years. Characteristic of his personality, I might add, he took no satisfaction from the Midland's troubles. Edwards paraphrased Smith's sentiments when he wrote, "So you sympathize with the poor Midland, and Mr. Littlejohn, and Oswego City and County, and Madison County, that are so heavy loaded with debt for the road that was so injudiciously constructed ..." (Sept. 23, 1873). Smith's railroad experience thus ended happily. If he sank $50,000. it was not too high a price to bring railroads to Oswego and to his properties. (Edwards to Smith, May 9, 1874). A few years later a single railroad, the reorganized

Midland, was paying his heirs $6,000 a year for a site on the Cove Property. (Edwards' Account of Land Payments, 1891).

Smith And Edwards A Team

The business association of Smith and Edwards was in many respects truly remarkable. The length of the connection in itself was almost unique. When Smith died in December, 1874, the association had passed its forty-third anniversary, and by 1891, the date of the last letter in the Smith-Miller Collection, Edwards, aged 89, had been employed by Smith and his heirs for 60 years. So far as I know he was still carrying on for them at his death —which would have brought the total years of association to 64. During the entire period it would appear that there was not a single misunderstanding. In 1860, after 29 years Edwards wrote to Smith, "I will now say what I have often thought and have sometimes said to others—that during all the long period, you have never spoken or written an unkind word to me notwithstanding all my imperfections." (Dec. 7, 1860).

One of the most attractive facets of their business relationship was the respect felt by each for the other. The following incidents are cited to illustrate this mutual trust.

Edwards' annual salary for many years was $500—a wage which would appear to have been rather small considering the responsibilities involved, and at a time when unskilled labor commanded about $1 per day. In 1846, however, Smith presented Edwards and four other agents and secretaries with $500 each as a gift for "faithful and valuable services" which had enabled him to weather the lean years after 1837. (Smith to Edwards, Aug. 1, 1846).

From almost the very beginning Edwards speculated in property with his own funds. Instead of discouraging him, unless he thought a particular situation to be unwise, Smith extended credit to him, permitting him to expand his operations. Edwards' investments were soon paying him more than his annual wage.

Edwards' Reports Informal

Edwards' annual reports were quite informal in their format, and sometimes difficult for him to balance. In January, 1854, he first reported that he seemed to have paid out almost $900 more than he received, and asked Smith's secretary, Caleb Calkins, to help find the error. A week later he discovered the omission of a $1,000 item which Smith had paid to him for the relief of fire sufferers in the conflagration the year before at Oswego. This left him with a shortage of about $100 which he could not account for. He reported this discrepancy to his employer, suggesting that he charge the deficit to Grampus Bay, upon which he had been expending c o n s i d e r a b l e sums. Smith's total reaction was a single comment—an acquiescence to Edwards' suggestion, and a clean page for the new year. (Edwards to Smith, Jan. 17, 23, 27, Feb. 4, 1854).

Cuts Own Salary

Edwards' annual report two years later contained a brief statement which further documents the mutual respect of employer and employee. "You will see that for my services the past year I charged you $250 and the Pier and Dock Co. $250....As I had given a considerable attention to business for myself and care of my family the past year I had thoughts of reducing my wages. But it occurred to me that for some of the former years my wage was rather small for my services. So I thought I would keep them up for the past year, but some reduction in my wages for hereafter will probably be right and proper, as your business here has become much diminished by Mr. Rhodes taking charge of

the Canal and by sale of the Hotel property (Fitzhugh House) and your houses and my own business in real estate is getting to be considerable and profitable." (Feb. 12, 1856). A year later he voluntarily cut his salary from $500 to $400; meanwhile his investment that year in Grampus Bay yielded better than $4,000—an investment which had been made possible by Smith's extension of credit. (Jan. 10, 29, 1858).

Beneath their day by day business relationship was an underlying friendliness, and concern for the other's welfare. "So one of your large ears was frozen on the 25th (Christmas), a very severe day that was," Edwards observed. "You ought not to have went out. I did not go out. I spent the day at copying my accounts. I hope your ear was not badly frozen." (Dec. 27, 1849). A few years later, commenting upon an expression of praise from Smith, he declared that he too was thankful that God had brought them together to be of mutual benefit. "I feel sure that it has been of benefit to me not only pecuniarily, but intellectually and religiously." (June 29, 1864). And again, "I laugh in thinking how enormously you overcredit my usefullness to you. It is much more appropriate for me to say what should I do without Mr. Smith." The latter was written after 40 years of employment. (Feb. 6, 1871).

Edwards found Smith's solicitude a source of comfort through a succession of family tragedies. Edwards' wife (Lydia Hall Edwards) and each of their children (William, Mary, John and Emily) died after lingering illnesses.

Friendly Personal Relations

Smith showed a lively interest in Edwards' second marriage, and entertained the bride and groom at Peterboro. When the second Mrs. Edwards (Julia A. Imlay Edwards) prevailed upon her husband to purchase a fine stone house for a residence at East Seventh Street, between Oneida and Mohawk Streets, Smith reassured Edwards that they were worthy of the pleasant habitation. (Edwards to Smith, May 6, 1865) And after this house burned, and he purchased the Hubbard property at 207 Syracuse Avenue, Smith enjoyed Mrs. Edwards' efforts to remodel it in the face of her reluctant husband. "We all had a good laugh at what you write of me and my wife in reference to our rebuilding part of our house," Edwards reported. "We pulled down a pretty good one and half story house—which looked to me to be too much waste for the gain obtained." "Yes the Presbyterian Wife has beat the Methodist Husband for an enlarged house." (June 3, 6, 1873).

The Edwards, meanwhile, opened their home to Smith's grandsons, who lived with them over a period of several years while they attended school and prepared to launch their careers in Oswego. Dudley (E. D. Miller Jr.), Gerrit (Miller) and Willie (William Miller) made the Edwards residence their home in the late 1860's and early 1870's. Gerrit was enrolled at the Oswego Commercial College and Dudley at the Normal School. None, it turned out, settled permanently, though Dudley worked for a time with Edwards, who offered to turn over his position to him—only to get a refusal from his grandfather. Smith and his wife, Ann, also made the Edwards home their Oswego headquarters, particularly after the removal of the Henry Fitzhughs from the city.

Smith's Death

A business relationship had thus blossomed into a friendship which was broken only by death. In December, 1874, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards made what had become almost a yearly pilgrimage to New Jersey to visit relatives and friends. They returned early in January and learned of Smith's death on December 28. A letter written to Caleb Calkins dealing principally with business matters

shortly thereafter provides a final expression of appreciation for his employer and friend.

"I arrived home last evening. I find your letter of the 12th inst. (January)...The wise and good man with whom you and I have been so long and intimately associated is much missed by us. I am thankful to our Heavenly Father that in his Providence I have been permitted to so much association with such a man." (Jan. 14, 1875).

As indicated above Edwards continued to work for the Smith heirs for almost two more decades. Some Oswegonians can still remember him—a tall, dark bearded man; on Sundays clad in a black suit, and wearing a tall silk hat and carrying a cane enroute to the Trinity Methodist Church, where he was for many years a leading layman; or they may recall seeing him in his office in the Oswego Savings Bank or on the wharves on the east side. Death came unexpectedly while he was enjoying his usual good health on the evening of November 4, 1895, at the age of 93. (The writer is indebted to Mr. William Imlay, of Roseland, N. J., grandson of John B. Edwards, who supplied a short sketch of his grandfather, based on recollections from his boyhood.)

Jerome Increase Case and His Contribution to Mechanized Farming

(Paper Given Before Oswego County Historical Society by Mrs. Nell DeLong, Sandy Creek, on February 19, 1952)

Not too long ago there was some discussion, by members of the Oswego County Historical Society, of the possibility and advisability of arranging for an Oswego County Hall of Fame whereby those Oswegonians who had made large contributions in the field of education, medicine, literature, research, agriculture or any of a score or more of other fields could be fittingly honored. This would bring proper attention to their successes and give us a chance to honor our county's outstanding men and women.

I sincerely believe that Jerome Increase Case is a potential candidate for such honor.

John Case, the progenitor of the American Cases, was born in Aylesham, England, and came to America in 1633. He landed at Dorchester, Mass., but later settled in Windsor, Conn. What happened to the family from 1633 to 1787 does not directly concern us. On Dec. 13, 1787, Caleb Case was born. When he was ready to establish a home he married Deborah Jackson, a member of the family which gave Andrew Jackson to the world. Caleb and Deborah came to Williamstown, Oswego County, where he became a pioneer wheat farmer. He came by way of the old water route from Rensselaer County in 1811.

At Williamstown he built a log cabin which is claimed to have been a plain, but in a primitive way, a beautiful structure with its puncheon floor, fireplace, a ladder leading to the loft and a cellar for storing meat.

After many weeks of correspondence, several calls on old residents and an afternoon with Miss Ida Case in Williamstown I have been able to locate a farm which was known as a Case farm. It is the first farm past the Kasoag school house and on the right hand side of the road as one proceeds towards Williamstown. The log cabin, no doubt, was replaced by the house that now stands there. Carrie Speck Stearns says that it is a very old house and that she can remember it was called the Case farm. Whether or not this was the farm where, on Dec. 11, 1819, Jerome Increase Case, fourth son of Caleb and Deborah, was born is a debatable question.

However we do know that Caleb prospered in the country that was still wild enough to pay $25.00 for wolf pelts and twelve cents a bushel for wood ashes.

It was a sunrise to sunset schedule and the father and four sons toiled side by side with such primitive tools as the cradle and the flail, crude, wasteful and back-breaking, but the only ones available then. Whenever possible the boys went to Philander Allen's school during the brief term. The father was ambitious for his family and appreciated the value of an education.

Buys A "Ground-Hog"

Jerome grew up with the feel of blowing chaff on his face and stands of golden grain in his vision. He read in the "Genesee Farmer" about a miraculous new machine called "the Groundhog" which actually threshed wheat

mechanically. After watching the demonstration of one of these new contraptions, Caleb not only purchased one but became the local agent for their sale to his neighbors as well.

It was a slow, one or two-horse tread power machine, a spike-tooth cylinder in a box through which grain was run. Straw, grain and chaff all came out on the ground beneath the machine after which the straw was forked away and the chaff winnowed by the wind if possible.

Crude as it was it was a step forward and for six years Jerome, the thresherman of the family, nursed and tended "the Groundhog" through the harvest seasons. All the while he was dreaming of a machine that would do all the work he and his brothers had to do. He wanted a machine that would separate as well as thresh —one that would pile the straw at one end, blow off the chaff and deliver the grain separately. This would eliminate forking and winnowing and would truly be a miracle machine. In the evenings he would sit before the fireplace and sketch the ideas that came into his mind. As Caleb noticed his son's interest in and talent for invention he encouraged him to enroll at Rensselaer-Oswego Academy at Mexicoville, half way between Williamstown and Oswego, in 1841.

He worked furiously at his lessons and kept dreaming that some day he might free the farmer from the drudgery and poverty of small crops harvested in fear of bad weather and threshed laboriously and in a desperate hurry.

Determines To Go West

A man does not consciously determine to push back a frontier to "open the west" or to build a great nation. He merely chooses his job and does the best he can with it. It is important to our agricultural and economic history that Jerome did not choose the relative security of farming in New York. Hearing reports of the richness of land in the Northwest Territory and sensing that wheat was definitely moving westward into the broad prairie country, he determined to pull up stakes and go to Wisconsin to establish a thresher manufacturing business. That choice built an inventor, an enormous business and has helped in a great measure to build a nation.

In the spring of 1842 he shipped out of Oswego aboard the new screw-propeller steamer, "Vandalia", built in the Doolittle shipyard at Oswego the preceding year as the first propeller on the Great Lakes. He took a half dozen "Groundhog" threshers with him (which he had bought on credit at an Oswego iron works which manufactured a few) and cash enough to cover the expenses of his journey. He sold five of these machines on his way north from Chicago. The sixth he kept for custom work and experimentation. He had gone to Wisconsin to sell threshers but not "Groundhogs". His sales would be Case machines.

At Rochester, Wisconsin, he would tear down the last "Groundhog" and begin the development of an improved thresher. The countryside was beautiful with its autumn coloring, the rivers were running full and it had a prosperous look. It was already being called the heart of the American wheat belt. A sense of deep satisfaction engulfed him as he enjoyed the feeling of independence and adventure. He would see his dream come true; for at least he had a clear vision of what he was going to build.

The First Case Thresher

For a year and a half he worked. At last on a May morning his first Case thresher made its debut on the Cherry Hill Farm of Henry Cady. A small crowd of well-wishers and skeptics assembled to see if the wonder-machine would do what it was supposed to do. It

did what it was designed to do—separated grain from straw in a manner vastly superior to anything then on the market.

All that summer, Case made minor improvements on his thresher. When harvest time came he threshed throughout the country side. The machine stood up well under all field tests. He was ready to operate a factory and build threshers for wheat farmers.

Unable to get water rights in Rochester he went to Racine, twenty miles east on Lake Michigan. This place had a natural harbor which was an advantage. At the time Case rented a little shop and started manufacturing there, its population was 1,920. Today it is a thriving city of over 70,000.

Those early threshers could shell out the grain, blow off the chaff and carry away the straw. The grain ran out of a spout all cleaned, into a box where it could be shoveled into sacks. The wheat farmers had plenty of land for planting purposes, the market was excellent but the ability to harvest a crop before it ripened too much and was largely wasted was their big problem. They listened and watched. By 1847 the demand for his product encouraged him to build a three-story brick shop 30 feet wide and 80 feet long so that he could step up production.

There was more to merchandising threshers than production and publicity. Finances played an all important part, for money was short. From the beginning Case made it easy for worthy farmers to purchase his machine. His terms of $50 down and liberal credit on the balance were more than generous. To those who could pay all cash, he gave a 10 per cent discount.

Advertising Aids Business Growth

He was a pioneer in advertising. As early as 1850 he was placing advertisements in farm papers, sending out mailings, making personal calls on prospects and staging demonstrations.

An insight into the physical and financial difficulties which beset the farm implement manufacturer in his pioneer days can be seen from a glance at his collection problems. The hardships and risks would have discouraged the majority of young men. Not so with J. I. Case. Customers were scattered, many of them beyond the reach of railroads. The Midwest roads became quagmires after heavy rains, wagons became mired but the machinery had to go through. Nearly all farm machinery was bought on credit and the manufacturer had to function as banker to his customers, tiding them over slack periods on a promise of payment when the crops were harvested and sold.

After he had been in Racine a short time he met and married Lydia Ann Bull. Some excerpts, from letters which he wrote to her while acting as his own collection agency, will tell how difficult transportation and collecting could be. Periodically he set out on laborious trips on foot, horseback or lake or river boat.

Collection Problems

From Monroe, Wisconsin, on October 30, 1849, he wrote: "I have ridden ten miles since dark, taken care of my horses, eaten supper and written one letter. I drove hard all day Saturday and only got as far as Delevan....I have had middling luck collecting. So far I have collected one horse and enough money to pay expenses home providing I cozen pretty well."

From "nine miles east of Madison" on November 12, 1850, he wrote...."I have ridden late and early since I left Spring Prairie, presented notes to the amount of $2,500 for payment and have received $50. I tell you these are hard old times to collect money but I get good promises to get it in by the 25th... Since leaving

you I have paid out only 35c for a pocket map and 10c for a gimlet to fasten my door at night. I find it will be necessary for me to be gone most of the season to save my debts and to get along."

The same story of poor collections and steady perseverance in face of transportation hardships is repeated over and over in the letters to his wife throughout the early years of his business.

Feb. 21, 1852...."I feel some depressed in spirits this evening as I have collected only $21 since I left home."

Again from Galena, Illinois, on April 12, 1853: "I have now boarded a steamer which goes up to St. Paul....I have collected a little money since I left and if I am prudent I think it shall last me home."

The next day he wrote from Prairie LaPorte, Illinois: "I arrived in this place about 8 o'clock on the steamer Nonimee. I have been to Garrinville, a distance of about ten miles. Did my business and returned on foot....The walking was very bad....I did not rest much last night as the boat was crowded to a jam and I was obliged to sleep on the cabin floor. I shall retire early this evening for tomorrow I expect to start on foot for Dubuque, a distance of 40 miles."

Thus, through faith in his customers and a dogged application to his business affairs, he helped the American farmer survive a most difficult beginning.

Very early in life Case realized what machines could do for agriculture. He knew what his product meant to the grain farmer. He sensed how machines might change the entire complexion of the agricultural and economic world. He was keenly aware that what he hoped would be his livelihood would be a real service to others.

Worked His Own Machines

In 1856 he had just developed a new thresher which embodied important changes. The first one produced was sold to Chesbrough and Hart who operated farms at Emerald Grove near Janesville about 70 miles from Racine. Although the machine had been tested at the factory, Case could not resist the impulse to see it in operation at the farm. One morning a strange rig drove to the field where Chesbrough and his crew were at work. Jerome I. Case had obeyed the impulse and driven from Racine to see his new thresher at work. After introducing himself he asked if he might feed it for a while. Enjoying the work he remained on the job until noon and then ate with the men, sitting beside William Chesbrough who was then thirteen years old. Years later William said: "There was not a prouder boy than I was that day. To me Mr. Case was as great a man as I ever hoped to meet. There was I, cutting bands and Mr. Case, the builder of the machine, feeding the bundles as fast as I could cut. He surely was an expert at feeding a thresher and kept it humming to full capacity all the time."

He never lost the personal touch—both in his dealings with his employees and with his customers. The hum of a threshing machine in full operation was music to him and his fingers never lost their itch to feed the sheaves into it or heft the sacks of precious grains. He always felt that his experience in the field as a working man provided a foundation upon which he could build a needed product. As a farmer he understood a farmer's problems; as a designer he helped to solve their problems; as a business man he merchandised the solution.

By 1861 he sensed that his business was too big and cumbersome for him to carry on alone. At the same time, he was desirous of maintaining the personal and practical standards he had practiced for almost twenty years. So he converted his business to a partnership known as J. I. Case

and Company but made certain the partners were men like himself—specialists in business yet devoted to service.

In setting up the partnership, he took in his own brother-in-law, Stephen Bull, and placed him in charge of finances. Robert H. Baker was made general agent and collector, and Massena B. Erskine, an engineer, was put in charge of mechanical construction. Together, these men made up the famous "Big Four" of the thresher manufacturing business in Racine.

Not only did J. I. Case make threshers but also the power by which they were operated.

Produces "The Sweepstakes"

The first Case thresher to sweep the west was the "Sweepstakes", a separator that proved a revelation in its day. This one was driven by a Case-built two-horse tread power. He produced thread-powers and sweep-powers almost from the beginning, but his great early triumph in the power field came with his work on steam engines. In 1869, the same year he introduced his celebrated "Eclipse" (no apron) thresher, his factory sent out Steam Engine No. 1, an agricultural "iron man" that was to set the pace in the steam power field and usher in a new day for farmers the world over. It was the forerunner of thousands of Case steamers. Today "Old No. 1" holds a place of honor in the Case Museum at Racine. It is still capable of doing a good job.

After the "Eclipse" and steam engine, Case scored triumph after triumph as a manufacturer. His portable steam engine won the highest award at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876 and he himself was honored for the outstanding contribution to agriculture the same year that Alexander Graham Bell was given the gold medal for the greatest contribution to science in the telephone.

In 1884, when he added a steering device to his engine (he had given it traction several years before), he created one of the very first tractors—a snorting steam-propelled giant capable of pulling plows and ideal for furnishing power for other belt-driven machines. With the introduction of his celebrated "Agitator" thresher of 1880 and the continued development of his steam engines, his soon became the most famous name throughout the grain fields of America and Europe.

The Case Agitator principle of counterbalancing the grain pan and straw rack is still basic to threshing today. The capacity of this rig was about a thousand bushels of wheat per day, employing a crew of 15 to 20 men. This was real production compared with the old Ground Hog and shaker type which turned out about 80 bushels per day. Case felt there were better days ahead and went on to improve, perfect and speed up production.

Business Mushrooms

The Case Company expanded in mushroom fashion. As the word spread through the broad wheat fields, more and more men joined the army of progressive farmers who saved their grain with Case machinery. From north and east, lake boats came to the Case docks loaded with cargoes of lumber, iron, steel and coal. Foundries, machine shops, wood shops, experimental rooms, testing rooms and offices grew and outgrew their quarters.

While we do not see Jerome Increase Case as a military man yet he has been given credit for no little part in the victories of our country. Armies are at the mercy of food production, traveling, as Napoleon so aptly put it, "on their stomachs." Food wins wars and the objective of the farmer in war time is to produce food required for victory. Farm machinery is as necessary as weapons of warfare. Farm production achieved through farm

machinery proved vital to our victories in both World Wars I and II. J. I. Case and other farm implement manufacturers are the men responsible for the abundant agricultural production which helped make American soldiers strong under stress while the enemy was forced to resort to short rations.

Died In 1891

When Jerome I. Case died on Dec. 22, 1891, he had fulfilled his historic and economic destiny as the biggest builder of threshers and steam traction engines in the world.

Success had given him a full and satisfying life—one of service to agriculture and civic improvement. He had packed his leisure hours full of living, too. Quite early in his life he became the most influential private citizen in Racine. He was founder of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters; president of the Racine County Agricultural Society; served as mayor of Racine and was also a state senator.

The industrialization of Racine is directly traceable to the establishment of the Case factory. Approximately one-seventh of the city's industrial workers are today employed by the J. I. Case Company in the two Case plants there.

Eight Plants Today

Six other plants are located at Burlington and Bettendorf, Iowa; Rockford and Rock Island, Illinois; Stockton, California and Anniston, Alabama. Over all the eight plants employ over 12,000 people. The company is established on a firm footing, with every chance of continued success. Trained men are at the wheel and the same rules are in force. Quoting from Case's reply to a news reporter, when asked the secret of success ..."First, I made myself sure that the machine I proposed to make was correct in principle and was needed. Second, I endeavored to construct the machine in the most perfect manner possible, always using the best materials and constructing it in the most durable way I could devise."

Horse Fancier

In his private life, too, he was a man to be remembered. Not all his buildings were shops for he had a palace-like, world-famous stable built near the race tracks for his record-breakers. "Nothing but the best" was his slogan for horses as well as machinery. He owned the world record-holding black gelding, Jay-eye---see, the first horse ever to hold the world's record for both trotting and pacing (or J. I. C.) and such other record breakers as Phallas, Governor Sprague and Lexington Wilks.

Jerome Increase Case saw the farmer advance from the cradle to the reapers, from the flail to the thresher, from the horse to the tractor. He had seen the shackles of laborious hand labor broken and been in the very forefront of that epic-making advance. He had made the dream of a Williamstown boy come true and made Williamstown proud that it was his birthplace.

Many descendants of the Case family (there were seven children born to Jerome and Lydia) are prominent in Wisconsin affairs. One son, Jackson Case, served as mayor of Racine.

Clinton Case, a cousin who was also a Williamstown boy, and who was in the Case Company office for some time, is now living in Madison, Wisconsin.

The Coat Of Arms

It might be interesting to note that the Case Coat of Arms was granted to the family on Dec. 21, 1598. Its over-all color scheme features silver, red and gold. The dominant figurations are buckles, cresents and torteaux. On both sides of the family the forebears of Jerome I. Case reached America in the 17th century, settling in New York and New England.

Politics and Campaigns in the 1840's

(Paper Given Before Oswego County Historical Society by Charles Groat, Oswego, March 18, 1952)

Probably no other period in the history of the American nation has as much to offer in the way of color and genuine folk interest as the years between 1830 and 1850. Before this period America was definitely an infant republic, dependent upon Europe for many of its institutions and, to a large extent, its very livlihood. On the other hand, after the half way mark of the century the republic became so deeply engrossed in sectional controversy that many other aspects of American life were lost in the melee of war that followed. This sectional controversy, fired by socio-economic forces as well as by certain explosive psychological elements all but succeeded in permanently rending the young republic. After the war many Americans doubtless felt that the future would be a mere continuation of the familiar past. However, this was not destined to be as new economic forces and new social cross-currents were at work transforming society into a new industrial pattern.

However, the period of 1830-1850 was like neither the years that preceded it nor those that followed. Here was a nation, exuberant in its adolescence, and already feeling quite expansive. Having hacked out a future for themselves from the challenging frontier, and having dealt with the problems of government and diplomacy with varying degrees of success, Americans were now ready to look around at what they had created. Aggressive and flamboyant, yet gullible and credulous, these people continued to amaze the world. They were on the one hand, practical and pragmatic, while on the other they were idealistic and mystical. In spite of their vaunted practicality, they seemed to be virtually hovering on the periphery of a metaphysical twilight. At the same time that they were extending the principle and practice of democracy and concerning themselves with road and canal construction, they were also evidencing a real and genuine interest in such matters as somnambulism, Millerism, and spiritualism.

Interest Range Wide

According to present day standards it might be difficult to justify the belief that these 19th century small town Americans such as the inhabitants of Oswego led a cosmopolitan, urbane life; yet it would be fully as difficult to prove that they were of the opposite point of view. A cursory examination of their newspapers reveals that these people led full, active lives and that they had a wide, stimulating range of interests. Certainly it is hard to say that they were provincial when foreign events occupied more space than local news, as it often did. Their range of interests was truly amazing. Although they were far removed from the Indian danger by 1830, yet they showed a lively interest in the problem of Indian removal in Georgia and Florida. State elections were always certain to evoke considerable interest and their outcome was recorded in some detail, even of the most distant southern states. Oswegonians followed closely the exploits of the South American revolutionists and the full text of some of the speeches of Simon

Bolivar appeared in the Palladium of 1830. Naturally, the proximity of Canada insured its position of prominence in the newspapers of Oswego and the tide of political events there was scanned as closely perhaps as the commercial and maritime notes. The latter years of the thirties were destined to project Canada into American affairs even more sharply with the coming of the Patriot War and the Maine Boundary dispute. Of events in Europe, revolutionary France and Czarist Russia shared the spotlight with the British Empire. Americans were alternately thrilled and disgusted with the swift tide of events in France while disgust seemed quite universal at the Russian subjection of the hapless Poles.

Meanwhile, new forces were at work here at home—forces which were to put an indelible stamp upon the American character. Public attention was centering in the temperance drive, the abolitionist movement, religious revival and divergency, the spreading of culture, and the general wave of humanitarianism that characterized the age.

Politics Absorbing

That these were important aspects of American culture no one can deny. Nevertheless, it was the field of politics that seemed to have the most universal and continuing appeal. Present day Americans, concerned so much about foreign affairs and atomic warfare, devote less time, comparatively speaking, to politics and elections. The fire and excitement of a presidential election for instance, is usually confined to the four or five months preceding the election. True, speculation and excitement sometimes rises to the fever pitch but it is often overshadowed by other events. This, of course, is in pronounced contrast to the Americans of a century or more earlier. Then, politics seemed to provide the only focal point of interest that could be shared by all and they threw themselves into it with great gusto. The warp and woof of their daily lives was studded by political harangues, rallies and conventions, and threats, speeches, and tirades. After the election there followed a period of rejoicing or moaning, depending upon which party triumphed at the polls. The losers would quickly rally their forces and the struggle would commence all over again. Of course, there were the local and state elections which were given much more attention than they are today. These earlier Americans played the game of politics as vigorously as they did everything else.

Let us glance briefly at the general political scene in 1830. The party in power at that time, generally refered to as the Democratic-Republican party, had been spawned by political and social unrest and had been muted by astute political leadership. Organically, this party was an outgrowth of the National Republican Party which had flourished during the period following the War of 1812, a period euphemistically referred to as the "Era of Good Feeling". That this was a misnomer there is now no reason to doubt. Actually it was a period of growing political discontent, a period of smoldering sectional animosities and factional strife within the body politic. The ill feeling aroused by the passage of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 brought these pressures to the fore and caused thoughtful and farseeing men to shudder at the latent force of sectional interests. Thomas Jefferson, a venerable elder statesman in 1820, in reference to the Missouri Compromise said prophetically: "Like a firebell in the night, it awakened me and filled me with terror. I considered it at once the death knell of the union." The aged Jefferson, living beyond his generation, found few listeners for his sage council.

The Democratic - Republican Party had swept into power in 1832 with that intrepid son of America's sprawling frontier, Andrew Jackson, simultaneously ushering in a new era in American politics. His first inaugural was truly "open house" at the White House for the American people. Muddy boots from the wilderness West clumped over velvet carpets while the coarse laughter of tobacco-chewing frontiersmen profaned the hallowed walls where foreign diplomats had once been feted. Throughout the country a shudder passed through polite society and John Adams was reported to have cried out despairingly, "This is the end."

This was indeed the age of the "new politics"; for the masses had come into their own. During the past few years the various states had been busy amending their constitutions in a manner intended to broaden the franchise. Universal manhood suffrage was virtually achieved. With this extended franchise came several political innovations. The caucus method of nominations gradually gave ground to the more democratic national nominating conventions. This period also gave rise to the party leader. A swayer of the masses, he combined the attributes of the demagogue, the psychologist, and the super-salesman.

Welland Canal Opened

But let us turn and scrutinize the national scene from the local level. In the village of Oswego the decade of the thirties was one of robust growth based on an expanding economy and relative prosperity. It was an exciting age with many new facets of American life being experienced for the first time. Oswegonians cheered at the opening of the Welland Canal in 1830, with its promise of trade for this village. The canal was officially opened by the departure of the schooner Erie and was cause for festive rejoicing in Oswego. A giant celebration was in order and was presided over by T. F. Morgan, Esq., president of the village, Alvin Bronson, Henry Fitzhugh, and Gerrit Smith, men all vitally interested in the material progress of the city. "Great good humor, hilarity, and temperance prevailed", reported the Oswego Palladium and Republican Chronicle of August 11. Temperance or no temperance over twenty-five toasts were offered. Gerrit Smith, with an eye to future business offered, "The Welland Canal—a stream of wealth into the lap of Oswego". Alvin Bronson rose to near oratorical heights to proclaim, "The Schooner Erie—like the dove of the Ark, a messenger on the winds; but unlike the dove, she proclaims that the waters are flowing, not ebbing." And Henry Fitzhugh almost outdid himself by boasting, "Oswego—with Upper Canada, Ohio, Michigan, and the valley of the Genesee for her back-country, she can never want supplies!"

The AntiMasonic impulse reached its fullest flowering during this period and Oswego was in the midst of it. And in 1832, the dread fear of cholera hung over the city like a dark cloud. Unrest and disturbances in Canada were keenly felt in Oswego and especially did the Patriot War of 1837-38 excite Oswegonians. This same decade saw the village engrossed in the temperance movement, the abolitionist crusade, the Sunday School Movement, and the imprisonment for debt controversy. In more prosaic matters also was Oswego forging ahead. The Oswego Palladium of June 2, 1830, reprinted an extract from the Kingston Chronicle describing the growth of Oswego:

"The village is situated on the southern banks of Lake Ontario and at the mouth of the Oswego River—a rapid and powerful stream exceedingly well adapted to hydraulic purposes. An extensive and substantial pier has recently been

constructed by the United States government, by which means a safe and commodious harbor is formed. Several large flour mills are in constant operation and extensive forwarding store houses are erected along the wharves. At the head of the harbor there is a wooden bridge 700 feet long, connecting the two parts of the village. The public buildings are most respectable. The Episcopal Church is indeed handsome and built in good taste. The principle tavern is a large brick building called the Welland House and is well kept by Col. White. The population of Oswego hovers around 3000—among which are twelve doctors, sixteen lawyers, and a goodly sprinkling of colonels, judges, and generals. The society is good and very attentive to strangers."

Local Industry In 1832

The Oswego Palladium gives a more graphic account of the economic growth of the village. The June 12, 1832, issue lists the economic activity of the village as follows:

Four operating flour mills:
Fitzhugh & Co.—five stories high of stone const.
Fitzhugh & Co.—five stories high of stone const.
Bronson & Morgan—four stories high
Smith, Cole & Co.—five stories high.
One machine factory
One textile factory—the Oswego Cotton Factory
Stone Cutting and Polishing—Cochran and Dunton
Foundry and Iron Works—E. Carrington & Co.
Two tanneries, three sawmills, and numerous other small retail establishments.

Five Churches: Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, Catholic.

The village boasted of a population of 2116 in 1830, and 3212 in 1833, while by 1835 it had reached 4,902.

But let us look more closely into this matter of political Anti-Masonry and its impact upon Oswego.

AntiMasonic Movement

AntiMasonry as a social and political force was thrust upon the American scene by the abduction and presumed murder of William Morgan of Batavia, New York. A stone mason and bricklayer by trade, Morgan had led a quiet and uneventful life in the small town environment of central New York State. He had been a Mason of good standing but by 1826 had become disgruntled and dissatisfied with the Order. Partly out of a desire for revenge, he announced his intention of publishing a book exposing the secrets of the Masonic Order. Under a flood of protests, Morgan proceeded to make a contract with David C. Miller, editor of the Republican Advocate in Batavia, to print the book. Morgan's subseqent dissappearance caused a great furore throughout the area and gossip spread like wildfire that the Masons had struck silently in the dead of night and had made away with Morgan. Tremendous excitement and activity prevailed. Weeks later, the discovery of a partially decomposed body floating in the Niagara River served only to intensify the issue. Morgan's widow was immediately summoned and forthwith proclaimed it to be the body of her late departed husband. The fact that another woman from Canada also claimed the body as that of her recently departed spouse, seemed to carry no particular significance.

After a protracted delay, the abductors were brought to trial and a verdict of guilty was arrived at. However, the penalty served as a mere travesty on justice, while the uprighteous citizenry fumed and seethed with indignation. The sentences ranged from two years down to one month. In all probability, the ex-

tremely light sentence did more to arouse the public mind than had the actual disappearance of Morgan in the first place. Gradually, all over the affected area people began to see that here was a great, sinister, and wholly undemocratic force which sat astride not only politics but also the law and press. A somewhat apathetic distrust of secret societies had existed in America since the earliest times, but the fact that George Washington and other prominent leaders had been Masons tended to exclude that order from any particular stigma. Now, all that was to be changed. In the ensuing months several significant facts impressed themselves upon the minds of the people. Evading the demands of its constitutents, the state Legislature failed to pass any effective remedial legislation; the Courts repeatedly failed to do proper justice in cases pertaining to Masonry, while the newspapers, largely Masonic, either failed to report the significant events, or deliberately distorted them to their own purposes. Denunciatory mass meetings were held in which the general consensus of opinion seemed to follow the reasoning that all secret societies were dangerous to freedom, but Masonry especially so, as it was charged that some of its members had shown themselves ready to commit murder in the interests of their order, and therefore, no Mason should be supported for office.

The Masonic Order was then composed, to a large extent, of prosperous and influential men who pushed a vigorous and spirited campaign for the order's defense. This situation only lent greater emphasis to the claim of the AntiMasons that the Order was using its strength for political purposes and that they were trying to subvert the government. The Masons were in an uncomfortable position, for if they defended their doctrines, they were accused of political chicanery, while on the other hand, if they renounced their allegience, it was looked upon as additional proof of their original subversive intentions. Be that as it may, thousands of Masons did renounce their ties to the Order and their public statements filled the newspapers of the day. The fact that Masonic membership in New York State dwindled from 20,000 in 1826 to a mere 3,000 in 1836 shows the tremendous sweep of this force. However, this was only a temporary eclipse for the Order afterwards recouped its forces.

Pawns of Politicians

After the first flurry of passions had cooled many of the ex-Masons who had gone over to the Anti-Mason camp began to regret their hasty renunciations and soon thereafter the AntiMasons were having their renunciation troubles too. As early as 1830, some of the converts began to realize that they were being used as pawns on the political chessboard. The July 28th, 1830 issue of the Oswego Palladium carried a public renunciation of AntiMasonry by one John Turner, who said in part:

"I consider the AntiMasons honest men who have been deceived and cheated into being tools of aspiring demagogues. I renounce it as the hotbed of violence, discord, and unmanly strife—as the author of immense and various evils, and no good, as the patron of bigotry, meanness and hypocrity—as the prompter of discord, enmities, jealousies, and cruel and outrageous slanders and abuses—as the crippled hobby of bankrupt politicians and apostate moralists. I renounce the mass of Anti-Masons as deluded and infatuated men—as men, blindly and zealously persecuting their innocent neighbors for opinions sake—as men ignorantly believing themselves engaged in God's service, while heaping all possible ills upon the heads of their unoffending brethern. I re-

nounce Anti-Masonick leaders as time-serving politicians, unprincipled apostates, and selfish and calculating disorganizers. Wherever anti-masonry appears, discord and contention attend upon its every step; and wherever it obtains the ascendency, incessant and extensive strife prevails — wherever it goes, it literally sends not peace, but the sword. My opinion of Masonry has not changed. I still believe it to be a useless and unnecessary institution, a compound of folly and wickedness, and if left to itself, would sink by its own incumbent rotteness. However, the evils of Masonry, great and manifold as they maye be, are infinitely less than the evils of Anti-Masonry."

After 1830, it become readily apparent that the force of Anti-Masonry was dictated, in a large measure, by the political situation of the time, and it was in this field that it exercised its greatest influence. The opposition to Andrew Jackson's administration had been in existence from his first inaugural but the sweeping effects of the spoils system had left the opponents of the regime in a peculiarly frustrating position. In the election year of 1832, political Anti-Masonry reached its high water mark. By this time, it was actually a third party, claiming many adherents in New York, Pennsylvania, and New England. Guided by skilled leaders such as Thurlow Weed and William Seward of New York and Thad Stevens of Pennsylvania, it represented a veritable complex of political and social discontent. They nominated William Wirt for President in 1832, a man who had never officially renounced Masonry. They joined forces with the National Republicans whose candidate was not only a Mason but who had publicly objected to Anti Masonry. Some successes were won in the state elections, but by the time the 1836 election rolled around, the party as such, was definitely waning.

An Anti-Masonic Newspaper

The Oswego Palladium maintained an unswerving support of the Jackson administration throughout the AntiMasonic crisis. However, the AntiMasonic element was soon represented by a newspaper edited by Richard Oliphant, and entitled the Oswego Free Press. Mr. Oliphant's star was in the ascendency and he later became the editor of the Oswego County Whig. However, a long and most difficult path lay ahead for Mr. Oliphant and it was a full decade before he tasted the brimming cup of victory when at last the Democratic party was defeated in 1840 and the Whigs swept into power. Throughout the Whig interlude, the Oswego Palladium continued in its role of political opposition.

To the discerning individual it must have been readily apparent that AntiMasonry was rapidly overflowing the narrow confines of its avowed purpose and was entering vigorously into the political realm. Thus, AntiMasonry became a two-sided issue. This fact is apt to confuse the laymen unless he keeps certain facts clear in his mind. For example, the casual observer is all too apt to classify, rather carelessly, all people of that time as either hostile to Masonry and hence in the AntiMasonic camp, or those who were dedicated to the defeat of AntiMasonry and hence supported the Masonic Order. This of course, is a gross over-simplification of the issue. As Anti-Masonry grew, it became more and more a political entity. Many people flocked to its banners and voted the AntiMasonic ticket as an expression of protest in the political realm. Others lent the movement their support in the hopes of gaining remuneration for themselves in politics. Obviously

then, many people voted Anti-Masonic who were not necessarily opposed to that fraternal order. They voted this way because they were either opposed to President Jackson and his political principles or because of strictly local issues. On the other hand, it did not necessarily follow that all those who combatted AntiMasonry were supporters of the Masonic Order. Many of these people fought the extension of AntiMasonry because they saw it as an instrument of bigotry and intolerance and not because they were espicially fond of the Order. Indeed, many individuals who opposed Masonry also decried the excesses of AntiMasonry. Alvin Bronson, leading citizen of Oswego, held these views. While he never desired to join the Order, neither could he condone the radical course of political Anti-Masonry.

AntiMasonry Short Lived

This movement was, then, a complex social and political force. It attracted men from all walks of life and of all political faiths. However, from 1830 on it became apparent that the preponderance of membership consisted of those who were "on the outside"—politically speaking; those who were unseated by the relentless spoils system of Andrew Jackson or those who had lost, or were seeking political influence in local affairs. Actually, as a political force, AntiMasonry was rather shortlived. It did not get firmly established in national politics until 1830; by 1834 a definite decline was noted, and by 1836 its force had been largely spent.

In Oswego, AntiMasonry caused considerable interest in the early 1830s. Actually, the village was in the center of the infected area. AntiMasonry extended eastward from Ohio into western New York and northern Pennsylvania, through northern New York and up into the New England states. In the county elections of 1831 and the national elections of 1832, Oswegonians witnessed the local high water mark of political Anti-Masonry. The Oswego Palladium and Republican Chronicle edited by Mr. John Carpenter took up the role as spokesman for Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Republican Party in national and local affairs. Mr. Carpenter threw down the gauntlet for the 1831 county elections in an editorial of Aug. 10 in which he said, in part:

"The approaching election in this county will be one of absorbing interest and already the note of preparation is sounded by our opponents. The Anti-Masonic Party, with a zeal becoming a better cause, has already taken the incipient steps for a warm and sharply contested election, and it behooves the friends of our country—those who believe that all men are born and created equal, to be up and doing, and oppose manfully the advances of the intolerant and anti-republican principles upon which that party is founded.

"The AntiMasonic party is now the only party which is organized in opposition to the Republican Party. Its ostensible object is the proscription of a society of men who choose to differ with them on a subject entirely disconnected from politics; but its real object, as has been proclaimed by its leaders, is the acquisition of political power. They avow no political principles, profess no attachment or opposition to any of the leading measures of the government, and should they succeed, the people have no assurance they will adopt any measures except those of proscription. In such a state of affairs, where would be the safety of our boasted political institutions?—Where would be the political

equality which the Constitution secures to every sect and denomination of our citizens? Let every citizen reflect upon such a crisis, and let his own judgement dictate a reply.

"A desperate struggle is shaping up for this county, and on the result of the approaching election may depend the existence of political antimasonry in this county. By defeating it at this election we may expect that at the next (which is the presidential) we may be brought back into the healthful channels of fair political discussion. Every citizen who values the safety of our institutions and wishes to put an end to the the interference of this illegitimate non-descript in our politics, must feel himself loudly called upon to throw his weight into the balance against it."

Alvin Bronson's Attitude

In the AntiMasonic Free Press of Oswego, edited by Mr. Richard Oliphant, there appeared a story casting doubts upon the politics and patriotism of Alvin Bronson. It was implied that he was a Mason and that he had been a Federalist at the time of the War of 1812. In a vehement reply the Oswego Palladium attempted to refute the charges:

"Alvin Bronson is not and never has been a Mason. He is, in principle, opposed to the institution; but he will not desert his Republican friends, to unite with the opposition ..... The editor of the Free Press claims that Mr. Bronson was a Federalist during the late war, referring to the War of 1812. Let Mr. Bronson's opinions as to the policy of that war have been what they may; his conduct during the war is sufficient evidence of his patriotism and devotion to his country. At that trying period on our frontiers, Mr. Bronson so far had the confidence of our democratic government as to hold the office of Public Storekeeper at Oswego from an early period of the war to its close. In this capacity he was informed by the commanding general of the district that an expedition against Oswego was fitting out at Kingston and that the governor would rely wholly on his exertions to remove from Oswego a large deposit of military stores to a place of safety. He placed his own vessel, the Penelope, in this hazardous service and removed the deposits losing his ship in the movement. At the capture of Oswego, he was taken prisoner, but was offered his liberty if he would divulge where the stores had been secreted. He refused to give any information and consequently was carried off as a prisoner of war and held in captivity a number of weeks until finally liberated. So much for Mr. Bronson's Federalism."

This reply, of course, did not actually refute the AntiMasonic charge that Mr. Bronson was a Federalist. Undoubtedly Mr. Bronson was a Federalist in the period mentioned but that did not mean that he was lacking in patriotism as implied in the Oliphant paper. However, Mr. Oliphant had the last word when it was discovered that Alvin Bronson did receive payment for the loss of his ship. In 1824, a full ten years after the incident, he received 3,000 dollars in compensation for his loss.

Gerritt Smith's Viewpoints

As the election season approached, public expectation in Oswego County mounted rapidly. Just how strong was AntiMasonry, anyway? Could their nominees stand up under the close scrutiny of the voting citizenry? Just what was their relationship to the Clay faction of the all but defunct National Republican

Party? These and other questions assailed the minds of the people. Consequently, considerable interest was evidenced by Oswegonians when Geritt Smith's views on political AntiMasonry were made public. The Oswego Palladium of July 13, reprinted Smith's statement from the Madison Observer and Recorder. Smith wrote in part:

"Distrusting the virtue there is in words, the Anti (s) try what virtue there is in stones. They call on us to make sure of the immediate fall of Masonry by uniting with them to strip Masons of political power. Thus they are ready, in their eagerness to accomplish their object, to violate the terms of our political compact, and to defraud a large portion of the citizenry of their undoubted rights. The political power invested in our electors is not to be used to enforce their views and wishes in all matters."

And with no little vehemence, Mr. Smith continues:

"This political crusade against Masonry is to me Alarming! What may not follow such a precedent? The ballot boxes will, with as much propriety, be chosen to settle the controversy between the Calvinist and the Armenian—between the Deist and the Christian. If, instead of making the lawful attempt to argue down Masonry, it is to be crushed in this way, where will you set bounds to this precedent, and the day will not be far distant when the power of our electors will be degraded from its present dignified exercise in matters of state to a contemptible interference with the affairs of the family or the rights of conscienec and the freedom of opinion."

Mr. Smith concluded his remarks by saying:

"I do hope, therefore, Sir, That the result of the coming elections in this county will be such as to dissappoint those who are industriously bringing the question of Masonry to bear upon it; and that it may appear, for the honor of our country, that we look on the political rights of Masons to be as sacred as those of other men."

Wirt Named For President

Meanwhile, the public was further enlightened by the Anti-Masonic National Convention which met in Baltimore on the 26th of September. John C. Spencer of New York was chosen chairman and presided well over a rather noisy convention. After much haggling and hurried private consultations, a William Wirt of Maryland was awarded the presidential nomination. This was rather astonishing to the rank and file as Mr. Wirt was himself a Mason and had never publicly renounced the order. The Palladium caustically announced:

".....Wiliam Wirt of Maryland, a Mason, who had never discovered the evils of Masonry or the blessings of AntiMasonry until this meeting, very suddenly became a convert, and was nominated for the presidency."

County Nominees in 1831

In the meantime the Democratic-Republicans of the county met in convention at Union Square for the purpose of nominating candidates for the various offices which were to be filled at the forthcoming elections. After a "full, free and harmonious consultation", the following individuals were recommended to the electors of the county for the offices designated: for member of the Assembly, Avery Skinner of Mexico; (Mr. Skinner had served as county Treasurer and as a judge in the county courts.); for county clerk, Joseph Turner of Scriba; and for Sheriff, William Hale, of Richland.

Immediately the Free Press launched an attack against these newly announced candidates. By

innuendo and blunt implication they were described as being unqualified for the offices for which they aspired. The Republican candidate for county Clerk, Joseph Turner, came in for particular abuse. "A petty man," trumpeted the Free Press, "and one who has held only petty and nondescript offices". "Petty man! petty and non-descript offices!", stormed the Palladium in its October 19th issue. "Just listen to this. Mr. Turner has been president of the Oswego County Temperance Society; President of the Oswego County Sunday School Teachers Union; secretary of the Lake Ontario Seaman's Friend Society, and a member of the Baptist Church. He has also been an assistant in the county clerk's Office. If these are petty and nondescript offices, well, we'll let the people decide that on election day."

At about the same time the AntiMasonic ticket was announced, as follows: for member of the Assembly, Nathan Stiles of Constantia; for the office of the County Clerk, Donald McPherson of Scriba; and for Sheriff, Robert Gillespie of Richland. As the Free Press had derided the Republican candidates so now did the Palladium attempt to heap scorn on these hapless individuals. All their past activities, indeed, their whole life from the cradle forward was bared to the public usually with considerable embellishment. "Gillespie is a yes man", chortled the Palladium gleefully.

"Ask him if he is in favor of General Jackson—he answers yes; if he approves of the course his opponents are taking —he answers yes; if he is opposed to Anti-Masonry — he answers yes; if he dislikes Masons—he answers yes; YES, YES, YES, that same eternal answer is all that escapes him."

Of Mr. McPherson, the Palladium had this to say:

"Who is this Donald McPherson? He is a Scotchman by birth, his best inheritance and redeeming quality, if indeed, redemption is possible. Until last spring and for the three or four years he has been in this county, he was a resident of the town of Oswego. He has been a candidate for the office of constable twice, but a certain something in his manner and his intercourse with his fellow citizens, renders him so excessively unpopular that he could not be elected. He then was so anxious for an office that he actually whined and cried about the Town Justices until they finally appointed him."

Renunciations Feature Campaign

Meanwhile, both sides were making use of public renunciations which they printed in their newspapers for their propaganda value. A good, scathing renunciation published in the paper and embellished with an editorial introduction was indeed a potent weapon. However, by 1831, the peak of Masonic renunciations had been reached, while the renunciations of the AntiMasons seemed to be increasing. Such a renunciation of AntiMasonry was published in the Palladium of October 19th. In glaring headlines it was announced that Mr. Hiram Carpenter of Lewis County was renouncing his ties with AntiMasonry. In the words of the Palladium:

"For one reason he was the editor of the AntiMasonic newspaper of Lowville and was considered a main pillar of the party in that county. He was an AntiMason from principle; but having seen the base means to which it has been perverted, and being fully convinced that its original object has been lost sight of, and that it is now merely being used to gratify the cupidity of political bankrupts and corrupt demagogues, he has resolved in honesty of heart to come out from among them."

The renunciation itself and is here quoted in part:

"... the reason I give for departing from this course which I have strenuously pursued are the following: In the first place, the period has arrived when the spirit of AntiMasonry has arisen to a degree of frenzy and given birth to a variety of the most absurd inconsistencies. And secondly, there does not appear any sufficient ground to believe that the causes, which gave birth to AntiMasonry, any longer exist. I am aware that a few original principles are laid down and insisted on, as the seeds out of which the system vegetates; but it appears to me that both the seed and the subject have become exhausted ... The avowed object of AntiMasonry has been the overthrow of Masonry. This has been their professed object and their only object. But how stands the question in Lewis County? The Masons in this county have abandoned their lodge, given up their Masonic Charter, and disposed of the implements of the craft, in order to conciliate public opinion. This was all the AntiMasons could reasonably ask or expect. But have they been satisfied with this? NO! They have since attempted to inflame the zeal, to widen the breaches already made in society, and urge on the contest with increasing rage and antipathy."

Masonic Lodges Suspended

In the Palladium of October 19th it was reported that there was not a single Masonic Lodge operating anywhere in Oswego County.

Undoubtedly one of the most colorful charges of the entire campaign was made public on October 26. Under the banner of "ANTIMASONIC DICTATION", the Palladium revealed that the behind the scenes activities of the AntiMasonic county bosses had upset the candidacy of Donald McPherson and replaced him by Ernie Poor, of Parish. This was excellent campaign material for the Republicans and the Palladium pounced on it eagerly. After all, one of the main bulwarks of AntiMasonry had been that they opposed secret conclaves and combinations to thwart the will of the people, and now their county leaders suddenly undid the work of their own convention by replacing their candidate for clerk with another man. The Palladium gives us a colorful account of the incident:

"...The Free Press Committee has been most assiduous in their exclamations against 'dictation' and 'Regency' of the Republican Party. Now mark their consistency. At the AntiMasonic county convention McPherson was unanimously nominated for clerk. This, it appears, did not suit the 'Dictators' of the party and they immediately set to work to break up the nomination, in which they succeeded by resorting to the most dishonorable means, and called upon the delegates to meet again and perform their duty more to their satisfaction —such glaring acts of dictation never were practiced in any party to our recollection, and it remains to be seen whether the independent freemen of this county will be juggled into the support of a ticket, which must receive the sanction of George Risher, Moses Whitney, Ernie Poor, Ambrose Morgan, and Edmond Hawkes, the political bosses of local AntiMasonry."

The story continues:

"McPherson's nomination did not sit well upon the stomachs of the DICTATORS, because they could not prove his Federalism. A set-to was therefore made upon him by George Fisher, Ernie Poor and Co.; and to make peace he resigned into the hands of Poor what the PEOPLE had rightfully given

him. Mr. Poor's warm friends, the old and adhering Federalists of this vicinity notified the delegates of a few towns, the most of them friendly to Poor. A second convention is held, and the formality of voting for Poor is gone through with....Mr. Poor is, without question, an old Boston Federalist, an opposer of the late war, and a distributor of coffin handbills at the last presidential election; one who has grown up, come to maturity, and fattened upon the atmosphere of the Hartford Convention. Fisher, Whitney & Co., of course know it, and thus their anxiety to get him nominated. It is to be hoped that our old Republican friends will get their eyes open and fight again for the good old cause."

Election Outcome

The election itself showed the Republicans holding a slim lead in three out of four offices reported. The Republican candidate, Senator Robert Lansing, polled 2232 votes, while his AntiMasonic rival, Thomas Beekman, polled 2137. Republican Avery Skinner of Mexico led his AntiMasonic rival Nathan Stiles by 117 votes; while William Hale, Republican, captured the office of Sheriff, leading Robert Gillespie by 127 votes. For the office of county clerk, the AntiMasonic forces succeeded in naming their man. Yes, in spite of all the charges of boss rule and party "dictation", Ernie Poor defeated Joseph Turner by a single vote. Who can pretend to fathom the mysterious workings of the American voters mind?"

The official canvas of the county showed the extent of AntiMasonic strength. It indicated that 650 more votes were cast than at the election of the previous year. Of these, the Republicans claimed 208, while the AntiMasons gained 442. Clearly, AntiMasonry was a force to be reckoned with and the Republicans could expect to hear from them again. However, this year, together with the next two, clearly represented the high water mark of political AntiMasonry. In an election summary, The Albany Argus reported that the AntiMasons had about 30 out of 130 members of the Assembly. Their strength never gained appreciably beyond this figure.

Peter Sken Smith Becomes Boss

Far from being discouraged, the Oswego AntiMasons were already making plans for the presidential campaign of 1832. Indeed, there was no slacking off of effort after the 1831 affray. It was at this time that the leadership of the Oswego County AntiMasonic Party passed from the hands of Ernie Poor, George Fisher, and Amos Whitney to the mercurial Peter Sken Smith, brother of the more famous Gerrit Smith. Peter Sken, locally referred to as "General" Smith by reason of his militia office, was a well known man in politics and business. He was not a strict party man but when he embraced a cause he would go all out in its behalf. For the next decade and more Peter Sken Smith was active in Oswego politics. He was the perennial candidate; the one who never quite gets elected no matter how hard he tries. Up until the summer of 1831 he had been a Democratic Republican supporting Andrew Jackson in 1828 and opposing the growth of political AntiMasonry. Such an abrupt "about face" in his political views is not easily explained but the Oswego Palladium of January 25, 1832, offers a possible explanation. It was darkly hinted that General Smith changed his politics because of economic reasons:

"For five long years after the Morgan outrage, you, Gen. Smith, were actively engaged in opposing the party which you now are attempting to rally, and never, until the commissioners of the Oswego Bank

turned you off with only thirty shares, and until you failed in obtaining for your brother-in-law the appointment of cashier, did you once think that the outrage upon Morgan should be brought into the arena of political discussion. Until then, you contended that Masonry and AntiMasonry should be kept aloof from politics, and that it was made a hobby to get office by the political trimmers, and that they ought not to receive the countenance and support of honest men. Did you speak honestly then, or are you sincere now?"

The Mexico Convention

The voluble Gen. Smith was not to be daunted by such reasoning. "A wise man changes his mind often; a fool, never", seemed to be his attitude, while he continued in his role as titular leader of the AntiMasonic Forces.

On April 24, he asked all Anti-Masons to convene at Mexico to take stock of the current political situation and to prepare the spadework that would lead them to victory in the coming national elections. What he lacked in political acumen, he made up for in optimism and bravado. His was the role of the party whip and by his exhortations and his boundless enthusiasm he planned to carry the county for the AntiMasons. At the Mexico convention he worded the convention's resolution which was adopted and published as a challenge to the Republicans for the coming elections:

"Resolved, that the result of our late town elections warrants the conviction that the cause of correct principles is steadily advancing to the final overthrow of secret combinations. The veil of the HAND-MAID has been rent asunder, and her wrath-kindled eye quails beneath the withering glance of Insulted Justice, and her brazen cheek, crimsoned in the blood of a martyr, is now pale and trembling with 'a consuming disease'—and her quivering lip gives signs that 'all is lost'! For Loyal Oswego, imbued with the patriotism that 'tried mens souls' and nerves with the inflexible purpose, that threw overboard the tea at Boston, will, at her visit to the polls bestow her free suffrage to annihilate the titled mummeries and guilty mysteries of Masonic Despotism."

The Republicans faced the election of 1832 with high confidence, and consequently saw little need to exhaust themselves in defending President Jackson. The Party will stand on its record seemed to be their attitude. In Oswego they confined themselves to exposing the inconsistencies of Anti-Masonry and to ridiculing their candidates. The Palladium hammered away rather effectively at the charge that the AntiMasonic leaders themselves were not particularly concerned with the Masonic Order as such, but rather were selling out their followers to Henry Clay and his National Republicans. The fact that the Anti-Masonic candidate for president, William Wirt, was a Mason, (and Henry Clay a Mason too), lent emphasis to this charge. The editorial of August 29 was typical:

Palladium Speaks

"When the AntiMasonic Free Press was first established in this village, its editor pledged himself to oppose Masonry without regard to any political party. But now, in the name of consistency, is it that he prefers to abuse and villify the Old Roman at the head of our government, while at the same time he is silent or ready to applaud Grand Master Clay—and publishes the addresses of his friends recommending him to the support of the people? We can readily answer this question. The editor of the Free Press has been using Anti-Masonry for the purpose of

drawing strength to hand over to Grand Master Clay. If He tells the truth, he is himself a Mason of high order, (A Knight Templar) and has never renounced; and no doubt understands the so-called 'deceptive wonder workings' of the order which he has so often described, and is now practicing them for the benefit of Grand Master Clay."

This charge of conspiracy and coalition was a telling blow against AntiMasonry as they had based their very existence on this same charge against the Masons and the Republicans. As time progressed it became more and more evident that this charge against the AntiMasons was true.

By this time the candidates of each side had been chosen. In the national arena, President Jackson was to be opposed by the Anti-Masonic William Wirt, of Maryland. For Congress, the Republicans of the 17th District (Oswego and Oneida) chose Samuel Beardsley and Joel Turrill, while the AntiMasons nominated Peter Sken Smith and Charles P. Kirkland. In the state elections, Republican Marcy would oppose William Granger, AntiMason, for governor, and for the Assembly Republican Avery Skinner would be opposed by Joseph Houghton.

Republicans Win

The election again showed the Republicans to be in the saddle, but it was a close election. Oswego County cast 2565 votes for Jackson and 2379 votes for William Wirt. Marcy received 2556 votes for governor as opposed to 2381 for Granger. Avery Skinner received about the same plurality for the Assembly. The Republicans similarly won the two seats in Congress by electing Samuel Beardsly and Joel Turrill. Actually Turrill received less than either of the AntiMasonic candidates in Oswego County but he received sufficient votes in Oneida to give him victory. In Oswego County, the two AntiMasonic candidates received a total of 4948 votes (Peter Sken Smith and Charles P. Kirkland), while the two Republicans received a total of 4832 votes. This indicates a sizable show of strength for the Oswego AntiMasons. For the office of state senator, the Anti-Masons won their only victory. John C. Stower totaled 2559 while the Republican Nathaniel Hall received only 2380.

The Oswego Democratic-Republicans enthusiastically hailed their victory. The Palladium spoke glowingly of the "Glorious Triumph—the coalition routed—the country safe".

"The democracy of the Nation—the State, and our own county have nobly done their duty, and by a most triumphant vote have rebuked in a voice of thunder one of the most corrupt political coalitions which was ever formed in our country; and have taught the managers of the siamese party, that openness, honesty, and consistency in politics will always meet with the support of the people—while deception, fraud, and double-dealing will always receive their veto."

In its exuberance, the Palladium was ready to pronounce the AntiMasons as out of existence:

"The AntiMasonic Party is no more—that which gave it life and moral strength is gone. The moral, almost religious charm, through whose agency it operated, is extinguished. Hereafter the Masonic and the Anti-Masonic influence will be just about equal, and we may expect as many Masons to be made as AntiMasons."

To this, Mr. Oliphant of the Free Press, replied:

"Thus the mask is thrown off and Masonry is invited to take the field in full force. But what will the anti-Masons of this county say to this? WE answer —the fire of honest indignation will kindle up and spread from

cheek to cheek, consuming all before it, until Masonry no longer exists to disgrace the country."

Paved Way For Whig Party

The AntiMasonic forces of Oswego were visibly discouraged by their failure to make significant gains. Nevertheless, they girded themselves for the struggle in 1834. This election pointed to the obvious decline of the party, and by 1836 most of the AntiMasons had drifted into the newly created Whig Party. What factors can we attribute to the demise of the AntiMasonic Party? It was, of course, a sectional party and was dominated by leaders of a compact geographic area. The most influential leaders were William Seward and Thurlow Weed of New York and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. Another factor operating against the success of political Antimasonry was the fact that many of its leaders and supporters were themselves unrenouncing Masons. In other words its own membership belied its avowed purpose. Its alliance with the Clay faction of the old National Republican Party which smacked of Federalism was also important. This situation of course exposed the wide divergencies between the leaders and the rank and file of the party. Above all, political AntiMasonry ran directly counter to the newer political and social ideals which were springing from the so-called Jacksonian revolution.

In retrospect, one could say that the AntiMasonic party owed much of its strength to the conditions of the times and was by no means wholly the product of the abduction of Morgan or of hatred for Masonry. The party's chief significance lies in the fact that it offered the politically dissatisfied a medium of attack against those who wielded the power. It served as a political party at a time when the country was close to a one party government. In this capacity, it was fulfilling a traditional American concept, that of political checks and balances. Politically speaking, it was decidedly important, as it furnished the first solid basis for the Whig movement of the future.

Whigs Vs. Democrats In 1840

Never before had the republic been faced with such a significant campaign as that which confronted it in the presidential election of 1840. The administration in power had time and time again confounded its critics and had managed to win repeatedly at the polls and with comfortable majorities each time. Indeed, many of the younger generation had practically grown up under a political system which boasted of one, not two, political parties and it seemed almost impossible to elect anyone save those sponsored by the administration in power. This of course, did not mean that political opposition did not exist, for it certainly did; but it was scattered and disunited and tended to be more personal and local than national in character. Now, as the nation girded itself for another presidential campaign, the opposition had at last welded itself into an effective striking force.

Certainly there was great need for a change. To the opposition it was all very clear. The administration in power had grown careless of the public trust. Graft and mismanagement were everywhere. Indeed, the entire political fabric seemed to be honeycombed with corruption and inefficiency. Men in high office were involved in shady deals and lived a life of luxury while the average citizen struggled with a fluctuating currency and an unstable market. Sordid details were uncovered by probing investigators but the people seemed to take it all as a matter of course to such a degree that thoughtful individuals began to comment on the changed code of ethics that apparently pre-

vailed throughout the land. Everywhere traditional American values were slipping into obscurity while the country was unmistakably, "going to the dogs".

Analogy With 1952

Does this sound like the year 1952, my friends? Yes, it must be acknowledged that these symptoms seem painfully close to us today; yet this is a description of the national scene not of today but of the year 1840. At that particular time, the party of Andrew Jackson had been in power for twelve eventful years—eight years under the Old Roman himself, and four years under his successor, Martin Van Buren.

During these years broad and sweeping changes had taken place, altering our traditional American society. The democrization of our politics and the struggle to achieve social and economic equality dominated the era. This was the essence of the Jacksonian Revolution. Americans have tended to look upon the figure of Andrew Jackson as the benevolent father and the leading genius behind this so-called revolution. However, careful historians point out that the tap roots of the movement preceeded Andrew Jackson as president. Indeed, most states had already extended and broadened the franchise well before Jackson was first elected president. Yet, his inspiration and leadership did result in a furthering of this process. And so his role in history continues to be a controversial one. Perhaps his severest critic is Professor Thomas Perkins Abernethy who has made exhaustive studies in Tennessee politics and Jackson's pre-presidential years in Tennessee politics. In his book "From Frontier To Plantation In Tennessee", he theorizes that Jackson, not having been a great democratic leader in Tennessee politics, could not therefore have been a genuine champion of the people, but was, says Abernethy, "an unprincipled opportunist, who happened through a set of accidents to head a democratic movement". He was basically a conservative, says Abernethy, "and he and his backers had no very strong convictions and were willing to make friends with the times. It is not the greatest men who go to the top in politics". He continues, "Not only was Jackson not a consistent politician, he was not even a real leader of democracy .. he always believed in making the public serve the ends of the politicians". And again Abernethy in an article in the Dictionary of American Biography says, "He had little understanding of the democratic movement which bears his name and he came to support it primarily because it supported him". However, it must be borne in mind that Abernethy's criticisms are based primarily on Jackson's role in Tennessee state politics and implies that because he was conservative here, he naturally carried this trait into the presidency.

A Jackson Champion

More recently Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., of Harvard, has attempted to evaluate the Jacksonian era in American politics. His book is well worth reading and in general he defends President Jackson. He has probed more deeply into the social and economic aspects of Jacksonian Revolution than the earlier writers attempted. He feels that the tradition of Jacksonian democracy was primarily a reform tradition, dedicated to the struggle against the entrenched business interests of the national community. The political strength of the eastern working man, and not the intermittent radicalism of the West, he feels, formed the backbone of Jacksonian power. Even more recently, Professor Richard Hofstadter of Columbia University, gave his sage comments on the Jackson era in his book entitled, "The American Political Tradi-

tion." He expresses the opinion that Jackson's election was more a result than a cause of the rise of democracy, and the "revolution of 1828" was more an overturn of personnel than of ideas or programs. On the bank issue he defends Jackson in principle but questions his methods and his solution to the problem. Hofstadter says, "He (Jackson) was opposed to both privilege and inflation, but in warring on one he had succeeded only in releasing the other. In killing the bank he had strangled a potential threat to our democratic government, but at an unnecessarily high cost."

Parallels Drawn

There has been much said about similarities between the Jacksonian era of the nineteenth century and the New Deal era of the twentieth. Indeed, Franklin D. Roosevelt took obvious pride in drawing the comparison. Both were struggles of large sections of the community against a business elite and its allies. As Professor Hofstadter says: "There is an analogy between Biddle's political associates and the "economic royalists" of the Liberty League—and an analogy between the two dynamic aristocrats who led the popular parties." But there is a major difference: the New Deal was based on the premise of an exhausted economic expansion, necessitating governmental remedial action, while the Jackson movement grew out of expanding opportunities and a desire to enlarge these by removing restrictions and privileges.

Although Jackson was sick and emaciated at the inception of his first term, his indomitable spirit carried him through two hectic terms and the following four years of Martin Van Buren. By this time they had dropped the word "Republican" from their party name and were henceforth to be knewn simply as "Democrats". Thus had the word Democrat at last gained social respectability.

The administration of Martin Van Buren had not been a happy one and the Democrats must have faced the election year of 1840 with great foreboding and trepidation. Van Buren, the "old fox of Kinderhook" had no sooner started his administration when a financial crisis gripped the country. By this time the political opposition was considerable and rather articulate. This Depression of 1837 more than anything else had served to coalesce all the various elements of opposition to the Democratic party. This new political force, gathering strength during the past few years was promptly labeled the Whig Party and thus supplanted the defunct National Republican Party of earlier days. The Whigs tried in 1836 to wrest control from the Jacksonites only to be met by dismal failure. Without a doubt, the Democratic victory in 1836 had been a blessing in disguise for the Whigs. From their defeat they learned much politically and also avoided, to a large extent, the stigma attached to the Depression of 1837. It is a well known political axiom that a depression always reacts unfavorably upon the party in power.

In 1838, due to astute leadership, the Whigs placed William L. Seward in the governor's chair in New York State. They were learning their political lessons well and by 1840 they were determined to steal the thunder from the enemy and if need be, they would "outdemagogue the demagogues". For the Whigs, out of their defeat in 1836, had gleaned the secret of political success at the polls.

This technique, of course, lay in the identification of the party with the interests of the masses. After all, hadn't old Hickory and his followers barnstormed their way to victory by playing on Jackson's role as an Indian fighter and by stressing his proletarian backgrounds?

The Log Cabin Campaign

Without a doubt, the campaign

of 1840 was the jolliest one to ever grace the American scene. For the Whigs it was the famed log cabin and hard cider campaign. The slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too", saw them through to victory. General Harrison, the Whigs candidate, became known as Tippecanoe because of his battle with the Indians at that spot. Never before had so many people participated in an election and never before had so many slogans, pet phrases and catchy tunes been employed to woo the people. The Democratic party, although in power, suffered serious handicaps. President Van Buren did not have such magnetic appeal to hold the masses as Andrew Jackson had. The party, tarnished by official laxity and the hint of scandal, was further weakened by internal dissension and a notable lack of statesmanlike leadership. Although the Democrats tried valiantly to hold a line and fight a campaign, they were overwhelmed by the Whigs in their new found power. "Van, Van is a used up man!", they shouted whenever the Democrats tried to defend their candidate. "But let's look at the record", pleaded the Democrats. "Tippecanoe is hard working and true, which puts old Van in a terrible stew", chanted the Whigs. "But how about Van Buren and the Independent Treasury Bill?" demanded the Democrats. "Tippecanoe and Tyler too", sang the Whigs. "Tippecanoe and Tyler too."

Whig Candidate Popular

The Whigs had a natural winner when they picked General William Henry Harrison as their standard bearer. He had been an Indian fighter of some renown, a qualification which had helped Andrew Jackson to win the presidency some twelve years earlier. Almost overnight Harrison was adorned with all the virtues of the honest, hard working, God fearing plowman. Simplicity, frugality, and integrity, virtues highly esteemed by everyone, were affixed to him. Unfortunate it was indeed for the Democrats when one of their own number passed the remark that if given a jug of hard cider and a small dowery, Old Tip would be content to sit in his log cabin for the rest of his days. This remark was readily seized upon by the Whigs as good campaign material. Certainly, Old Tip enjoyed a glass of hard cider—what red blooded American didn't? Of course, a few of the blue bloods like Van Buren would drink nothing but expensive imported wines, but not so with good Old Tip. Of course, he lived in a log cabin, and furthermore, the latchstring was always out. Also, the Whigs went on enthusiastically, when Old Tip takes over at the White House, all signs of foppery and lush, extravagant living will be purged, and the simple social graces of the log cabin will be reinstituted—and the "latchstring will always be out."

This, then, was the general nature of the campaign and of the election. The Democrats, sensing the popular reaction against them, tried desperately to stem the onslaught of the Whigs. However, it seemed that the Whigs could carry the crowds by their songfests and noisy mass meetings with the ever-present hard cider. It was to prove a combination most difficult to combat and one which finally overwhelmed the Democrats. Truly, Democratic chickens were coming home to roost!

Campaign Of Personalities

At first glance, then, it would seem that it was a campaign of personalities rather than issues. This, of course, was not entirely true as there were issues aplenty, and it was issues that prepared the popular mind even before the Whig Party started its barnstorming campaign. What were the issues in this crucial campaign? One of the main points centered around presidential usurpation of

power. This had been a live issue ever since Andrew Jackson led the Democrats to power back in 1828. Indeed it had been the basis of the creation of the Whig Party, and President Jackson had been dubbed "King Andrew" by his critics. From the vantage point of the historian this charge seems superfluous, especially when we view the growth of presidential authority under subsequent presidents, such as Lincoln, Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt. Of course, the entire fiscal policy of the Democratic party was under attack by the Whigs. The same politicians who harassed Jackson in his battle against the U. S. Bank were now belaboring Van Buren and his Independent Treasury Bill. The Democrats were charged with opening the floodgates of inflation and debasing the currency which in turn tended to place the finances of the country into the hands of wildcat speculators and favored banking interests.

Present day historians generally defend the Democratic fiscal policies of the period in principle, although they feel that the ways that they were carried out were sometimes questionable. Another charge against the Democrats was that their party had drifted far from its original tenets and had lost touch with the people. The personality of Van Buren enhanced this claim. He was accused of riotous living, of wearing curly haired wigs, of using perfume, and filling the White House storage with expensive, imported wines. And the charges of corruption and inefficiency became more and more important. That all these conditions existed in some degree, could not be denied. The Whigs seized upon them and magnified them for their own ends.

The Campaign In Oswego

The campaign of 1840 in Oswego followed familiar patterns. Veteran party leaders were in charge, men who had been influential as early as 1830. It would be impossible to say just when the presidential campaign of 1840 got under way in Oswego. Actually, there had been no appreciable letup in political activity since 1836. The fiscal policies of the Democrats, the Panic of 1837, the Canadian insurrection of 1838, the Maine Boundary dispute, and the question of Western lands, all had kept the political pot aboiling.

Richard Oliphant, now editor of the Oswego County Whig, was in his familiar role of handling the opposition press. With the demise of political AntiMasonry Mr. Oliphant transferred his energies and his loyalties to the Whig movement and he promptly took over the management of their newspaper. His wit and his pen had been sharpened by a decade of political struggle in Oswego, but he was at last to taste the cup of victory. More than a year prior to the election of 1840 he was hurling his barbed shafts at the local and national Democratic party. In a reply to an editorial in the Oswego Palladium praising Van Buren as the leader of the Democracy Mr. Oliphant said in the Oswego County Whig of October 15, 1839:

"Is it Democratic to plunder the Treasury? Is it Democratic to stifle the people's investigations of the doings of their public servants? Is it Democratic to squander twelve million dollars a year in "ordinary" expenses and twenty-eight million in "miscellanies, incidentals, and extras"? Is it Democratic to control popular elections by the interference of paid government officers? Is it Democratic to corrupt the representative body by the distribution of sinecures and public honors? Is it Democratic to degrade Congress by the distribution of fat contracts and base jobs among its members? Is it Democratic to unite the Money

Power with the Military Power —to divorce State and Bank, that the Purse may be married to the Sword? Is it Democratic to rob one portion of the country to enrich a more favored and more opulent region?"

Mexico County Convention

Despite the blustery weather of early February, Oswego County Whigs assembled at Mexico for a general conclave. Mr. Oliphant gives us a picturesque portrayal of the journey to Mexico and the assemblage there:

"On Monday last, in the company of a number of our fellow citizens, we started for the convention which was to assemble at Mexico. At a little before ten o'clock, the pro-delegates from Oswego and Scriba, preceded by the Oswego Band, moved from the village in a spirit of enthusiasm we have seldom, if ever, witnessed. Although the traveling was extremely difficult, due to the late thaw, the group moved on in the best of feeling, and even the horses, in their zeal to press forward, with curved necks and tossing heads, seemed to participate in the joy of the occasion.

"At Scriba Corners, we were joined by the Hannibal delegation of thirty, and all then pushed on to the place of meeting, amid the cheers and encouragement of persons of all ages. On arriving at Mexico we were met with acclamation by the delegates of most of the other towns, who were already on the ground. At half past two, a procession was formed and proceeded in regular order to the Presbyterian Church, an edifice calculated to accommodate over 800 persons, and this building was full."

Meanwhile, the Oswego Palladium was taking a dim view of such "boisterous" activities. The Democrats were plainly worried by the enthusiasm of the Whig campaign. The Palladium of February 12 described how the Whigs were attempting to overwhelm "the sturdy democracy" with mass conventions—bands, banners, and bottles, "well filled with 'O, Be Joyful;'" a necessary article, says the Palladium, "to inspire Whig enthusiasm". "It was most assuredly," the paper continues, "a spirited assemblage. There is little popular enthusiasm for Harrison among the Whigs, hence all this ballyhoo".

Whigs Well Led

Needless to say, the Whigs were undaunted by such attacks. At the Mexico convention the Oswego Whigs were well represented by such men as William Duer, Thomas Bond, Henry Fitzhugh, and Seth Swift. The convention issued a clarion call for united action which was faithfully reprinted in the Whig paper:

"Whigs of Oswego—let there be no faltering now—maintain the same spirit you have on this occasion manifested. Show the nation and the world that the Whigs of '76 and the Whigs of '40 are of the same heart, of the same mind, and as those of the former period spurned the dictation of tyrants abroad, much more will the latter defy coercion and oppression from despots at home. When you are next called together, come in double numbers, and when you shall hear the toscin to cast your ballot, as you value your homes, your liberties, your lives: be at your posts—rally around one common standard of sound principles and good government. He who falters now, when all that is sacred and dear is jeopardized, is a coward or a knave, and will sink into an ignominious grave. Let those who desire such an ignominious immortality for the sake of present aggrandizement, receive it; but see that you are not numbered with them. He who would sap the foundation of our

free institutions, is a wretch—he who would overthrow the constitution of these United States is a traitor and a villain. Come then, to the rescue—come like the mighty whirlwind, and blast their machinations forever."

Meanwhile, the Democrats were busy assaulting the character and fitness of General Harrison. They accused the Whigs of claiming that Harrison had been appointed governor in the Northwest Territory by Thomas Jefferson. "Tisn't so", stormed the Palladium. "He was a John Adams man and supported his Alien and Sedition Acts and for reward was appointed by John Adams to that post."

Of course, one of the main issues that the Democrats harped on was the fact that Harrison was simply a soldier and was ill equipped for the office for which he aspired. However, they could not ride this too hard as their own hero, Jackson, had also been a military hero. And so the Democrats were often reduced to attacking the military record of General Harrison. In the March 11th issue of the Palladium there appeared the opinions of a General Carroll, who, said the Palladium, was the most distinguished Indian fighter next to Jackson.

"He, (Gen. Carroll) commenced with the famous battle of Tippecanoe, proving by Harrison's own official letter to the War Department, that he encamped upon ground selected for him by the Indians, and which Harrison himself acknowledged to be unsuitable. Harrison knew that the Indians were near, yet he failed to throw up an intrenchment which he might at any time have done. And again, he had no picket guard—he had not even a common camp guard as is clearly proven by his own admission that some of his men were stricken down at the front of their tents, when coming out to met the enemy by whom they were surprised.... where next do we find General Harrison? I answer, he was in the rear, a favorite position of his, where he has always been found in the hour of peril.... General Harrison is said never to have sustained a defeat. I would like if anyone could point out the place where he ever fought a battle. He never fought a battle—he had no inclination to fight—'retreat' always seemed to be his favorite word. It is a matter of surprise that a man who never fought a battle should never have sustained a defeat."

Rollicking Campaign Songs

Meanwhile, the Whig bandwagon was rolling merrily and gustily onward. There seemed something magically contagious in the songs that they concocted and the verses that were created by their facile pens. Clearly, General Harrison was to be immortalized:

Tho' content with his cottage and few acres of ground
And despising the wealth got by base speculation,
His heart true to glory will ever be found,
He's himself like the Roman, the gem of the nation.
Give Old Tippecanoe the just fame that is due,
To honesty, valor, and worth we are true,
Then inscribed on our banner'll be Harrison's name
As chief of the nation we loudly proclaim.

And again we hear:

What has caused this great commotion, motion, motion
Our country through?
It is the ball a rolling on
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too,
Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

Oswego Whigs turned this particular verse to their own local needs and we hear:

Old Oswego will rally for Duer, Duer, Duer,
And Judson too

Oswego will go, Oswego will go
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too!

William Duer and Edward B. Judson of Oswego were candidates for the State Assembly in the pending election.

Nor were the Whigs alone in their mingling of poetry with politics. Democratic campaign poetry seems to have been lost sight of by subsequent generations. Nevertheless it did exist. Here is one example I found:

New Song For The Whigs

Come all ye bold Whigs from Georgia to Maine,
Who dwell on the mountain or inhabit the plain,
A plan we've concocted, and will show it to you
How we'll ride into power on old Tippecanoe.

A log cabin we'll build, of pine and birch mixed
With a roof of rough bark and a chimney of sticks.
Place in it a barrel of Hard Cider or two
And drink with the loafers to old Tippecanoe.

And the Huge Paws, you know, who can't understand
Will think the log cabin so fine and so grand
That they'll be like us, without principles too
And shout "down with the locos, up with Tippecanoe."

And when we have paddled to the summit of power
And the riches of state around us do shower,
We'll kick out the loafers and Big Paws too
And nose around as we please poor Tippecanoe.

But alas, you poor wiglings, you're all in the wrong
You might as well come to the end of your song
For I shrewdly suspect that the locos will show you
In the year Forty-One, a Tipped-over-canoe.

Again will our Marty receive the command
And peace and good laws will again rule our land
Sailing up the Salt River, the Whigs we shall view
On the bottom side up of their tipped-up-canoe!

One enterprising Democrat from Oswego aligned the Temperance movement on his side. He argued that the temperance movement was retrogressing—why?—because he says intemperance has become the badge of a political party:

"Yes, intelligent men, men who have enjoyed the benefits of Christian teachings—and who live in a land of gospel light—are called upon to exhibit an enthusiasm in a political strife by drinking hard cider, often made harder by hard brandy, all for the glory of General Harrison. Yes, at these conventions and committee rooms, many a young man will take his first lesson in drunkenness which will bring him to the almshouse or the prison and thence to the drunkard's grave. More than 10,000 young men will be made drunkards in one year by this 'hard cider enthusiasm.'"

Democrats Opposed Change

The Panic of 1837 had cast the Democrats in an unfavorable light, and to combat this, they repeatedly stressed the idea that actually the people in 1840 were doing all right for themselves and that there was no need for a change of national administration. It was the familiar cry of "don't change horses in mid-stream", and "prosperity is just around the corner." In a leading editorial of September 16, the Oswego Palladium maintained that:

"...the farming interest is generally doing well, and the farmers know it. If prices are not as high as they were in the two or three years of specula-

tion, the crops are better than they were in those years, the farmers have more to sell, have less to pay for the commodities that they are obliged to purchase, and liberated from the excitements of speculation and extravagance, are essentially better off than they have been for a number of years past. Those who imprudently contracted debts on purchasing property at the high speculative prices of 1836-37 can only find relief in patient industry and economy. No administration can relieve the land speculators, caught by the economic revulsion. Had the warning voice of Gen. Jackson, delivered through the Specie Circular, been heeded, thousands would have been saved from great loss and ruin ....that the mercantile pursuits and mechanical trades would, ere this, have been fully revived, but for the abuses of the Bank of the United States, is now candidly admitted by all men of business and capital, who are out of the pernicious whirl of Whig politics."

Democrats Carry Village

With the prevailing excitement of the national elections, Oswegonians paid scant heed to their own village elections held on April 6, 1840. In fact, I found only one passing reference to the election in the newspapers, excluding of course, the official tabulation that followed. This apparent apathy seemed to characterize all village politics in Oswego. County elections were played up prominently, but not so with the village. The reader must keep in mind that in 1840 the county population dwarfed the village population while today the reverse of this situation is true. On the surface, this particular village election seemed to be a substantial victory for the Democrats in that they elected the president, all of the four village trustees and the collectorship, leaving for the Whigs only the office of the treasurer. "Oswego Redeemed! Federalism Prostrated! Democracy Triumphant!" cried the Oswego Palladium. A glance at the official tabulation, however, shows that such enthusiasm was unfounded. The struggle for each office was sharply contested, the Democrats winning only by the slenderest of majorities. The tabulation is as follows:

President:

Democrat—Abraham Prall, 350.

Whig—Luther Wright, 319.

Trustees:

Democrat — Leander Babcock, 344; George Seeley, 342; Henry Willis, 333; Dwight Herrick, 333.

Whig — Thomas Bond, 334; James Platt, 336; Sylvester Doolittle, 329; Charles Phelps, 330.

Treasurer:

Democrat—Thomas Crouch, 333.

Whig—John Cooley, 334.

Collector·

Democrat—James, Crolius, 334.

Whig—Elizabeth Stockwell, 323.

Log Cabins Built

Meanwhile, local Whigs were continuing in their campaign for General Harrison. Log cabin and hard cider talk was everywhere and log cabins were springing up all over the country. The first log cabin in the Oswego area was erected about a mile and a half west of the village. This was a gala occasion for Whiggery with William Duer giving an address on the history of the log cabin movement and another address by Thomas Bond of the village. This took place about the tenth of June. It was about this same time that Oswego Whigs were forming their "Oswego Tippecanoe Club." The following were among its prominent members:

John Grant, Elisha Gillett, Donald Herrick, Joel Penfield, Daniel Marsh, Edmund Hawkes, Mathew McNair, Ernie Poor, Orin Munger, William Dolloway, George Burch, Thomas Bond, Jessy Gray, William Duer.

This organization was responsible for the raising of another "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" log

cabin. This one inside the village limits (possibly in West Park). It was to serve as the official meeting place for all Whig meetings prior to the election. All those interested in good government were invited to drop around any time to receive the gospel light. "The latch-string would always be out," Oswegonians were told. Whenever the Harrison banner was seen floating over the cabin, that would be notification of another Whig meeting.

Union Association's Activity

Perhaps the most spectacular aspect of the campaign locally was the political activity of the Union Association of Oswego. This agency consisted of a small number of Oswego Democrats, who, by themselves, set out to discredit as much as possible the fitness of General Harrison. The origin of this group was, presumably, quasi-legal. This Union Association, with Miles Hotchkiss of Mexico as its spokesman, addressed a letter directly to General Harrison at his headquarters in Cleveland asking him three pertinent questions:

1. Are you in favor of receiving and referring petitions for the immediate abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia?

2. Are you in favor of a U. S. Bank or some similar institution for the safekeeping of the public monies and for giving a uniform currency throughout the United States?

3. Would you favor the passage of a general Bankrupt Law by Congress so that its operations might be equal in all the states of the Union?

These questions were all designed to embarrass the Whig candidate no matter how he answered them. Harrison wisely turned the matter over to his campaign managers, who in turn penned a reply to the Oswego Union Association. In a carefully worded letter Harrison's managers explained that insofar as the General had already publicized his views it would be pointless to rehash such controversial issues, especially when it seemed to stir up dangers to the Union. Of course, the local Democrats seized upon this as indicating that Harrison didn't know his own mind, and that he was in fact a prisoner of his own keepers. Pointing to Harrison, the Palladium said scornfully, "Thou wear a lion's hide—doff it for shame, and hang a calf's skin on that recreant frame" One Democrat attempted to portray Harrison's plight in verse as follows:

The People's Candidate

Here is another song to sing although its rather late,
About the man the Whiggies call "the people's candidate".
A FARMER-CLERK, I'll prove him thus—though others keep his dockets,
He FARMS out all the labor, while the fees of CLERK he pockets!
This poor old man is kept by his immediate advisors
Shut up in a log cabin under careful supervisors;
And as his old ideas now are getting rather hazy,
They will not let you question him for fear 'twill make him crazy.
Some gentlemen not long ago addressed a line inviting
An expose of his sentiments, on topics all exciting;
His good old mouth was closed; perhaps to open his heart the wider
Said they—"He cannot answer you, but—Won't you have some cider?"

Union Association Attacked

Meanwhile, local Whigs were trying to undermine the influence of the Union Association. In a searing editorial, Mr. Oliphant of the Oswego County Whig castigated this political organization:

"In the first place, as we believe, this club was originally styled the Pennyless Aristocracy, and designed as a regular loafer combination and the name of Union Association has

probably been assumed as more appropriate for public correspondence. The members were generally loco-focos and infidels of the worst stamp, and it was a positive stipulation for initiation that no man be admitted who is not known to be a bankrupt, and several of the members have chuckled long and loud at the forfeiture of membership by one of their company because it was proved that he had told a truth in the course of a twelvemonth. The record of their proceedings is a panorama of obscenity and profanity, alike disreputable to the members and the village, and interspersed with designs of the most beastly and disgusting character. To carry out the principles of their real leader, Fanny Wright, and make a derision of religion, mock prayers are offered on tne opening of their meetings. To add to the dignity of the affair, their meetings were held in a groggery attached to a ten pin alley."

Whigs Sweep Election

The election itself proved to be a smashing victory for the Whigs. In Oswego village, Martin Van Buren had a total of only eight votes while General Harrison had 335. In Oswego County Harrison claimed 3,907 votes while Van Buren had only 166. For governor, Oswego gave the Whig candidate, William H. Seward of Auburn, a total of 406 while the Democrat William Bouck received 338 votes. In the race for the Assembly seats William Duer and Edward B. Judson (both Whigs) received 411 and 404 respectively, while Democrats Leander Babcock and Alban Strong received 342 and 335 respectively.

The Whigs were jubilant:

Brave Tippecanoe has come out of the West
To deliver the land from a horrible pest
A Plague, such as Freedom before never knew
Has fled at the touch of Old Tippecanoe
The foul spot that darkened the roll of our fame
The black line's recording our annals of shame
A proud hearted nation no longer shall rue
They've all been expunged by Old Tippecanoe.

In 1836 Oswego County had given a majority of some 1,100 to Martin Van Buren; in 1840 they gave the Whigs a majority of 1,500. This was indeed a tremendous reversal.

What lies ahead for the Whigs? asked Mr. Oliphant and then he preceeded to answer his own question by stating what he hoped would be the Whigs course of action:

1. Overthrow the Sub-Treasury.
2. Pass a national Bankrupt Act.
3. Restore the right of petition.
4. Work for currency reform.
5. Terminate the Florida War.
6. The income from the public domain to revert to the states.
7. Pass a protective tariff to stimulate our economy.

General Harrison's Death

This was an ambitious program and one which the country was not to see under Whig management. Shortly after assuming office the stalwart old soldier, General Harrison, died and the reins of government passed to John Tyler, an aristocratic planter from Virginia. He had little sympathy with the major portion of the Whig platform and consequently the administration passed little in the way of constructive legislation. Their inability to carry out their platform pledges together with the extreme heterogeneity of their party enabled the Democrats to get back into power in 1844 but that is part of another story. Thus through a study of local politics we gain a valuable insight and a new perspective of the mainstream of American history.

The Willett Family at Belgium, New York

(Paper Given Before Oswego County Historical Society by Rodney Johnson, Oswego State Teachers College, April 22, 1952)

It was a beautiful spring morning in May, 1830, as we rounded the bend in the Seneca River and the large frame house of Rev. William M. Willett came into view. I had heard marvelous tales of this fine home constructed there on the banks of the Seneca but had never before seen how truely impressive it was. In a country where one is used to seeing small frame houses and many rude cabins it is a surprise and a pleasure to come upon a mansion house, standing with a certain haughty grace, looking out over an expanse of forests and newly cleared fields. Our approach by river gave us a view of the house on a rise of ground rolling back from the water and framed it through the soft, pale green leaves of a new spring time. The sun caught the fresh white paint of the clapboards and the dark green of the window shutters to bring the full magnificence of this picture to us. As we drew closer to the front of the property, I saw that the young minister and his wife had started gardens about the house and that the clearing of the surrounding territory had been planned so that a good number of trees were left standing about the place.

Rev. Willett was with us in the boat and while we were being rowed by his man, he told me of his history in that new country and of the Methodist Episcopal Church which they had completed there at Belgium two years ago, in 1828. The place was growing rapidly and people who had been able to clear farms and market crops were prospering on the rich bottom land along the Seneca.

William Willett recounted to me the story of how his father, Col. Marinus Willett, (who was still living, at the age of 90, in New York City) had drawn 3,000 acres of land in the Military Tract in consideration for his services in the Revolutionary War. His lands were composed of a township lot of 600 acres in five different townships of the tract.[1] The land I was about to visit was Lot 88 of Lysander, part of the Colonel's grant. When our craft was securely tied at the wharf, the man took my small hair trunk and other bags as we walked toward the house. The country was fairly bursting with new life and there were any number of small animals who went scampering off into the thicket as we made our way to the Willetts' door.

We were met by Elizabeth, Rev. Willett's wife, and taken into the large parlor to the left of the hall where I needed no urging to sit down and rest. It had been a long and tedious journey from Albany on the canal packet and then by stage from Syracuse to Baldwinsville. The men met me with the boat, explaining that the river, while it lengthened a three mile overland trip to ten or twelve, was by far more comfortable and

1—Balloting Book of New York Military Tract, (M. S. and History Section, New York State Library) Location of Col. Willetts lands. (Lysander, Lot 88; Cincinnatus, Lot 88; Ulysses, Lot 55; Fabius, Lot 52; Milton, Lot 4.)

usually more speedy than travel over the miserable roads and through the spring mud.

Steaming hot tea was soon offered and, with an abundance of other foods, refreshed me in short order. Mrs. Willett urged me for news of Albany, New York and especially Dutchess County which had been her home.

This imaginary account could very well have been written in the journey of an early traveler and caller at the Willett house. It may help to establish the setting for the remainder of the paper.

To first have some understanding of Col. Marinus Willett's background, we will consider some of the highlights of his life. He was born of an "old and respectable family" at Jamaica, July 31 (old style) 1740.[2] He attended King's college and also worked as a cabinet maker during his earlier years. At 17 Willett began the military career (which was to be his most important business) as a lieutenant in the French and Indian War. He was with Abercombie in his unfortunate expedition against Ticonderoga and was with John Bradstreet when he captured Fort Frontenac. In the turbulent days which preceded the Revolution, he was one of the earliest and most radical of the Sons of Liberty in New York City. Some indication may be had of Willett's natural inclination toward such a movement from Bronner's comment[3] which follows:

> A cursory search finds little evidence of his [Col. Willett] making speeches, writing pamphlets, or even serving with committees appointed to meet with more conservative factions in the city. On the other hand, there is evidence that when the time for speeches had passed and the mob was rising, Willett would be on hand.

As a leader of these radical patriots he aided in the attack of the Arsenal, April 23, 1775, and on June 6 that same year he and his associates seized arms from British forces which were evacuating the city.[4] In 1775, however, he began to see the real military action for which he had been spoiling. Congress had given him the authority to start recruiting so that he was at least able to anticipate action. On June 28, 1775, he received his commission as Captain in the First New York Regiment.[5] His first campaign was with "Montgomery's ill-fated expedition to Canada."[6] By November, 1775, he had received a lieutenant-colonel's commission in the Continental Army and five years later, in 1782, received the rank of full colonel.[7]

As a colonel then, in February, 1783, Marinus Willett made himself a permanent part of the early history of Oswego County. The military expedition which he led against Fort Ontario at Oswego in that year was the first contact which his family was to make with our area. This interesting event was exceptionally well covered in a paper presented before our society in 1939 by Edwin M. Waterbury. The complete paper may be found in the society's yearbook for that year.

It will be remembered that Col. Willett, on February 8, 1783, led a body of Rhode Island and New York State troops (numbering about 500) from Fort Herkimer to Oswego with the purpose of

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2—John Barber and Henry Howe, Historical Collections of the State of New York, (New York, 1844), 460.

3—Frederick L. Bronner, "Marinus Willett," New York State Historical Association Proceedings, (1936) 274.

4—Dumas Malone, Dictionary of American Biography, (New York, 1936)xx.

5—Bronner, "Marinus Willett." N. Y. S. Historical Proceedings, XXXIV. 275.

6—Ibid.

7—Ibid.

sieging the fortification here by surprise attack. They were following careful plans drawn by General George Washington himself, which warned that if the British garrison at Oswego could not be taken by surprise; the continental troops must not attack at all.

They followed the main water route although the winter weather made it an icebound passage for the 120 sleighs and teams of horses. Wood Creek, Oneida Lake and then the Oneida and Oswego Rivers brought the cold and weary troops to Oswego Falls. Horses and sleighs had been left under guard at Fort Brewerton with the soldiers continuing on foot. They stopped at Oswego Falls, set to work building scaling ladders with which to enter the fort, and then proceeded down the Oswego River toward their goal. Five days after leaving winter quarters at Fort Herkimer, Col. Willett and his men were on the last leg of this hard march through a frozen northern wilderness. As Mr. Waterbury pointed out, this exceptional expedition in "the depth of a northern winter was almost without parallel in this most unusual war". To cover the distance of 180 miles in five days meant that the army had to average approximately 36 miles per day! Near Minetto the men were forced to leave the river when they came upon open water caused by rifts. They proceeded down the eastern bank, following their Oneida Indian guides led by a Captain John. While they had from 11:00 o'clock at night till 2:00 a. m. the following day to make their way from Minetto to Oswego, the Indian guides lost their way by following the Indian snow shoe tracks which they believed were headed toward the fort. When they finally found that these Indians were traveling toward a point farther east on Lake Ontario's shore, the men were stopped in a frozen, swampy area. After losing much time reconstructing their route, it was too late to make their way back to the fort to fulfill their mission. Under careful warnings from Washington to attack only unobserved at night, Col. Willett had little choice but to immediately start the 180 mile march back to Fort Herkimer. Two men were frozen to death by dropping out of rank and lying down on the ground while numbers of them were badly frostbitten. This Oswego expedition proved to be the last major military campaign of the war and would not have been undertaken except for the slow communication of the day. The provisional treaty of peace had been signed on November 30, 1782, with Britain by Franklin, Jay and Adams but word had still not reached America by February 8, 1783, when Marinus Willett and his hardy band left for Oswego!

So it was that Col. Marinus Willett probably first saw the area where he was to own land for nearly a quarter of a century and where his son would some day live.

Military campaigns and Sons of Liberty escapades were not the only form of adventure indulged in by the colonel. On April 2, 1760, at Old Trinity Church he was married to Mary Pearsee, the first of his three wives. One son was born of this marriage. He was named for his father and is listed as a surgeon. He died at about the time of the Revolution. unmarried.[8]

Mary died July 3, 1793, after 33 years the colonel's wife.[9] On October 3 of the same year he married Mrs. Susannah Vardill, the daughter of Edward Nicoll of New York and the widow of Joseph Janncey and Thomas

8—Rosalie Fellows Bailey, "The Willett Family of Flushing, Long Island," The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, LXXX, 159.

9—Malone. Dictionary, XX.

Vardill.[10] (Weekly Museum, New York, October 5, 1793). This marriage proved an unhappy one and a divorce was obtained by Mrs. Willett.[11]

Col. Willett married, for his third wife, probably in 1799 to 1800, Margaret Bancker, daughter of Christopher and Mary Smith Bancker.[12] He was sixty years old at that time, his military fame had been won, and he was busily engaged in making his fortune in New York City. Besides his military career, he had been active in other public places. He was vestryman of Trinity Church 1784-85 and high sheriff of the city and county of New York in 1784 and again in 1791.[13] Margaret, the new wife, was 25 to 26 years old when they were married and the couple had a daughter and four sons. The eldest was Dr. Marinus Willett, 1801-1840. He was the second son by that name who became a doctor; the other having died before this marriage.

Post War Activities

In 1804 Col. Willett established a ferry from Corlaer's Hook to Long Island. He became a merchant of means and a considerable property holder. Not only did he purchase various estates confiscated from Loyalists in the city and Jamaica, but he was, at one time or another, owner of large tracts of land upstate either alone or in association with other men. This latter activity was undoubtedly of a speculative nature. He bought a tract in DeLancey's east farm on Corlaer's Hook in what was then suburbs of New York City. Here Marinus Willett built his home, which he called Cedar Grove and here, at number 58 Broome Street, between Cannon and Lewis Street, Lafayette called on him in 1824.

He was appointed mayor of New York City in 1807 by Governor Lewis as a political favor. "It was an important position even then with considerable patronage at his disposal; he was president of the common council, chief judge of the court of common pleas, head of police and fire departments, chairman of the board of health and had an income of close to $12,000."[14]

Col. Marinus Willett died at Cedar Grove, August 22, 1830, aged 90 years, and was buried in his family vault in Trinity Churchyard with military honors. It has been estimated that ten thousand people came to view his remains.[15]

The Willett Grant

This paper was prompted by the old Willett house which is still standing on the west side of the Seneca River just above the bridge at Belgium. Interest in the place has been more or less general in that immediate area and many motorists have been attracted by the marker which stands on the Cold Springs Road one-half mile south of Belgium. Because the house stands on the river, a considerable distance from the highway, there are many who have never seen more than glimpses of it. There have been so many conflicting stories told about its history—some of them more or less fabricated—that it seemed desirable to attempt to gather as much authenticated information on the family and the old house as possible. As part of this assignment, I followed the transferes of titles from the first owner to the present time. I was able to examine an abstract of title which recorded the principal parties of all transferes of the

10—Ibid XX.

11—Ibid XX. (bill filed November 11, 1799; decree filed April 10, 1805).

12—Ibid XX.

13—Bailey, The Record, LXXX, 158.

14—Bronner, New York State Historical Association, XXXIV, 279.

15—His widow Margaret died May 12, 1867, aged 93 years, at 297 Delancay Street, New York City, Kelby's Notes, (New York Historical Society Library).

property. Later I consulted the original recordings of deeds for Onondaga and Cayuga, in the Cayuga County Clerk's Office. The earlier papers are often in the Cayuga records due to the important role this county played in the military tract when it was the center of military land transactions. According to these records, Col. Marinus Willett received Lot No. 88 in Township One (Lysander) by Letters Patent dated July 9, 1790. It reads, from "The people of New York State" for his services in the Revolutionary War. As mentioned earlier, this was one of the five lots of 600 acres each which he received on that date.

It is interesting to note that Col. Willett and his wife Susannah sold the entire 600 acres in Lysander, (with his lots in Fabius, Ulyses and Cincinnatus), to Nicholas Denise of New York City on September 18, 1795, for 2,000 pounds. This was for a total of 2,400 acres, inasmuch as it excluded his lot in the Township of Milton. Willett took a mortgage for the entire amount but a little over a year later, on January 11, 1797, Nicholas Denise, with his wife, Grace, sold this same land to one Benjamin T. Young for 2,500 pounds. Denise was, of course, still living in New York while Young was from the Town of Troy in the County of Rensselaer. It would seem that Young failed to make good on his new venture, as did also Denise. On June 6, 1799 "proceedings were had against Nicholas Denise, an absending debtor", under which the total 2,400 acres were sold to George Bement, the highest bidder, for $1,500. Bement received a deed to the land on May 1, 1800, apparently acting for Willett (who, it will be remembered, held the $2,000 mortgage). The next day, on May 2, 1800, Col. Willett received full title to the property, once more, from George Bement and his wife Aletta for the consideration of $100. Thus it was that, after changing title three times in five years, the lands were once more owned by Marinus Willett![16]

The fact that William paid fully half as much for this property as was paid in 1795 for four times as much land (using the rough equivalent of five dollars for one pound) might lead us to believe that the increase in value was produced by the mansion which was built before that time. While the increased prosperity in the country of the 1830's was then being noticed, I doubt that it would have so greatly affected land values in 1826.

Dating The House

One of the most difficult things I had to do in my research, preparatory to this paper, was to try to establish a date for the building of the house and determine the actual builder.

The site is marked by a State Education Department marker put up in the early 1930's. It bears the following legend: "Willett House, built by William Willett, son of Colonel Marinus Willett, 1796". This date has been doubted by most local historians for some time. It can now be stated that if William built the house it would have been quite impossible for him to have done it in 1796 inasmuch as he was not born until 1803! It will also be remembered that between 1795 and 1800 the property was not in the possession of the Willett family. Therefore it will be seen, that if the house was built in 1796, it could not have been built by the Willetts—either father or son.

There is a strong family tradition in the LaGarry family of Belgium which involves the Willett House. When I interviewed

16—There was a great deal of litigation and very complicated transactions which continued well into the nineteenth century as the result of many resales. Frauds were also perpetrated by forgery antedating conveyances and conveying the same land to different persons.

Mrs. Esther LaGarry, I was given the following story.

Mrs. LaGarry's grandfather, Ira Eno Jr., settled one-half mile north of Belgium on the east side of the river, cleared land for a cabin, and after living there for about a year married Esther Vickery of the Phoenix area on January 6, 1820. Their first child was Jane Eno, born on November 10, 1820.[17] The family tradition has always been that Jane was five years old when her father built the frame house across the road from the cabin. This house is still standing and is Mrs. LaGarry's home. The tradition continues, however, with the story that it was the same carpenters who, when they had completed the Willett House, came down to build the modest home for Ira and Esther Eno. I feel that internal evidence such as the fine shell carvings in the window paneling and the mouldings used in some of the wood work and other interior architecture of the Eno house, prove it to have been built by craftsmen well above the skill of the average "barn carpenter" who fashioned many an upstate home in this period.

The shell carving is surprisingly similar to that found in the matching mantles of the Willett parlors. If this family account could be entirely accepted it would date the Willett house from about 1820 to 1825. 130 years is, however, a long time for a story such as this to remain unchanged and so we are forced to accept it only as tradition and not as historic fact.

If the place was built before 1826, then it was standing when Col. Willett and his wife deeded the property to their son, William, on June 16, 1826, for the "consideration of $5,000".

A Preacher Is Born

William Marinus Willett was born on January 3, 1803 [18] in New York City. He must have had some college training (to have had Hebrew, etc.) but there is no record of his having a degree, although A. M. sometimes appears with his name. As a very young man, he attended the ministry of John Summerfield, was converted to Methodism and was called to preach the Gospel. Col. Marinus Willett was a member of Trinity Church and as an aristocrat, we are told he was not at all happy about this son who chose to cast "his lot with that humble and despised people".[19] William taught at Wesleyan Seminary in New York City while still in his teens. At twenty he became a member of the New York Conference with his first charge being Suffolk Circuit, which covered the greater part of Long Island. He remained on the Island for one year and was transferred to the Genesee Conference in 1826 where he was appointed to Delphi.

In 1828 and 1829 he was stationed at Lysander.[20] This undoubtedly refers to a circuit of that name, on which Belgium was one of several small societies.[21] He was later a member of the Oneida Conference (set off from the Genesee Conference) where he was "located at his own request" in 1831.[22] This "location" would also seem to be at Belgium. At that appointment he was listed as a local preacher and therefore not mentioned in the published conference journals. Due to the fact that he had ample means, he may

17—All dates for the Eno family are from the family records in a Bible owned by Mrs. LaGarry.

18—James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, Editors. Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, (New York, 1889).

19—Warriner, Rev. Edwin, "Footprints of our Predecessors; Father Willett—Oldest Living Circuit Rider of Long Island," City and Island, (New York, 1893-1895).

20—Conference Journals and records, Methodist Historical Society, New York City, James R. Joy, Librarian and Historian.

21—Ibid.

22—Ibid.

have chosen to leave the traveling ministry and become a local preacher, still rating as a minister but not subject to appointment to a pastorate. This would have left him free for study and writing. Appleton's Cyclopedia gives the date of his Genesee Conference association as 1826 to 1833 which is also the exact date of his ownership of the "Willett Place" at Belgium.

This conflicting data, while it seems very confusing, certainly associates Rev. William M. Willett with the area.

He was married on September 12, 1827, by the Rev. Mr. Westbock to Miss Elizabeth Carmen. The wedding took place at Low Point, Dutchess County, which was the home of the bride.[23] It was in the following year that the conference minutes place Rev. Willett in Lysander, so it seems likely to believe that he came here with his bride at that time.

The Family In 1830

William is recorded as the head of a household in the Town of Lysander in the United States Census for 1830. At that time his household consisted of one male under 5, four males between 20 and 30, one female between 10 and 15, one female between 20 and 30 and one free colored woman between the age of 55 and 100. In 1830 no names were given in the census report other than the heads of households. We can see, however, that this refers to William's wife, Elizabeth, three unknown men about his age (he was 27) a girl under 15 whom we cannot identify, their young son who was under five at that time and a free colored woman past middle age.

The unidentified people in the family at this time may be kinsmen and undoubtedly also represent servants or hired help. Tradition has always maintained that the Willetts had two colored men on the place and that they remained there after the family left in 1833. In fact, this last was reported by the late William Lee of Phoenix when he was interviewed some years ago by Miss L. Pearl Palmer of Baldwinsville. He was born at Belgium and remembered, as a boy there in the 1850's, seeing the two colored men come into Belgium with a wheelbarrow loaded with vegetables for sale.

Slavery was abolished by ordinance in the Town of Lysander in 1821, so any colored people would have been free during the period of Rev. Willett's ownership.[24]

In 1830, however, there was (according to the best official record) only the one colored woman with Rev. Willett's family.

Of Rev. William Marinus Willett's life at Belgium little is actually known beyond the bare facts previously outlined. We may assume that he lived on the farm most of the seven years while he owned it. It may not have been until 1827 or 1828, however, when they came to Lysander, as the records show him appointed to Delphi in 1826. It is certain that he came by 1828 when he was stationed at Lysander but inasmuch as he is not mentioned at Delphi in 1827, he probably came in that year. That he helped to build the Methodist Church at Belgium is evident. The building is still standing although it has, for some years. been used as a community house. The date for its building has been variously given as 1828 or 1829. These dates coincide with Rev. Willett's coming to the Lysander circuit and it would therefore be reasonable to believe that this young minister, in residence in the community, sparked the interest which saw a substantial church erected. Henry

23—Newspaper Clippings — Notes prepared by William Kelby regarding Willett marriages (New York Historical Society Library).

24. L. Pearl Palmer, History of Lysander, New York, (Baldwinsville).

V. McMechan is said to have given the land on which the church was built.[25]

In the category of traditions there is a story about Mrs. Willett while she lived in the big house at Belgium. This comes from Mrs. Esther LaGarry of Belgium, whose ancestors, the Eno family, were pioneers of that region. She told me the story which she has often heard from her mother.

Mrs. LaGarry's grandmother, Mrs. Ira Eno, Jr., (nee Esther Vickery) and her daughter, Delacy (Mrs. Abram LaPoint, Mrs. LaGarry's mother), were invited to the Willetts' home for the day. It seems that the mother and her daughter were impressed by the spacious house, servants, etc., of the well-to-do Willett Family. They always remembered that afternoon after dinner when they were chatting in the parlor with Mrs. Willett. The lady of the house wore a large white apron during the day. When the girls who were working in the kitchen had finished washing the dishes and scouring the pots and pans they brought the heavy iron spiders into the parlor for Mrs. Willett's inspection. She proceeded to wipe these spiders on her white apron. If any black came off they had failed to pass her acid test!

Other house guests at the place included Mrs. Norman Goit and her daughter, Martha. The Goits were original settlers in the town of Lysander on the present Gidding's Farm. (The Giddings family is descended from Norman Goit). The story has always been told that the Willets sent a boat around by the river to take Mrs. Goit and Martha from Baldwinsville to the house. (The Goit farm is north of Baldwinsville). They usually spent a period of several days before returning home.

This same family (according to their tradition) entertained Col. Willett in the early days on one occasion when he came to visit his holdings there. He came up from New York City and had with him a small trunk with gold in it. While stopping over with the Goit family he is said to have tucked this tiny trunk up over a beam in the ceiling during the night.

Willetts Move Away

On March 19, 1883, Rev. Willett and his wife, Elizabeth, deeded the place, then reduced to 470 acres, to John Stevens for $8,490.78.

The family is unaccounted for during the following five years but by 1838 Rev. Willett became an instructor of Hebrew at Wesleyan University and by 1841-42 was professor of Hebrew and Biblical literature.

We find him at Newbury, Vermont with the Biblical Institute there in 1843-1847. He is listed by one reference as the founder of this institution but this is doubted by Mr. James R. Joy, Historian and Librarian for the Methodist Historical Society of New York City. A history of Newbury, Vermont, refers to Willett as a man of "abundant private means" who heard Hebrew classes in his own house, as teacher in the Seminary there. Another authority mentions him as "wealthy."

After 1847, when the Newbury Institute was moved to Concord, New Hampshire, William M. Willett's activities are lost sight of as to exact location and nature. A cursory search has shown that

25. Bradley Abbott, Excerpts from his paper on early Lysander History given at the Centennial Celebration of the Towns of Lysander and Van Buren, May 30, 1894, Fiftieth Anniversary Issue, The Gazette and Farmers Journal (Baldwinsville, 1896).

26. Wilson and Fiske, Editors, Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography. (New York, 1889).

he wrote at least six volumes,[27] as well as contributions to Methodist periodicals. The dates of Willett's publications seem to cover 1831-1874.

William Willett was married twice, the second time to Frances Fletcher.[28] I do not know the date of Elizabeth's death nor of his marriage to Frances except that it definitely was after the family left Belgium. Rev. Willett had four children. They were, William Marinus, Jr., (d. 1878), Cornelius C., Mary M., Walton and George.[29]

William Willett's obituary, clipped from a contempory newspaper, tells us that "a son, seventy years old, by the first marriage, survives him" and also that his second wife survives.[30] This was in 1895. The son's age was undoubtedly less than seventy but incorrectly reported in the paper. This would have been either Walton or George who also seems to have been the same little boy who lived in the Belgium house in the late 1820's and early 30's.

In his later years, Willett resided in Jersey City and it was here that he died on December 7, 1895, at the age of 93. He was buried with his second wife in the P. E. Churchyard, Jamaica, Long Island. Frances, the second wife, died January 25, 1898.

Bradley Abbott tells us that in his later years, Rev. Willett appeared one day on the "streets of New Bridge" (Belgium). He was a grey-haired old man. "He seemed a stranger; not more than one or two in that whole community ever knew him." He had apparently come back to see the old place once again. To see the church and the old house; to possibly visit with old friends. It is not definitely recorded that he even visited the house but "after standing about the streets for a few hours, he hired a man to take him to the depot and, probably with a feeling of sadness, returned to his home" in Jersey City.

The New Owner

John Stevens owned the Willett place from 1833 till his death sometime prior to 1862. He apparently operated the place as a farm and must have had some means.

It has been said that Stevens was a character.[31] Upon occasion he is reported to have dressed himself up in silk stockings, knee breeches and matching costume, jump on his pony and then ride at a dead gallop across the farm giving orders to his men. He must have fancied himself an 18th century master of a plantation!

As the possessor of a sense of humor, he goes on record with the following story:[32]

One day a man appeared in Belgium who wanted to buy soft soap. Upon inquiry, he was referred to Uncle John Stevens as a man who would be likely to have it. He went down to the house and when he put his query to John Stevens, he was given the ready reply of "Yes, plenty of it." Immediately Uncle John began to make himself agreeable. Taking his visitor to the barn, he showed him his horses, wagons and stock of all kinds. In the flower gardens and about the farm they went. Everything they saw was of the finest kind and the man seemed almost bewildered by it all. Finally, coming back to his original business, he said, "Mr. Stevens, now about the soft soap..." With a look of utter astonishment Uncle John turned upon him and

27. Including the Narrative of Col. Willett's Military Actions which is based on his father's papers and letters and was published the year after Col. Willett's death in 1831.

28. S. Willett Somstock, Willett Family, Not Pub., Boston, 1928.

29. Ibid.

30. Kelby's Notes, (New York Historical Society).

31. Abbott, The Gazette and Farmers Journal, (1896).

32. Ibid.

said, "My Lordy, h'aint you got enough yet?"

On July 17, 1862, "Hannah Stevens, widow of John Stevens", deeded the place (now 430 acres) to Thankful Anderson, daughter of John Stevens, for $2,000.

The Collins Family

In 1864, on March 16, "Thankful M. Anderson, only child and heir at law of John Stevens, deceased", sold the 430 acres of land and the house to Luke Collins. He paid the tidy sum of $16,400 as he began the ownership which was to remain in the family for eighty-four years. Luke Collins was, at one time, a merchant in Robber's Row, lower James Street, Syracuse, and was an alderman of that city.

It would seem that life was gay and fashionable here at the fine old mansion during the next twenty or thirty years. Brilliant parties were given and much entertaining was seen in the large rooms and spacious grounds of the Willett House. It is believed that the Collins family planted the row of Osage Orange and other trees from the front of the house down to the river. These formed the northern border of the avenue with extensive flower gardens to the south. The trees are still standing.

Ownership followed to Mrs. Collins after her husband's death. The property later went to her brother, Lafayette Evens, in 1918. He lived on the place until his death in 1943. The sale of the house and farm was the result of the settling of his estate.

The Huebenthals

Three years ago, in June 1949, Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Huebenthal moved into the old Willett house, following their purchase of the place in December, 1948.

Since that time they have been busily at work on the old building making it into a comfortable home. They are carefully and painstakingly bringing it back to the "golden age" of its youth by a sympathetic treatment of details. The goal set by the Huebenthals is a home which will meet the needs of a modern family with their many diversified interests and yet have that quality of character and charm which only comes with old, much lived-in, houses.

The house has a central hall, two huge chimneys at either end, and one of those long, meandering wings which stretch back ever so far and embrace kitchens, pantries, summer kitchens, back rooms, woodsheds, hitching sheds, tool houses, etc. The open fire was obviously used to heat the house—there are ten fire places! All of the four main chimneys have a fireplace on each floor and one of them has a fireplace and dutch oven in the celler. The chimney in the wing also was built for a fireplace. None of the mantles are exactly the same, with the exception of the matching pair in the large parlors on the left of the hall. (Even these, it was found during reconstruction of the fireplaces, varied in height about three inches). These two rooms occupy the entire first floor of the house on one side of the hall and are connected by a wide opening which makes them nearly one.

The hall is a wide, inviting room with interest centered around the staircase, front door and archway connecting the two. This arch is approximately fifteen feet from the door front. It is exceptionally well proportioned with fine detail in the reeding and paneling. Fitted from the wooden keystone at the top of the arch hangs a candle lamp, hexagon in shape, with cranberry colored glass panels alternated with frosted ones. This is very similar to the lamp at Constable Hall and was in the house when the Huebenthals came. The banister rail curves at the newel post and is set with a small ivory

button about the size of a dime. This staircase goes up continuously for three floors with a below-floor-level landing at each flight. The peculiar construction of the stair rail is interesting. The spindles in the rail are perfectly plain turned pieces except for one on about every seventh step, which is a bar of solid wrought iron! This ingenious devise was appropriately used for added strength.

Across the hall from the double parlors we find another large room with a Franklin grate installed in the fireplace just as it was arranged by its early owners. This is the room which is said to have been used as an office—study by Luke Collins (owner 1865-1895). It probably was intended for the dining room in the original plans. This room measures 16' x 20' and is larger than the other rooms which are sixteen feet square.

The second room on this side of the house is smaller, (the result of the extra four feet taken from it for the north living room) with a small mantle and hearth which makes a perfect retreat for the Huebenthal's small daughters.

The long wing which runs back to the west from the main house is built very crudely when compared to the careful workmanship of the principal structure.

The first section of this wing is Mrs. Huebenthal's large "country" kitchen while the rest of the wing has been made into an apartment.

The wing's construction is such that the roof over this kitchen is of a lower level with the ridge several feet below that of the remainder of the structure. There is certain evidence in structural details that this lower roof, sandwiched in between the wing proper and the main house, may have been a more or less open passage between the two buildings with the roof provided for protection.

The above mentioned apartment, which occupies 35 feet of the 69 foot "el", has a rebuilt fireplace with a simulated dutch oven for the kitchen. Something more of the wing's length may be judged from the fact that there is room at the very end for a two-car garage and a tool house! The tiny garrett over this part of the house was sealed with rough pine and was undoubtedly used for servant's quarters, as may also have been the rest of the structure.

There was a long porch fitted into the corner of the house where the wing meets the upright. This pleasant place to sit on summer evenings continues back along the entire length of the apartment as well as completely along the west side of the main house. It has been rebuilt in its original position by the Huebenthals. Centered in the area which the porch borders on two sides is an old horse chesnut tree which spreads its shade over the corner and the flagstone paving which is being laid by the new owners.

The second floor hall has a complete door front which opens onto the flat deck of the entrance porch below. There are four huge bedrooms here in a fairly balanced pattern and each room is provided with its own fireplace! The second floor doorway has a story of its own. Over its entire width is a large board fitted into the space which is filled by the overlight in the door below. On this panel is carved, in large inscription type letters, the following data:

William Willett, 1796; John Stevens, 1830; Luke Collins, 1865; Mrs. L. Collins, 1895; Lafayette Evens, 1913.

The carving is all identical in style and was apparently executed during some latter occupancy, either Luke Collins' or Lafayette

Evens'. It has been responsible for many people assuming that all the dates which appear there may be accepted as historically accurate—a fallacy which is now apparent.

As one goes up the third flight of open stairs and into the third floor hall, he finds that that passage is entirely sealed with vertical pine boards, of random width and with a beaded edge. To the right one finds the open attic but on the left awaits the surprise of the entire house—a large, low room entirely finished in old pine! The ceiling is only seven feet high and exhibits a small beam here and there across its width. The walls are built well in from the eves, making the room roughly 12 x 16 feet square. It is lighted by one of the wide palladian windows which are built into the gable ends of the house. There is a stove pipe opening into the chimney which indicates that at some time the room was heated. The magnificence of the pine boards can only be appreciated by seeing them. Some of the single boards are nearly three feet wide. They have reached that soft perfection of patina which only comes with age and then best with pine. Opposite the window is a row of wooden pegs mounted in a board and a cupboard which seems to have been built for guns. This was built into the corner as part of the original construction. Its door is hung on a pair of small strap hinges and has a leather handle. From this evidence, it may be that the pine room was used as the retreat for the man of the house. It would also have been a good location for the large loom. Because there were quarters over the wing, it is doubtful that this was intended for servants.

The construction details of the house are most interesting. It is entirely framed of sawed timber which indicates that there must have been saw mills set up in the area by the time it was built. All of the upright beams used in framing are sawed four inches one way so that no beams project into the finished rooms. The corner posts are 4" x 14"—instead of the more usual 8" x 8" or 12" x 12". The timber are mostly of pine, as is much of the construction and finishing.

It is interesting to note that native pine was being cut out of the big pine woods between Baldswinville and Plainville and in 1830 sold for eight dollars a thousand at Baldwinsville.[33]

The rafters in the house are extraordinary in that they are sawed in a tapper which makes them graduate from 6' x 6" at the plate to 4" x 4" at the ridge. They are half cut at the peak and pinned with wooden pegs. The roof is equipped with a hatchway which opens near the top and has a step-ladder type stairs from the attic floor to the roof.

This was a precautionary measure in case of chimney fires which was often needed in the days of no fire protection and wooden shingles.

During work on the house, the Huebenthals made a rather startling discovery. They lowered all of the downstairs ceilings except that in the hall. The new ceiling joists are supported by brackets from the original upstairs floor joists. When the openings were made in the ceiling over the west parlor, (one of the double parlors at the south of the house) to fasten the brackets it was found that, some time in the past, there had been a fairly extensive fire which burned between floors. It obviously caught from the fireplace in the upper bedroom and may have either been extinguish-

33. L. Pearl Palmer, History of Lysander, New York, (Baldwinsville). Letter written by Col. Minard (later an attorney) in 1887 in which he described Baldwinsville when he first came in 1830.

ed by pulling up the floor boards or burned itself out for lack of air. None of Lafayette Evens' children had heard of the fire or knew of the remaining evidence. The incident stands as an example of the hazard risked by these old houses from open fires and is a reminder of the fate many of them have met.

The gable windows are of a palladian style, very beautifully proportioned and rather exceptional for this area. They have an arch over the center section which is fitted with a fan of shutters.

The house is sided with half-inch clapboards, nailed onto 4" x 4" studding on two foot centers. These studs do not support the weight of the house but only the hand split lathe and slacked lime plaster. The floor is inch and a half native pine, hand matched with tounge and groove on the site so that all boards are not inter-changeable. This floor is supported by 4" x 9" joists.

The foundations of the house are field stone and slacked lime cement, four feet thick at the base and two at the top. They are faced with brick from the ground up. The cellar floor was entirely of cobble stone set in dirt, and had only a six foot clearance so it was replaced with modern cement at 7 feet.

The woodwork, doors, mantles and other interior finish are fine examples of the early excellence of builders—all hand work. The doors are both single and double cross design. The mantles were fashioned from pine and exhibit a very sophisticated face to the world. When one examines the back, however, he finds that in place of polish there is great crudity. The backs of the panels, as was the usual practice in early days, are not sawed or planed but merely smoothed with a adz!

And so it is, that after over a century and a quarter of service as a home, the old Willett House takes a new lease on life and looks forward to many more happy years with its new family!

Old Homes of Fulton

(Paper Given Before Oswego County Historical Society at Presbyterian Church, Fulton, by Mrs. Frank Elliott and Grove Gilbert, May 27, 1952)

Mr. Gilbert's Paper

Long before there was a Fulton, two locations within its present boundary were well known to River Travellers. The two locations referred to are the Upper and Lower Landing. On account of the Falls, and the Rapids below the Falls, boatmen were compelled to take their boats from the river at a point about the foot of Hart Street, known as the Upper Landing, and carry or haul the boat a good mile to a place near the present location of the Stacy Oil Co., known as the Lower Landing. These Landings were also called Carrying Places, and the path or road between them, the Portage. As the loaded boats could not navigate the Falls, and the Rapids below the Falls, canoes and smaller boats were carried on men's shoulders across the Portage. I like to think that on this carry, the men stopped for a drink at the spring, which still flows out of the Brown Stone Rock, under our Public Library. Larger boats were loaded on low wheeled wagons and hauled by ox or horse team across the Portage. When traffic became heavy, and large quantities of salt, manufactured at Salina, were transported to Oswego for shipment on the lake, this hauling became a regular business and stables were established at either end of the Portage called Line Barns. (James Lyon—Upper Landing. Falley and Crocker—Lower Landing.)

Fort Bradstreet

Nearly all settlers up to 1825 located at either the Upper or the Lower Landing. One of the first permanent structures in Oswego County was a fort between what is now First Street and the canal, at Pratt Street. This fort was built by Col. Bradstreet probably in 1758, as in 1759 it is known that 100 men were stationed here to protect the "Great Carrying Place," the importance of which may be judged by the fact that all military stores had to pass this point on their way to Oswego.

The first Permanent Settler in the town of Volney, in the limits of what is now the City of Fulton, was Daniel Masters, who located at the Upper Landing in 1793. He built a house near Bradstreet's fort, and plied his trade as blacksmith. His principal product was spear heads for fishing. These were always in demand and sold readily for $1.00 each. As Masters sheltered wayfarers over night, he might be said to have conducted the First Hotel in this locality.

Among the earliest houses was one located at the N.W. corner of Oneida and First streets (east end of lower bridge), where the great Nelson Flouring Mill afterwards stood.

Only 12 Buildings in 1812

When William Schenck came to Fulton in 1812, only twelve buildings were standing in the now corporate limits of Fulton. Mr. Schenck was a surveyor and made the maps to which reference is made in most of the deeds of Fulton property. He was the grandfather of William E. Schenck, who delighted us with his "Reminiscences of Fulton," Oct. 31st, 1950.

In 1825, the state appropriated $160,000 for the Oswego Canal. This project attracted various business men to Fulton, and laid the foundation for the future

growth of the Village. Among the first of these founders was Mr. Lewis Falley, who built a store on the S.W. corner of Oneida and First streets, opposite the house mentioned previously.

After the Oswego Canal was completed, a coal yard was established here—coal brought in by boat was unloaded by means of a derrick and stored in sheds on the bank of the canal. In my boyhood, I remember that this coal was sold at $4.50 per ton, delivered. The successive dealers here, were Mr. Willis Nelson, Mr. Frank Wilson, and Mrs. Elwin Hart.

The Loomis House

I have often wondered, and I presume many of you have, why prosperous men in settled communities took long chances in establishing themselves in entirely new communities. I am thinking, for instance, of the Loomis family who lived in the brick house at the corner of Third and Erie Streets. I have always wondered how such a fine house came to be built in that location, which seems now quite out of the main residential district.

In the first place much of the early settlement of Fulton, excluding that which we have already mentioned, at the Upper and Lower Landings, was north of Oneida St. Now the case of Mr. L. E. Loomis.

Mr. Loomis was born in Winchester, Conn., March 19, 1808. His forbears were wool drapers in England, and came to America in 1634. At 18, Mr. Loomis joined his brother, Abiel, in New York City and engaged with him in the hide and leather trade, soon after engaging in business for himself. In 1845, he with his wife and two children, moved to Fulton entering the firm of "Salmon and Falley" in the hides and leather trade. After the death of Mr. Falley, and the retirement of Mr. Salmon, he continued the business, taking into partnership his brother, Alanson. Answering my own question: Why did he leave New York City to accept the more primitive conditions of a young village? This is my theory —and it is only a theory: Mr. Loomis had been selling Salmon and Falley's hides and leather in New York, collecting a good fee for his services. He reasoned—I have the customers, why don't I tan and dress the hides, and make both the manufacturer's and the seller's profits? Some such plan must have worked, for he was able to build this fine brick house, which still stands, and owned and operated a large tannery on the site of the Hunter Arms Plant.

The Thayer House

The oldest brick house now standing in Fulton as far as we can learn, is the Thayer House, corner of Cayuga and Third Streets. From the records in the County Clerk's office, it would appear that David Chatterton built this house in the early 1820's, but in the obituary of Mrs. Mary Falley Carrier Schenck (Fulton Patriot, Jan. 8, 1892) it would appear that the house was built by Levi Carrier for his wife, Mary Falley Carrier, sometime prior to 1833, as Mr. Carrier was buried from this house in that year.

Thomas Hubbard acquired the house in 1846, and sold it to Dr. Edward Lord and wife, Mary Jane, in 1854. Dr. Lord was pastor of the Presbyterian church from 1851-65. His son, Chester S. Lord, became a well known newspaper man, and was managing editor of the New York Sun for fifty years. Don Carlos Buell, whom many of you remember as a local attorney, served as a reporter under Mr. Lord and always spoke of him in the highest terms.

Dr. Lord planted the elm tree on the corner of Third and Cayuga Streets, since grown into a huge and beautiful tree. In March 1866 Dr. Lord conveyed this property to Marie Antoinette Sanford, who in May of the same year sold it to Amos J. Thayer. The Thayer family have owned this property since 1866, and the

brick portion is about in its original form, and in excellent shape. The south portion of the original house, being inadequate, was torn off in 1905 and the present wooden portion built in 1905-06. Miss Ada Thayer, the present owner has taken pride in preserving this home, and I have here to show you one of the gargoyles, which originally graced the house, and which Miss Thayer plans to replace.

The Clark House

Judge Lovell Johnson, who came to Fulton in 1839, lived in a house on the north end of the Clark House site, in one of the oldest brick dwellings, a part of which interestingly enough, was said to have been incorporated in the present Clark House. Judge Lovell Johnson was the father of Hon. Willard Johnson, who was member of Assembly from this district from 1873-75. Mr. Johnson was father of Mary Johnson Hall, mother of Willard Johnson Hall, a former mayor of Oswego who is known to you all.

The Putterill House

This picturesque old frame house, simple but sturdy in design and workmanship, boasting two large chimneys which probably meant four large fire places, was built by Norman Hubbard sometime before 1828. In my day this house was occupied by Charles Putterill, an excellent carpenter. My interest in the house was first —that it stood diagonally across the lot at Fifth and Seneca Streets, where five modern houses now stand. I finally learned from Peter Schenck's map of 1829, that the reason for the strange setting was that Waterhouse Road, a continuation of what is now Whitaker Road, once ran across this plot, diagonally, to join Volney Road (now Emery Road) at Oneida and Holland Streets (now Fourth Street). My second interest in this house was as an original source of food. To make bread, yeast was not then exclusively sold at the stores, but largely by frugal women who made yeast or "emptins" of hops, potato water and sugar. Mrs. Putterill was one of those women, and it was my job, when a small boy, with 2 cents and a shiny tin pail, kept solely for this purpose, to go for the yeast.

The Gilbert House

The Gilbert house at Third and Rochester Streets was built in 1834 by I. A. Hart, then pastor of the Presbyterian Church. It was later occupied by Sands N. Kenyon, president of the Citizens National Bank, who later organized the first Savings Bank in Fulton. In 1888 my father purchased this house from the Kenyon heirs. At this time the entire grounds were enclosed by an ornate iron fence. Formal gardens with winding brick walks filled a large part of the east lawn and a carriage house stood in the northwest corner of the lot. All of these old fashioned embellishments my father promptly removed. They would seem quite appropriate and attractive today. When recently one of our young Fultonians, missed the turn at Third and Rochester Streets, and drove across the lawn and tore down the front porch at 2 o'clock one morning, major repairs were required. In the course of these repairs some clapboards had to be removed, behind which the carpenter found this chisel (exhibiting an unusually long chisel with a 1½ inch cutting edge) which apparently another carpenter had accidentally dropped in the partition 118 years before.

The Nelligan House

On the site of the present Public Library, a brown stone quarry was still in operation in the 1880s, shipping stone by canal boats to the metropolis for the famous "brown stone fronts" of Brooklyn and New York. Stone taken from this quarry was also used in the construction of some parts of the old State Prison in Auburn.

When the quarry was abandoned, Joel Chubb and his three

sons, Albert, John and Hiram, who had worked in the quarry, used the left-overs and rejected stone with which to build a combination store and dwelling which stood two stories above and two stories below the ground level. The lower stories were at first used as a canal store selling supplies to the canalers who tied-up their craft nearby.

The same fine spring which furnished drinking water for the early travellers along the river, and later along the canal, still flows from underneath the present library building. This building was later acquired by Willis Nelson, and occupied by the Nelligan family.

The Northrup House

A location at the west end of the lower bridge was chosen by W. D. Northrup for the site of his home. It stood between the two approaches to the bridge, and was reached by a driveway from West First Street, or by climbing up a long flight of steps from the east. This site is high above the river; the house, built of wood, with its long side towards the river, commands a beautiful view, north and south, and looks down, I would say, into the very heart of the east side business district. It is still, I think you will agree, an unusually fine location.

On the flat at the foot of the bluff, was where Mr. Northrup probably built his nail factory which afterwards was converted into a grist mill.

In 1821, at his own expense, Mr. Northrup started to build a bridge, where our lower bridge now stands. The State later took over this project, employing Mr. Northrup to finish the bridge, and re-imbursing him for his investment.

A law suit developed over the location of the dividing line of the Northrup and Schenck properties, which we are about to consider, and a Survey Map, which we will show you, was used in evidence in this suit.

About the middle of the plot we have been discussing, but on the First Street side (No. 69 West First Street) Peter Schenck built a house in 1835. This plot is now used for lumber storage by Henderson-Thomson Company. I knew this house well, as my sister, Lucy, was a friend of Lillian and Adelaide Schenck, granddaughter of Peter Schenck, and I frequently drove my sister over for a visit.

The James Whitaker House

Another early house, built in 1832, stood about where the Cake-Box is now located at 209 Oneida Street. In my day, it had been moved to the rear of this location, facing east in the alley, west of Dr. Keller's office. It was occupied by Bing Anderson and his wife, Nettie. Bing was a well known Fultonian of my day, employed by Dr. Charles M. Lee as keeper and driver of Dr. Lee's aged sorrel horse. He accompanied Dr. Lee on his professional visits.

The City Hall

The building now used as the City Hall, was built by Jonathan Case, who came to Fulton in 1826. It was later purchased by William B. Gage, a prominent mill owner, who occupied it with his family up to the time of its purchase by the village of Fulton.

The Steens Location

You have perhaps noticed in early deeds or on maps, references to "Steen's Location." This plot included all the land at present lying between Harrison and Academy Streets, and that from the river to Eighth Street. It was owned jointly by Norman Hubbard and G. F. Falley. Mr. Hubbard eventually held title to the section lying north of Oneida Street, and Mr. Falley that to the south of that street. Mr. Hubbard was the man, you will recall, who built the Putterill House. He also gave the land upon which the First Methodist Church was built.

The Miller House

The last house I shall mention is the Miller House which stands

at the corner of Seneca and Third Streets. This house was always of great interest to me, as it was always so beautifully kept. The lawn always seemed to have just been mowed, the garden tended, the house and fence painted, and the great brass knocker on the wide Dutch door, just polished. The two sisters, Miss Sarah and Miss Helen Miller, were most genteel and cultured women, and Mr. Townsend Miller, a genial Fulton grocer, was far and away Fulton's tallest citizen.

(The foregoing concluded Mr. Gilbert's portion of the manuscript. There follows that part of the jointly-produced paper which was composed and read by Mrs. Elliott.)

Mrs. Elliott's Paper

When this program was first planned, it seemed there was a great lack of information about our Old Homes. But, much to our surprise, to mine at least, there is very much available—County histories, two old Directories, Clark's "Onondaga," many newspaper clippings, some scrapbooks and some pictures—not very much about any one home but a little about many of them.

We have only time to speak of a few, only a few. Perhaps our reasons for selecting those we are speaking of are not good reasons; perhaps not houses you would have chosen or care about hearing us describe; perhaps not the best located, or the best looking homes; perhaps not homes of the most prosperous, cultured, or most prominent families, but we have tried not to spoil the ground for future programs.

There are things, institutions, means of communication, industries connected with the families of which we speak that will make a whole or a large part of other programs and these we have left untouched or only mentioned. Some of these are the roads, the canal, the railroads, Falley Seminary, the industries, and the histories of our churches. These certainly interlock and it seems best to leave them for future programs.

We have planned to keep within limits of time also so that you may have time to talk of these matters but someone else with better judgment and a more clever pen than I can go on from where we leave off—there is material available for one of more evenings.

We are assuming that you, as we, are more interested in the people who made homes of the houses, rather than in the houses themselves. You would like to know why they came to the Fulton area to reside, or if they were born here; why their parents or grandparents came; from where and when they came; whether or not they were the builders of the homes they occupied, and any things outstanding about their home or about the lives of the families that occupied them.

Of all of this, there is so little that has been written; so much of what we know is only what we have heard from others that, perhaps, it is well to get it recorded now while the facts are still available.

Mr. Gilbert and I are hopeful that you will, here tonight, be able to add much to what we have found recorded or what we have learned. Many of these people of whom we speak we have known personally and we hope you will find that you know and will like to tell us what you know personally, or have heard from others.

Two Architects in 1860s

In Child's Gazetteer & Business Directory of Oswego County published in 1866-67, two architects were listed at Oswego Falls, none at all at Fulton. These architects at the Falls were Ramson P. Alger and Henry Broadwell. They were really contractors and builders, not architects in the sense that we use the term today.

The log cabins and homes of the earliest days of settlement, were only temporary, put up hastily, to be occupied only a year or two. The forests which were

being cleared yielded very good lumber. And it was cheap. Clay for bricks was here and also a brown sandstone. This latter did not stand weathering very well but it was quarried and used. Some was sent to New York City for use in the construction of the brown-stone front houses that yet line the side-streets of old New York. Good houses were constructed in Fulton and in Oswego Falls, many of which are in use today; many more have been torn down or remodeled in the last 50 years.

Fulton had a few "batten houses," you know them — they had that familiar up-and-down look, always with scroll work hanging from the eaves. I once asked a Fulton architect about these and he said, "Oh, battens— Phoenix has some honeys." So I will say no more about ours.

As we look over the old homes of Fulton we find nothing very outstanding in their style. Probably each was planned by the owner or his builder with more thought as to the size of his family and the amount to be spent than to the architectural design. There was, evidently, not much thought of convenience. How much were the women consulted? How much thought was given to saving her steps, her time and strength?

The House of Many Steps

One house, near here, built about 1840 on very level land has this arrangement. Parlor, two bedrooms, sittingroom, pantry, stairway upstairs — all on one level; two steps down — dining room, another pantry, cellar stairway; two steps farther down— kitchen, and milk room; two steps down—woodshed. Some journey from parlor to woodshed!

The type of house of which most are now existing was that with the hall-in-the-middle plan. These seemed to have been chosen by the most prosperous builders. Many of these had cupolas. Was that cupola built with the thought of ventilation or in lieu of a captain's walk?

Possibly the cupola would fit nicely into the modern ventilating system but when these homes were built it was ornamental. Many of the houses with cupolas were doubtless the homes of forwarding agents and boat owners, but probably none was used as a lookout station. Canalers did not have the worries of lake or ocean shippers. Storms did not endanger their boats and cargoes or delay them much. Their chief worries centered about their teams— whether their drivers had observed due sobriety and been able to fight their way into the locks before other crews? Professional courtesy along the water-front demanded, if you were not there first, that you fight your way to first place. So the boat owners did not need to waste time pacing a captain's walk or looking out anxiously from a cupola to scan the nearby waters of canal and river.

Greek Architectural Revival

There was a period of Greek architectural revival here: pillars, wide friezes, frieze windows with iron grills. Two of the really beautiful houses of this type have very recently been torn down: Falley Seminary and the B. J. Dyer house. This latter stood on Buffalo Street between the residence of Ronald Osborne and the house built by F. E. Goodjon which now belongs to the Saint Mary's School.

We had few claims to show places or to houses or buildings of great, outstanding architectural styles but we like to think that the home builder copied the good points of his neighbors' plans and that he thought of the size and needs of his family; that he put bay windows where they best lighted the room or gave a pleasant view; that the outside plan was secondary.

Certainly Fulton had its share of spacious homes with a happy life for family and friends.

I wonder if what President

F. D. Roosevelt meant by "gracious living" was not achieved by Fulton in the period before and during the "Gay Nineties"? Most of those who were wealthy or moderately so, did what I would call light farming. They had spacious grounds around their homes; they had barns, chickens, horses, a cow and a garden. Usually a piece of land on the outskirts of town where they raised their hay and pastured their stock. They were able to hire a man who did all of this light farming and doubled in driving the family carriage. Sometimes he even reached the standing of a coachman!

These folk were able to employ one or two maids, perhaps extra help by the day and thus had time for F. D. Roosevelt's "gracious living."

Evidences of Progress

Our town was going strong before public utilities brought first of the month bills or the need for constant expensive repairs staggered us. Fulton was early supplied in 1858 with gas, but electricity in its early days soon displaced it for lighting. I think Fulton homes had electricity for lighting before those in Oswego.

Have you thought much about the furniture? Those who came first, except those of wealth, probably brought very little furniture. If they came by cart, they were very fortunate to be able to bring any. The axe, the saw, the hammer in the hands of the men had to make it. Probably those who came by the waterway could bring more. I have read that some families brought men to help with their seeding, clearing land, etc., and they could use several boats. Later when the roads were built and became less rough, more furniture could come in by wagon.

Early Cabinet Maker

Then the cabinet makers began to come and establish their shops. Sometime around 1840 Caleb Goodell had a shop at Volney Center and I know of some good-looking beds made by him that are still in use. Of course, they were cord beds. I have never found anything in the old letters and papers which I have about Caleb but the daughter of bride for whom they were made told me the makers name and that his shop was at Hull's Corners. The woods—cherry and curley maple —used grew on her father's farm.

There is much of that period furniture still to be found in this area. Such good, strong wood and so sturdily made this will, no doubt, outlast much of that made today. Many of us like the looks of the old better anyway.

Many of our old homes were built and furnished in the Victorian period which was a long and cluttered time for furnishings of houses. May I remind you of some of these not often seen now-a-days? Styles have changed and time for dusting has been curtailed. Here they are: whatnots, tidies, portiers, easels, rubber plants, vases, big ones with dried bulbushes, gilded baby shoes, plush throws, divans with many satin, embroidered, covered pillows for looks, not use; wax flowers under glass domes; framed hair wreaths and coffin plates, the parlor table with the family album and some books of poems. We were a little late in starting the Victorian style but as we prospered we soon caught up with the rest of the world.

We even sometimes achieved a den or still better, a Turkish nook with crossed spears, oriental lamps, taborettes and so on. If you didn't have them you must have seen them or pictures of them, in home interiors.

Victorian antiques are having their day and some of us whose young days were during that period like to look at them and think of the old days of "gracious living."

Forest Hall

One of the first pretentious homes built in this vicinity was situated near the Upper Landing on the west side of the river, be-

tween what is now West First Street and the river, and about what is now Cedar Street. It was a fine location for a beautiful home. It stood up rather high and after the trees had been cleared off afforded a fine view of the river and the lake.

A Mr. Fay who came in 1793 and built a log cabin, died the same year. The land he had owned was purchased eventually by a Mr. Van Epps. He built the beautiful home. He came, with his family from New York to occupy it. He had several daughters. Mr. Van Epps had been a successful tailor in New York city and he had hoped to establish his family socially in that city. However, the fact that he was a tailor could not then be overlooked or forgotten. The "socialites" would not let them cross the tracks—or what passed in those days for the tracks. This so irked Mr. Van Epps that he left New York city to live in the beautiful home he had built at Oswego Falls, and named "Forest Hall."

It is too bad we have no information about the social life of this family in Oswego Falls. We do know that the young ladies loved pretty clothes, and thereby hangs a tale. Once when a peddler —his pack full of beautiful materials—was showing his wares to the ladies at "the Hall," there came a very severe storm. The ladies had shopped so slowly that night had settled down before the pleasant task had been completed. There was nothing to do but for the head of the house to ask him to remain over night.

The Haunted House

The Van Epps' story of what happened was this:

During the night the peddler was taken ill and died. Next day he was buried under one of the pines in the yard of the Hall. This reposing place was not satisfactory to the spirit of the peddler and he, especially on dark stormy nights, walked the floor of the attic of the Hall and the pine trees 'round about moaned and cried. All of this was supported by other mysterious sounds.

There is another version not so favorable to the Van Epps family. According to this, the husband of one of Mr. Van Epp's daughters had an argument with the peddler —after he had shown the latter to his quarters in the attic for the night the husband had murdered the guest. As proof of this blood stains were pointed out on the attic floor. A later occupant of the house said that meat had been hung to cure in the attic and hence the stains.

In either case we had a "haunted house" in our town.

For some years Spiritualists got permission to hold their meetings at Forest Hall. Of these we have no report. What became of the Van Epps family I cannot tell. Perhaps they went back to New York and the disgrace of being a tailor was forgiven and they became part of the social life of that city.

New Owner for the Hall

There are recorded many things about the next owner of Forest Hall—Asa Phillips. He was born in Connecticut in 1795. His parents moved to Marcellus, N. Y., when he was a baby. His father was a successful man and when Asa was 18 years old he died, leaving his estate to Asa. Asa managed his affairs so well and in addition engaged in shipping salt profitably that by 1824 he was ready to make a large investment. He came to Fulton and bought Forest Hall and moved his family there.

To him is given the credit for inaugurating the movement for the creation of Oswego Falls village. He bought a square mile of land, built thereon a shingle factory, several homes for his men, a school house and paid the teacher's salary. Later he built a hotel on the present site of the Congregational Church. He also owned packet boats on the river and later on the canal. This growing young settlement was named

Phillipsville. The survey and laying out of lots which Asa Phillips arranged was the first attempt at a plan for the village.

About 1840 Mr. Phillips sold his business in Phillipsville and went to New York city where he engaged in banking and land speculations and soon lost his fortune. At the end of four years he was back at the foot of the ladder in Phillipsville (Oswego Falls) ready to try again. This he did successfully and when he died in 1865 he had accumulated another fortune.

The last owner of Forest Hall was a great nephew of Asa Phillips—Robert E. Phillips. He was a very well known and liked man. He had a drug store at No. 7 South First Street. For some years also he was with the Water Department.

In 1904 Forest Hall was destroyed by fire. In due time the lots upon which it stood and which had surrounded it were sold and homes were built on its grounds.

On a recent visit to Fulton, Mrs. Mary Phillips Bleecker of Albany, daughter of R. E. Phillips, related the story of Forest Hall.

The J. G. Willard House

The J. G. Willard house had a connection with Forest Hall. The obituary notice of Mrs. Asa Phillips reads: "Mary, daughter of Mr. Willard." This house stood on First Street, between Beech and Oak Streets. It was torn down to make way for the American Woolen Company's buildings. A picket fense surrounded the lot and partially concealed a very beautiful garden. At one time Mr. Willard was a wealthy man, was a manufacturer of bedsteds, and did a very thriving forwarding business, but he lost his money. He had never kept the house up and when it was purchased by the American Woolen Company it was in very bad shape.

Broadwell House

Only a few blocks from the site of Forest Hall stands St. Michael's Polish Church. This building is the remodeled home of Henry Broadwell. In the directory of 1866-67 the latter was mentioned as an architect. He was once called to the home of Asa Phillips to see about some repairs. There he met Miss Julia Phillips, the daughter of Asa, and a short time afterwards he married her. She was his second wife. He had two daughters by his first wife.

Mr. Broadwell's home was certainly graced by Julia Phillips. Many of us remember her as a very dignified lady riding through town with her step-daughters. Probably about 1900 I remember seeing her descend from her carriage to visit the home of R. E. Phillips. She was carrying a cap basket, the basket in which cap wearing ladies used to keep their freshly-done caps from being mussed when they were going visiting. Mrs. Julia Broadwell wore a beautiful white cap when in the house.

The Broadwells were a family of much culture and entertained very nicely—it was a matter of regret when these ladies were gone and their home no longer open.

Among Mary Phillips Bleecker's stories of the Phillips-Broadwell families is this: "Asa Phillips sheltered a dwarf. He was helpful about the house and garden and rode with the driver when the ladies were taken to ride. When the ladies went shopping it was his duty to carry the basket and run back to the carriage with their purchases. Mr. Phillips was very kind to this young fellow and allowed him many privileges. He was permitted to have a dog which he taught many tricks. The ladies rode forth in a very dignified manner and they had forbidden him to take the performing dog on their rides—they felt it not in keeping with their appearance on the streets of the town.

"One day, they left their carriage at the corner of First and Cayuga streets and as they did not have many purchases to make, the dwarf was left to watch it.

Upon their return they saw a gathering of people on the corner and, to their embarrassment, observed the dwarf passing his hat among them. He had hidden his dog in the carriage and when the ladies left the carriage he had placed the dog on the carriage seat and had him do his tricks."

No doubt there was no repetition of this performance but I believe Miss Julia, in spite of the hurt to her pride, saw the joke. From the accounts of what Asa did when he was told of this incident he too saw the joke.

The Half-Way House

While we are regretting the loss of some of these old homes, we should mention the Half-Way Home which is half way between the bridges on the east side of West First, just a little south of the foot of Phillips Street. It was built by James Crombie in 1845 and had a fine view of the river.

Its rather low brick basement supported the large house—central-hall type with pillared porches both front and back—east and west views. Were it standing today, it would have, no doubt, been made a home by some prosperous citizen. It could have been made the most beautiful place in Fulton.

Beyond the name of the builder, there has been found this other fact about it. At Fair time in 1859, Delave crossed the Oswego river on a tight rope stretched from a pole 30 feet high. The east pole was in the yard of the Citizens' Club of today. The west end was anchored on the grounds of the Crombie mansion.

At one time a Mr. Kilts and his wife lived there in luxury. They were very extravagant. The story is told that their maid, Anna Brown, was instructed that any food left from a meal was to be thrown out. Because of their extravagance they eventually lost their home and money and both died in the poor house. Later a Mr. Corrigan owned the place and its last owner was Dan York, the junk man.

During the last days of this mansion its grounds were used as a junk-yard and the house a tenement, evidently for several families, because we remember children scampering around it, like those around a school at recess. It is better that someone bought the property, tore down the house and built comfortable homes there.

The Church House

The block bounded by Oneida, North Seventh, Seneca and North Sixth Streets was at one time a real show place. A white picket fence surrounded spacious lawns, a vegetable garden, a flower garden, an apple and a pear orchard, and, most attractive of all, a fish pond or rather two fish ponds. A spring of clear cold water flowing about 75,000 gallons a day, was located in the northeast corner. It formed a sizable brook which flowed to the northwest. This was dammed up and made the ponds. Mr. Church, the owner of the property, stocked these with four kinds of trout. These he sold. If one wished to choose his own dinner, he could point to the trout he wished and it would be caught for him. The price was fixed at $1.00 per pound—even today the same price.

Mr. Church also raised very fine pears. If someone in New York City wanted a very special fruit for a banquet, those were packed very carefully and sent by packet; later, of course, by railroad. In these days of frozen foods or cars iced for shipping the host and hostess could have Fulton grown fruit and fish to give their guests. In 1870 Mr. Church began a house which was to face Oneida Street with the side on Sixth Street. The back part was built and occupied but the front was never finished. It is now occupied by Mr. Boylan and the pond has been drained, the lots sold off and houses built all around the block.

Wolves Raid House

Carlon Church, the builder of this home, was the grandson of the 1813 settler-pioneer, Whitman Church, who came from Kinder-

hook, and was a friend of the Van Burens who were among the earliest settlers in Oswego County. It is recorded of Whitman Church that he built the second frame building here. He kept some sheep in a corner of this building and one night while the family slept, wolves killed his sheep.

Carlon Church was a merchant here and a real estate owner. He owned the block formerly known as the Salmon block at 15 and 17 South First, now occupied by the Metropolitan stores. The third floor of this block was at first called Salmon Hall, then Church's Hall, and for many years it was the largest place for public gatherings in town.

Here were held the dances, concerts, lectures and theatrical productions. It would be of interest to know the list of famous people who appeared in this hall. I have heard of Henry Ward Beecher lecturing there—do you know of others?

D. W. Gardner Residence

This lovely old home, now known as the Fulton Club, does not need to be described to you, for it looks today with one exception as it did 70 years ago. Even the iron fence across its front has astonishingly few broken places. A few years ago the wing at the south, was built for offices for the Chamber of Commerce. The interior has been changed very little although a few partitions have been removed to make larger rooms for dining space and games.

This home was the residence of DeWitt Gardner, who was born at Cazenovia in 1819. He had two sisters living in this village, Miss Amanda, a teacher, and Mrs. Frederick Seymour. He came to live with them, when he was sixteen years old. He started his business career by clerking in a grocery store. He soon was able to go in business with a partner, and very soon afterwards was able to buy out the partner.

In 1855, he took a major part in the organization of the Oswego River Bank, which later became the First National Bank and is now known as the Oswego County National Bank. Mr. Gardner started his banking career as cashier. Later he became president, an office which he held until his death. He was active in many business projects, flour-mills and he built two business blocks on Oneida Street. The Grand Central Block, a two-story block with offices above, on the south side of Oneida Street and on the north side a similar one were built by him.

Mr. Gardner also owned houses which he rented. He evidently had great faith in Fulton and thought it a good place to make investments.

He was a fine looking man, very dignified and austere. He lived by a very rigid code. He took a very active part in the religious life of our town, was a loyal member of the Presbyterian Church, and supported its many interests. He was a member of the committee which built the present church building at Third and Cayuga Streets.

From resolutions adopted by the directors of the Citizens Bank at the time of his death I quote: "We desire to record our appreciations of his sterling qualities as a man, his wise and conservative policy as a financier, his public spirit and progressive spirit as a citizen."

They considered, although at an advanced age, his death "an irreparable loss to his business associates and to the village." This would of course, include his church and charities.

Mr. Gardner had three wives and several children but there is little information available about them. The third wife and her only child, a daughter, Miss Alice May, many of us still remember. They were wonderful women and I am glad of an opportunity to pay tribute to their memories. I surely enjoyed their friendship and wish I had the ability to give an estimate of their influence on the cultural and religious life of our

town. They were both college women, had traveled extensively. They were well informed on current affairs, great historians and students of art. They were devoted to the work of the church and its missions.

They had the rare faculty of making you feel comfortable, never embarrassed by their superior knowledge. Perhaps this was because of their desire always to learn and their unusual sense of humor, Mrs. Gardner's the quite unexpected kind and Miss May's the more sparkling kind. I never enter the doors of their old home without thinking of them and being thankful to have known them and wishing that their influence through the activities of the Reading Circle, the Shakespeare Club and the church could be properly evaluated.

Summer Program Includes Tour and Papers At Headquarters House

The Oswego County Historical Society acted as host to the Historical Societies of Jefferson, St. Lawrence, and Lewis Counties for the annual Summer Tour and Program, July 19th. The Tour rendezvoused at Selkirk Light House at the mouth of the Salmon River where E. M. Waterbury gave a talk on the importance of the area and the Light House. The motorcade proceeded to Port Ontario. Miss Josephine Parkhurst described the nature and scope of the Selkirk Purchase at this point.

Texas was the next stop. Miss Ruth Thomas had reproduced a map from Elizabeth Simpson's book, "Mexico: Mother Of Towns", to illustrate her talk on Vera Cruz, the dream city of George Scriba. She also touched upon the historic incidents associated with The Great Calamity, and Spy Island.

The motorcade proceeded to Colosse by way of the Village of Mexico. Several buildings and spots connected with the Jerry Affair were pointed out. At the Colosse Baptist Church, one of the oldest, if not the oldest church in the county, Mrs. A. H. Norton of Auburn, told of the interesting history of the church, and some of the amusing incidents associated with church services when she attended as a youth. The assembled members of the Tour sang one of the old hymns from the hymnal to the accompaniment of the old organ.

The next stop was at the Sidney Shepard Estate at New Haven. The gardens, the famous library, the flag pole, and the observatory were viewed and enjoyed by the tour members at their leisure and according to their individual interests. A short talk on the history of the Congregational Church, organized in 1817, was given by the pastor. The motorcade proceeded directly to Fort Ontario where the members enjoyed a basket lunch. During the lunch period members had an opportunity to inspect the redoubts and military facilities of the Fort. Following the noon recess, Dr. Albert Corey, State Historian, talked on the State's plans for the ultimate development of the Fort Ontario Historic Site.

Ralph Faust gave a brief description of the importance and significance of the old houses and other places which the motorcade was to pass but would not stop at because of the lateness of the hour. In succession the Pardee and Sloan houses, "Carrington's Castle," St. Mary's Church, Christ Church, Bronson House, First Presbyterian Church, Gerrit Smith library, St. Paul's Church, McWhorter House were passed before the motorcade made its final stop at the Headquarters House.

The two following papers by Major Jacobs and Dr. O'Connor were given before a large audience. The Auxiliary Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. James McCrudden and Mrs. Frances Dann served tea; the visitors took the opportunity to inspect the Headquarters House and the Museum. The Tour was most successful. The Tour Committee of E. M. Waterbury, J. C. Birdlebough, Dr. C. R. Baldwin, Grove Gilbert, chairman, were extended a vote of appreciation for their efforts and achievements.

The Jerry Incident and Underground Railway

(Paper Given Before the Oswego County Historical Society As Part of Summer Program by Dr. John O'Connor, July 19, 1952)

We think we have troubles now. We Americans look out upon a world torn by strife, separated by differing ideologies, and we wonder if we shall ever again be free. We consider those earlier, calmer days of our youth, and in our hearts there is despair that they may never come again. The future looks bleak indeed to those who think of the world as being sharply divided between a godless dictatorship on one side and freedom-loving individualists on the other. Fear is part of a man's heritage, but wisdom is something that must be acquired.

Only a hundred years ago, our ancestors also felt this gnawing fear of a seemingly hopeless future. In their world, too, there existed separate ideologies. A much smaller world, to be sure, encompassed within the boundaries of the United States, but to them the only world that mattered very much, because they had not yet learned to shatter time and geography. They had not yet begun to lean out across the seas to those other peoples in other lands who cry aloud for help. Yes, their world too was sharply divided. In the South, an agrarian civilization, ruled by an aristocracy of land holders, was in complete control. Their great plantations could be maintained profitably only through the use of slave labor. In the North, an ever-growing industrial civilization was building, competing, expanding, was already beginning to visualise the face of the world changed by the machines they were creating. There was no shortage of man power. The younger sons of the small farmers drifted into the towns and cities and remained because the wages they received afforded them a better life than they could expect at home. Recurrent waves of European immigrants, leaving oppression behind, passed through Castle Garden to a freedom they had never known before. They too found employment in the mills, the factories and the railroads, whose owners were growing rich and fat in an expanding economy. But the workers didn't care about that. They had become Americans. They had acquired freedom: freedom to choose their jobs, their leaders, even their religion. They built their homes and their churches, and they raised their children in an atmosphere of contentment. And because they were free, they looked with pity upon all those who still remained in bondage.

Thus the stage was set for a conflict that could only end in total war; total victory for the one side, total destruction for the other. There was no compromise; no middle ground where each might meet the other. Compromises had been tried and they had inevitably failed. The Southern planters wanted slavery, needed slavery. Their's was a huge investment which they were unwilling to lose. To most of them the moral question was not pertinent. They sincerely believed that a slave was a chattel, to be used in any manner the owner decided. If it were uneconomical to maltreat or kill their slaves, the owners holding such views felt free to provide for good health and well being. On the other hand, there were many

slave owners, who found it expedient to drive their slaves into the last bit of work, who estimated their value by the number of man hours of labor each slave was worth. Unfortunately, for their continuing prosperity, all the slave owners reckoned without the human element. The slaves were not chattels, not horses nor oxen nor dumb beasts. They were rational beings. Some of them had learned to read, despite the laws that made it a criminal offense to teach them. They knew vaguely of a world outside their own, where color was no bar to freedom. They ran away. Some of them found their way into the swamps and bayous and eked out a meager existence. Some of them turned north into the free states and settled down with their families. But even here they were not safe because the laws provided that a runaway slave must be returned to his owner. Over the years, more and more of them journeyed to Canada, where they were forever safe since the Canadian Government recognized no extradition for the offense of running away.

We who live in America live here by the grace of revolution. Revolt is our heritage and the strength of our system. The English immigrants rebelled against religious oppression, the German against political oppression, the Irish and the Italians against economic oppression. We cannot escape the deep roots which feed our branches. The Africans also came to this country, but not to escape oppression. They came to be oppressed, to labor, to die and to catch up their victimization into a blaze of revolt that burns as brightly in our national consciousness as those of the Germans who escaped the gallows and the Irish who escaped the famines.

False Picture of Slavery

There has been a long and honorable school of apologists for slavery who still find it a matter of pressing concern to establish the fact that slavery was, on the whole, an agreeable and patriarchal manner of living, and who draw gay pictures of Negroes singing at their work, and lovely women decorating the porticos of classic plantations. But the court records, newspaper items, plantation letters and tales told by exhausted and defenseless fugitives show that picture to be false. American slavery was a reign of violence, emotional as well as physical. It was a carefully devised and remorseless doctrine of racial inferiority. It halted the movement of progress for one half of the country and brought the waste and destruction of a century, so that only today are we seeing the South emerge from a soil-exhausting, artificial economy.

Despite the fact that the laws and the lawmakers, the bankers and the shippers were on the side of slavery; despite the fact that most of our presidents and many of our legislators and Supreme Court Justices were slave holders, slavery was bound to fail. It had within itself the seeds of its own destruction because it posited itself on the premise that one man could be the master of another, that the imposition of a will could stultify the expression of another's soul and govern the action of his body. It raised up as its natural consequence the forces that completed its destruction, for the Abolition movement represented the growth of theoretic freedom into fact.

Vigilance Committees Rise

When we think about the Abolition Movement and the Underground Railway, we often forget that both came into existence early in the nineteenth century and existed for many years as sporadic, intellectual concepts, supported mainly by freed slaves and the usual radical fringe of "do-gooders." Not until the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, did the solid citizens, the ministers, teachers, and prominent business men of the North recognize that no nation can exist half-slave and half-free. It seems to

be an axiom in America that no unpopular law can be thoroughly enforced. There never was a more unpopular law than this on the statute book. Not even the prohibition amendment in our own time, hard as it was to enforce, was so open to bitterness and rancor as this law which made every citizen an informer and slave-catcher. This was the law that drove quiet men to violence, and political, social and economic leaders to adopt counter measures to defeat its purpose.

Vigilance Committees sprang up throughout the North. Meetings were held to determine what steps should be taken within the community if attempts were made to enforce the law. One of the first of these Vigilance Committees to be formed was organized in Syracuse only eight days after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Gerrit Smith of Peterboro, New York was the principal organizer of the committee, which included many prominent citizens from Central New York. The committee pledged itself "to stand by its members in opposing this law, and to share with any of them the pecuniary losses they may incur under the operation of this law." It was a bold step, but they didn't seem to fear the consequences. They published articles in the papers announcing the names of the members, and in fact defied the Federal Government to enforce a law which they believed to be unconstitutional.

Gerrit Smith's Leadership

Through nearly two decades, Gerrit Smith was the recognized leader in the Abolitionist movement in New York State. While other leaders of his times were content to protest against slavery in editorials and from the speaker's platform, Smith was busy organizing the Underground Railway, and providing way stations from Philadelphia and New York, through his own home and on to Mexico and Oswego. The records of the Underground are necessarily sketchy. Even now it is difficult to piece together the whole story. Men who were to help were unwilling to leave any record which could be used against them. Smith, however, was a bolder spirit than most. A man of strong opinions, he embraced a cause only when he was sure he was right, and then nothing could persuade him to deviate from his purpose. During those difficult political times while the Whig party was slowly disintegrating and before the Republican party had been organized, he helped organize the National Liberty Party and was its nominee for President in 1850. The principal plank in the party's platform was the complete abolition of slavery, by force if necessary.

But Smith was not alone. Throughout all of Central New York, there had grown up a network of stations, manned by men whose names will never be known. Extending north from Syracuse to the lakefront at Oswego and to the mouth of the Salmon River were stations of the Underground. In Mexico and Oswego and all the points between were farms and stores and homes, whose owners were hosts over the years to literally thousands of runaway slaves, who in the face of indescribable hardships had made their way to this last jumping off place of the land of their oppression before entering Canada, the land of their redemption.

Today we have been shown some of these homes where slaves were hidden. There were many more, whose identities have been lost in the flight of time. What was behind this movement? Was it political? Was there some tangible reward in sight that could inspire such men to flaunt the law of the land? None of these are adequate. There must have been a great spiritual drive, especially when we remember the heritage of freedom that was part of their lives. Only a truly great cause could inspire such great devotion. Only a firm belief in the words of the Great Document—Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of

Happiness — could conquer their natural respect for law and order.

Oswego County Leaders

Who were these men of our communities who entered so wholeheartedly into the work of the Underground? The names will mean little to us now, but in their day they were among our most respectable citizens. There was Dr. Jackson and Asa Wing, Deacon Beebe and Orson Ames, Isaac McWhorter and Starr Clark, Solomon Peck and Sidney Clarke. Business men, farmers, religious men all; men who must have known in their hearts that their small efforts at helping the individual slave to freedom could never solve the greater issue of emancipation, who, nevertheless, continued year after year risking their property and their lives in the belief that their cause was just. Humble men, these, but magnificent in the humility.

In any discussion of the Abolition Movement, it must be thoroughly understood that the issue was never one-sided. Many political and spiritual leaders in the North were firmly convinced that slavery was just, and quoted the Bible and the Constitution to prove its righteousness, just as effectively as the Abolitionists quoted the same books to prove its injustice. Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun were bitterly opposed to Abolition. In a speech in Syracuse, Webster promised that the full force of the Federal Government would be turned against any community that dared to defy the Fugitive Slave Law. Although one of the greatest orators of his time, his warning was disregarded, as we shall see. It was necessary for all the conductors and station agents (as they were called) of the Underground Railway to keep their activities secret. Even families were divided on the issue, and one of the reasons why more has not been written about the Underground was this vital need for secrecy. Most of the runaway slaves moved at night. They used disguises. They were hidden for days at a time in barns and lofts and secret closets. Some of the stations were equipped with tunnels, so that they could pass freely along in case of pursuit. But, gradually the picture changed. Here and there, men with too much pride to hide their activities came out boldly for emancipation and boasted of the slaves they had harbored. The Vigilance Committees that formed in most of the Northern cities were very effective in uniting the divergent groups that had previously acted alone. The individual stations became a network that crisscrossed the country from the Atlantic Seaboard to Nebraska. Both Oswego and Mexico were permanent stations on this network, and continued to be prominently identified with the movement until the outbreak of the Civil War.

Jerry's Background

One of the most important of these incidents was the so-called Jerry Rescue, in which the people of Mexico played so prominent a part. William Henry, who was popularly known as Jerry McHenry, was a fugitive slave from Missouri. His mother was a mulatto and his father was his mother's master. As a young man he had been sold to a John McReynolds of Missouri, from whom he had escaped by way of the Underground Railway, found his way to Syracuse and became a cabinet maker.

On October 1, 1851, Syracuse was crowded with visitors to the Onondaga County Fair. At the same time, there were a great number of Abolitionists in the city in attendance at a convention of the National Liberty party. Just as the delegates were rising from their noon luncheon, the bell of the Congregational Church began to ring. The members of the Vigilance Committee recognized the signal. A fugitive was in danger. The other church bells took up the message, and soon the streets were filled with people converging on the office of

Joseph F. Sabine, Commissioner of the United States Circuit Court. Jerry had been arrested by Henry W. Allen, deputy United States Marshal, and accused of being a runaway slave.

The courthouse was quickly surrounded. Free Negroes, fugitives, white men and their ladies, children, all shouting. Dogs were barking, the city was in an uproar. In the excitement, and before the charge could be put, Jerry made a dash for liberty. He was in irons, and the crowd was so dense that he was recaptured before he had gone very far on Water Street. He was beaten, placed in a wagon and taken to the police station, located at that time between Water Street and the Erie Canal, now Erie Boulevard. That evening, as dusk came down and the street lamps were lighted, Jerry lay in his cell, still bleeding from his wounds. The Commissioner listened to the charges, and since a slave had no right to a hearing, Jerry was automatically ordered to be returned to Missouri. The crowd had left hours before. The excitement had died down. Perhaps no one noticed that there were a number of buggies lined up at the curb around the Courthouse, each drawn by a white horse. Perhaps no one noticed the quiet footsteps of hundreds of men gathering not far away at Packet's Landing. Charlie Wheaton's store was near the landing and he had promised to provide arms to the extent of his stock of axes and iron bars. Under the leadership of Joe Norton, they quietly took up their positions across from the court house. With a crowbar in his hand and followed by ten Negroes carrying a huge log twenty feet long, Joe approached the door of the courthouse and gave the signal. The ram shattered against the door. One powerful blow was enough. The door sprang open and Joe and his followers were up the stairs. The crowbar made short work of the door to a cell, and although a bullet from the marshal's gun grazed his head, he rushed on. His followers close behind him succeeded in preventing any of the deputies from firing, but the marshal himself had his arm broken and to escape the mob, he jumped thirteen feet to the courtyard below.

Jerry's Escape

They found poor Jerry still in chains on the floor of his cell. They rushed him down the stairs only to be confronted by the crowd gathered in the street. William L. Solomon of Granby, Oswego County, stepped to the front and shouted: "Open the way. Old Oswego is coming." The crowd fell back, and Jerry was placed in one of the carriages drawn by white horses, and away they went, zigzagging through the streets. The other buggies and their white horses set off in different directions out of the city to confuse the pursuers. The silent army which was not needed, slipped quietly away.

Jerry was taken that night to the home of Caleb Davis on Genessee Street, Syracuse, where he rested for four days. In the meantime tools were procured to remove the chains from his hands and feet, and new clothing was brought to him. Caleb Davis's brother James was not a member of the Vigilance Committee or an Abolitionist, but he was an active member of the local lodge of Odd Fellows and so was the toll keeper at the Brewerton Bridge. On October fifth, Jason S. Hoyt, accompanied by Jerry and the two Davis brothers set out by carriage. The authorities were certain that Jerry had already slipped through their fingers so their vigilance had relaxed. Whatever signals were exchanged between James Davis and his lodge brother at the bridge is not known. Neither is it known whether it was by accident or design that a searching party came up to the bridge shortly after they had gone through. It is known though that Caleb and James Davis turned back at this point, and Hoyt drove Jerry the rest of the journey alone. It is

also known that while Jerry and his rescuers had no difficulty in being passed over the bridge, the searching party which came along a short time later found the toll keeper "asleep," and they lost over an hour trying to arouse him.

Arrival in Mexico

With the aid of relays of fast horses, Jerry arrived in Mexico that Sunday evening. He was taken first to the home of Mr. Orson Ames on Main street, a house still standing, but because of Mr. Ames' known identification with the Underground movement, his other patrons in Mexico, Mr. Starr Clark and Mr. Solomon Peck, decided Jerry would be safer in the barn of Deacon Asa Beebe. There he remained for two weeks and under the kindly ministrations of his host and plenty of good food provided by Mrs. Beebe, he regained his strength.

In the meantime, Mr. Orson Ames communicated with his brother Sidney, a dealer in Boots and Shoes in Oswego. Sidney Clark was apparently the go-between at the Oswego end of the Underground Railway. He had a wide acquaintance with captains of the merchant vessels trading into Oswego, and it was he who made the final arrangements. Concealed in a loaded wagon, Jerry left the Beebee farm shortly after midnight on October 19th or 20th, and before dawn was safely on board an English ship bound for Kingston, Ontario.

Dies in Canada

There isn't much more in the records about Jerry. He didn't live long to enjoy his freedom. He found shelter in Kingston in the home of Joseph George and he obtained employment in the chair factory of Chester Hatch. Not long after his arrival there he was married, but exposure and privation had undermined his health. He died of tuberculosis in the Kingston General Hospital on October 8, 1853, just two years after his daring rescue.

Jerry was a person, a runaway slave and to all the people who shared in his rescue he was very real. But Jerry was more than a person. Looking back upon those troublesome times, we, today see Jerry as a symbol of all his race enmeshed in the white man's greed. He is just a half-forgotten name, but in another civilization he would have been a hero. To us he stands for all those others who also prayed for freedom. The unknown first fugitive, the softly stepping men and women following their Indian guides through swamps and thickets, the woman with the brand on her forehead hiding in the cornfields, the man with the lashed back listening to the bay of hounds as he crouched by the weeds in a river, the hundreds of children in unmarked graves who died on their flight to the North, the cries, the hopes and the end of a journey as the gap between capture and freedom was closed. He is all that and he is the tremendous presence of Fredrich Douglas, the caustic pen of William Lloyd Garrison, and the flaming oratory of Gerrit Smith. He stands for all the friends of freedom who sprang up like Jason's teeth from the ground to do their part.

Whenever we think of Jerry and of the brief time he spent in our neighborhood, let us not forget all those others who made emancipation possible. Let us remember the disguises, the closed carriages, the gunshots along the border and the long resolute train which chugged so silently and sent up such invisible smoke. Let us remember those unnamed heroes who decided in the darkness of a Southern night where the train would stop, and the sweet, brief songs that rose in the twilight, in the darkness, in the morning to send a message that freedom was a living hope; those unnamed heroes who made the journeys back from freedom to rescue those they loved, and those who went from door to door, from town to town, imploring, demanding the money that would buy their wives, their children and their friends.

Unsolved Questions Concerning The War of 1812

(Paper Given Before the Oswego County Historical Society As Part of the Summer Program by Major James R. Jacobs, USA, Retired, of Cazenovia, July 19, 1952)

Some of the causes for the disastrous outcome of the United States efforts at the invasion of Canada from several points along the Ontario frontier in the year 1813 during the "War of 1812" were set forth by Major James Ripley Jacobs (U.S.A. Retired) before the regional gathering of North Country historians which took place in Oswego July 19, with Oswego County Historical Society acting as hosts. Unpreparedness, favoritism, incompetence and indifference played a large part in the succession of failures in that year, according to Major Jacobs.

Oswego county did not figure largely in the military activities of that year, although Fort Ontario was garrisoned with militia units drawn from Auburn, Manlius and other Central New York points, and "the first advance to the northward" after the outbreak of the war in 1812 had been made from the Oswego fort, although it was not of an expeditionary nature. It was a year later, in 1814, that the Oswego County area became one of the active theatres of the war with the British attack upon Ft. Ontario on May 5th and May 6th and the gallant defense of that fort by Col. George Mitchell commanding several companies of the 3rd U. S. Artillery, equipped as infantry, which had been rushed overland from Sackets Harbor to defend the Oswego fort when it was learned that the British were planning to attack it. Only six cannon remained in the fort at that time which could be fired. While the British captured the fort in a joint naval and land attack, after once having been repulsed, Col. Mitchell successfully executed his orders and prevented the naval supplies which the British sought at Oswego from falling into their hands.

There followed, soon afterwards, the attack upon the naval convoy moving from Oswego to Sackets Harbor transporting the naval supplies to the latter place where the American fleet under construction was in serious need of them. After having spent the night at the mouth of the Salmon River, the convoy put out into the lake the next morning. It had been joined there by 150 Oneida Indian warriors, who stalked along the shore following the boats of the convoy as it moved. They were to take part in the Battle of the Big Sandy which was soon to follow, but they fled after the British had fired their volley into the undergrowth where the Indians were concealed. Their use in that battle marked the last occasion where Indians were used in New York State as aids to fighting forces of the state.

The Americans won the battle at the great bend in the Big Sandy Creek, saving the great cable that was intended for use with the largest battleship upon the Great Lakes, the "Superior," which was then nearing completion at the Sackets Harbor Navy Yard. After the battle, it was borne overland on the shoulders of the United States militia from the battle area to Sackett's Harbor. The trail followed by the soldiers carrying the cable today is suitably marked.

The events treated in Major

Ripley's paper at Oswego shed less glory upon the United States military efforts in the same war a year earlier. The text of his paper as read before the historians follows:

DUBIOUS ANSWERS CONCERNING THE WAR OF 1812

Often in the writing of history, the causes of the events related are those most easily ascertained and frequently accepted. The participants themselves may have hidden or discounted the determining reasons for their actions in an effort to save or enhance their own reputation. As a consequence the real truth is unknown and the deductions that are made from such events may be entirely erroneous. Too often in the War of 1812 it is this highly personal interest that sidetracks the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

When war began the Democratic party had been in power for eleven years. It stood for the interests of the farmer and the common man; it held out for simplicity and economy in government, and endeavored to maintain peace with all the nations of the world. In spite of such a philosophy, it yielded to the popular outcry against the ruthless measures of Great Britain on the high seas, and reluctantly declared war on June 18, 1812. Although a small group, commonly known as "War Hawks," were chiefly responsible for such a decision, they had little or no part in the immediate supervision and direction of hostilities. Such a task fell upon the shoulders of those who enjoyed an unblemished reputation for faithfully serving the party or who fervently promised to do so. In a number of cases, those who occupied the seats of the mighty were often drably mediocre and entirely too complacent with failure, wholly unable to cope with the supremely difficult problems of the day. Their leader was James Madison. Few question that during his career he often evinced great ability, but it was not of the kind that made him a distinguished war President. By temperament and training he was ill-fitted to play the part. In seeking the causes of important occurrences during the War of 1812, we must not only consider his administration but also the character of the army that served it.

Tiny Standing Army

When fighting began, the regular army numbered only about 6744 officers and men. They were poorly led, trained, and equipped. Whimsical policies and changing objectives had determined its character. No distinctive pattern had yet been evolved. The West Point Military Academy had been in existence for only ten years; its influence was only beginning. For those entering the army, it could offer only an ill-paid and dubious future. Too often its personnel was composed largely of those who could get nothing else to do. Those in the higher grades were old and usually physically unfit for engaging in hard field service. Since the days of the Revolution, their methods and means of fighting had remained unchanged. On such a force Madison had to depend for training the militia and carrying the heaviest burden of battle.

Why John Armstrong, Madison's Secretary of War, made certain dispositions and assigned certain missions to troops have aroused various surmises. Why was Wilkinson ever ordered to Sackets Harbor to command the troops in the Northeast? And when he arrived, why was he urged to attack Montreal?

As early as March 10th, he was directed to leave New Orleans and report to Major General Dearborn. Perhaps he might lend vigor to Dearborn's operations, as Armstrong later explained. Perhaps Armstrong's old time association at Saratoga during Revolutionary days may have been a kindling cause. Perhaps the War Department wanted to get him

away from New Orleans, where he had made many enemies and few friends. Maybe it thought that he was the best choice of the general officers available. There were only eleven of them. All of these factors may have entered into Armstrong's decision.

Wilkinson Procrastinates

Wilkinson himself was reluctant to change station. Most of his family connections were in the Southwest. There his business ventures had been profitable. The second Mrs. Wilkinson, about half his age, whom he had married in 1810, was pregnant. From Revolutionary days he knew the hardships of a winter campaign in the north country. He may have felt himself unequal to such a task. Apparently hoping that something might turn up to prevent his going, he procrastinated as much as he dared.

It was not until July 31 that Wilkinson and his wife reached Washington. There on August 5th, Armstrong suggested that troops be assembled at Sacketts Harbor either for attacking Kingston or Montreal. Wilkinson agreed that Kingston should be attacked if his means were competent; but, if not, then an offensive should be started along the Niagara River while Hampton was making a "bold feint" at Montreal from the Champlain Valley. If victorious along the Niagara, Wilkinson would then make a "lightning movement against Kingston." If again victorious, he would then join forces with Hampton and attack Montreal.

With nothing definitely decided, Wilkinson left Washington and his wife behind, arriving at Sackets Harbor on the afternoon of August 20th, or five months and ten days after he had been originally ordered there. On August 26th he convened a Council of War, and it determined to make a feint from Sackets Harbor against Kingston and then slip down the St. Lawrence and attack Montreal.

On September 20th he held another Council of War at Fort George. There he declared that the reduction of Kingston was the primary object of the campaign and discussed how it could be done.

Armstrong Shifted View Point

On October 4, Wilkinson, sick and dilapidated, was back at Sackets Harbor. Here he found Armstrong who agreed that Kingston should be the first object of attack, if forces were adequate, weather favorable, and the navy would help. These conditions gave him a loophole for change, and he was soon declaring instead that Montreal should be attacked first. Wilkinson belligerently yielded, but asked that Armstrong give him orders based "on the authority of the President" to attack Montreal. This Armstrong refused to do, in spite of his own continued and strenuous insistence that his own point of view be accepted.

The motives governing Armstrong's action are not clear. He chronically evinced unwillingness to give orders unless he felt confident they would result in success. When in doubt, he preferred to put himself in an ambiguous position so that he could evade responsibility in defeat or claim credit in victory. Wilkinson was much of the same kind of a man, forever eager for a safe exit for himself no matter the result.

More specifically Armstrong may have preferred Montreal for attack because the result might not be quickly known and some fortunate incident might occur in the meantime. For example, the war might end. Except in small matters, he was a well-known procrastinator. Also, Hampton and several thousand men might reasonably be expected to help while if Kingston were the first objective such aid would be highly doubtful. If Montreal fell into American hands, British ports to the westward like those of Prescott, Kingston, and York (Toronto), would languish away because of a lack of supplies. The

best part of Canada could then be easily overrun.

Wilkinson's Defeat

Wilkinson may have opposed the Montreal venture because he had begun to resent the officiousness of Armstrong and had long detested Hampton. He may have considered he was physically unfit to carry it through. Kingston, on the other hand, was only about 30 miles distant and not strongly defended. In any such attack, the fleet would be highly important, and Chauncey, the commander, professed eagerness to cooperate. Once the movement had started, victory or defeat would quickly follow. If victory, the main line of British communications would be severed at an important point; the Americans would be supreme on Lake Erie, and Wilkinson would have acquired a reputation that would assure him of consideration for a long while.

Whatever the motives ruling Armstrong's decision to make Montreal the objective of the campaign, both he and Wilkinson were duty bound to support it vigorously once it had been undertaken. Neither did so. Armstrong contributed little beside interference, failing entirely to make Hampton cooperate, and soon indirectly intimating that the campaign would fail by ordering the construction of enough huts in Canada to house 10,000 men. Wilkinson himself inspired little or no confidence. For much of the time going down the St. Lawrence he was "sick unto childhood," sometimes volubly drunk, seldom or never hard driving or inspiring. Defeated at Chrystler's Field by far inferior numbers, he withdrew his army to French Mills where it did nothing but deteriorate. Armstrong had not the strength of character to summarily relieve him.

McClure's Blunder

Another incompetent for whom the administration must be blamed for retaining in a position of importance was Brigadier General George McClure of the militia. He was an ex-tavern keeper of Bath, New York, who had waxed wealthy and influential and was ranking officer of the Niagara area from the autumn of 1813 until near the end of the year. His problem was a hard one, for most of his dependable troops had been withdrawn for the Montreal operation, leaving him with only a handful to repel a British offensive that was then in the making. When he and his men from Fort George burned Newark, Canada, a village close by, on the wintry night of December 10, 1813, they served no military purpose except to arouse the inhabitants and their friends into cruel acts of bitter retaliation.

What motive dominated McClure? He tried to excuse himself by declaring that the Secretary had given him permission to do so. However, such permission was granted only on the condition that the burning became necessary for the defense of Fort George. McClure's hypocrisy is therefore apparent when the fact is recalled that Fort George was in process of evacuation when Newark was being set on fire. Perhaps McClure wanted to satisfy a few old grudges against some of the inhabitants. Perhaps he yielded to the advice of his companion, the notorious Canadian renegade named Willcocks, who was vindictive and revengeful. Perhaps he wanted to destroy Newark, because in peace time it was an important link in the overland transportation of Canadian goods from Lake Ontario to Erie. A number of Americans sought a monopoly of such service, but they wanted it on their own side of the Niagara. Whatever the reason, the British used McClure's action to excuse themselves later for turning the stretch of country between Fort Niagara and Buffalo into a howling wilderness.

A subordinate who helped deepen and widen the failure of McClure was Captain Luther Leonard of the 1st Artillery who was in command of Fort Niagara.

He was enjoined to be vigilant and ever ready for attack. Since being graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1808, he had shown slight evidence of being trustworthy. The War Department had such little confidence in him that it had forbidden his exercising command until after an investigation of his conduct. But neither Dearborn nor his successors had taken any action, preferring to leave him in command at Fort Niagara and tolerate his drunkenness and general incompetence. Like his predecessors, McClure evaded the issue, endeavoring to excuse himself by declaring Leonard was the ranking officer among those available.

Indifference Brought Disaster

The general result of such indifference was disastrous. Though warned of the imminence of attack, Leonard was absent visiting his family several miles distant from Fort Niagara when it actually occurred. There may have been a reason but it has not been given. Worst of all, some of his sentries completely neglected their duties — a condition that would have been very unlikely under a vigorous and conscientious commander. As a result, the British quickly took Fort Niagara on December 19th with few losses. With its surrender went several hundred prisoners and a great supply of stores valued at $1,000,000, an amount at that time equal to the total appropriations for arming the militia in 1813. Worst of all, no other fortress of consequence remained to deter the British from laying waste the Niagara frontier.

Why was Leonard retained in command? He was obviously young, inexperienced, and with a highly questionable record. In 1815, he was discharged like many others, but he was reinstated one year later only to be discharged in 1821. Out of the army for twenty-five years, he was appointed a military storekeeper in 1845. At that job he remained until he was retired in 1861. In 1865 he died.

October's Fiasco

Another intriguing question concerns the Van Rensselaer prospective invasion of Canada on October 11, 1812. Why was it called off? For the purpose, troops were ordered to assemble at the old ferry opposite the heights of Lewiston at 3 o'clock in the morning. Taking part was optional. "Some companies volunteered without officers, in others officers without soldiers, and some neither officers nor soldiers. From Capt. Bristol's company, about 20 marched to the edge of the river at the hour appointed . . . for crossing." Such a motley collection of poorly trained militia, organized only a few hours before, knowing little of each other and less of the area of attack, could scarcely be expected to defeat a well-trained enemy in strong position across the treacherous waters of the Niagara.

For transporting them, 13 large boats were secretly hauled by wagon under cover of darkness from Gill Creek, about two miles above Niagara Falls, and placed in the river near Lewiston. They were capable of accommodating 26 men apiece with all their arms and equipment, or about 338 all told.

According to the generally accepted story, a Lieutenant John Sims of Niagara County was put in charge of the boats because of his reputed knowledge of them and the river. During the night he started off up stream in one of the boats, passed far beyond the place designated for embarkation, drew into the shore, and there deserted under cover of darkness and storm. By some hook or crook, he seems to have taken with him most of the oars belonging to the other boats, which, thus made immobile and useless, never arrived where the would-be raiders were anxiously waiting to be carried across. Disappointed and chagrined, they stood by until daylight, shelterless

and cold, enduring as best they could a violent wind and chilling autumn rain.

On Sims was commonly heaped all the blame for such a fiasco. Strangely enough no record has been found that he or his accomplices ever were punished. If he acted as he did because he was bribed by the British the fact would have been extremely difficult to permanently hide. Any suspicion of the kind would have stimulated inquiry. If he felt the weather was so bad that he was fearful of crossing, he may have taken the easiest measures that he knew to quickly prevent it. Solomon Van Rensselaer may have acquiesced because of his own ignorance of the river and the obvious need of favorable circumstances if his untrained, unorganized, and undependable force was destined to succeed. He may have felt that Sims wrecked his immediate plans but saved his army. In such a case he could not well demand punishment.

These and many other questions relating to the War of 1812 have often perplexed me. Perhaps your answers to them are very different from my own. I hope that at some convenient time I may have the pleasure of learning your own point of view.

Clarissa Putnam of Tribes Hill

(Paper Given Before Oswego County Historical Society by John J. Vrooman, Supervisor of Historic Sites, State Department of Education, October 21, 1952)

I have with me some colored slides which will help you to visualize the locale of the story but before showing them to you, may I take a few moments in which to review briefly certain aspects of the book; particularly how I came to write it?

You are familiar with the old saying that if one gives a suitable answer to the questions, WHY—WHEN — HOW — WHERE—the subject discussed will have been satisfactorily covered. Perhaps if I now follow this rule, the subject of "Clarissa" will have been explained.

First then, as to WHY I wrote the story. It's historical and I think I have always been interested in history. Certainly my interest goes back to times I sat on my Grandfather's knee, ate peppermint lozenges which I found in his coat pockets and listened to his stories of old Schenectady. With this early interest sympathetically implanted, it was natural that I should, in the romantic teens, revel in the series of historical novels of the Mohawk Valley, written by Robert W. Chambers. Many of his characters are drawn from history and many of them repeatedly used throughout the series.

In these stories I first met Clarissa, or "Claire" as Chambers called her. She was only a minor character; in one instance a guest at a gay dinner party in company with Sir John Johnson. At the time, I attached no more than fictional value to her. However, Sir John was, as you know, the son of Sir William Johnson, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Crown, and both of them were very real and very important personages.

When, considerably later (perhaps 15 years ago) while doing research for a book on historic houses of the Mohawk Valley, I came across what were indisputably authentic records proving Clarissa an actual person. Jeptha R. Simms wrote THE HISTORY OF SCHOHARIE COUNTY AND BORDER WARS OF NEW YORK, which was published in Albany in 1845. He tells us in a preface that he began interviewing aged people as early as 1837 on the subject of the Revolutionary War. Note that this was 54 years following its close.

From these interviews Simms gathered an amazing fund of information concerning events of that time which are the basis of his book. He has set them down and authenticated his statements (as you will note when I quote him) by naming his informants. In 1882 he completed an extended, two-volume version of his Schoharie history, entitled FRONTIERSMEN OF NEW YORK and in it has this to say of Sir John Johnson and Clarissa Putman. I quote him verbatim:

Clara Putman

"Of the early life of Sir John Johnson, comparatively little is known, but he is believed to have been indulged by his father in having his way too much, to result in his becoming a good business man. When a young man, he courted Miss Clara Putman, a

very pretty girl of a good family at Tribes Hill, by whom he had a son and a daughter named William and Margaret. Said Mrs. Magdalena Becker, Miss Putman was keeping house for Sir John; and before his return from New York with a wife, she and her children were sent into the town of Florida.

"Miss Putman was of good descent, her mother being a Staats and her Grandmother a Schuyler—both of Albany. The son was nicely established by his father in Canada in some kind of business; and Margaret Johnson, who grew up to be a tall and beautiful girl was for a time quite a belle in the Valley. Margaret had dark hair and dark eyes, was a brunette in complexion and was graceful in her carriage. She was much admired and her friendship sought by the elite. She married James Van Horne, by whom she had one or more children. Only a few years after her marriage, she was on a visit to Tribes Hill friends when she ate freely of plums, became sick in consequence and died suddenly at that place, much lamented.

"Clara Putman, who later made Schenectady her home was never married and Sir John whose breast was moved by a spark of manhood, late in life (for he was then 67 years old) sent word to her to come to Canada at a certain time (which was chosen in the absence of his wife) and he would give her some property. She went there in the summer of 1809 and at the door inquired for Sir John; a servant announced a lady at the door. 'Go and learn her name,' said the Baronet. It was reported and she was at once admitted to his presence; but to the scene which followed, of mingled tears and old memories revived, we cannot admit the reader. He gave her $1,200 in money and told her on her return to send him the dimensions and terms of a certain house and lot in Schenectady and he would purchase it for her future home; which terms were all complied with. Someone has said that he also gave her an annuity during the remainder of her life. She died about the year 1840. "I am happy to record this redeeming trait in the character of this man whose military record was one of blood, evidently waged against his old neighbors in a struggle to retain place and honors won by his father. The particulars of this Canadian visit were communicated to the writer in 1850 by Mrs. Rebecca Veeder, (a Miss Staats of Albany in her girlhood) and Mrs. Van Debogert and Mrs. Thompson, sisters of the late Andrew J. Yates of Fultonville, who were reared in Schenectady. Those ladies were all acquainted with Miss Putman and greatly respected her, notwithstanding this liaison. Jacob Shew also stated that Sir John Johnson settled a property in Schenectady on Miss Clara Putman."

Seeks Further Information

This quotation is the most extensive bit of information concerning Clarissa to be found and as I read and reread it, my curiousity and interest grew. I wanted to know about her. Naturally I turned to the descendants of the Putman family and in nearly every instance the person questioned professed to know nothing of Clarissa. My keenest disappointment came some 12 years ago, when I interviewed one of the Putman family, a lady then in her 94th year, of sound mind and memory who had lived most of her life on the Putman property I have described as the home of Clarissa. To support the fact that I was seeking historical data and **not** idle information, I made this visit in company with an elderly Domine of the Dutch Church who was well known to the lady. But his presence availed me nothing. Though I still incline to the belief that she knew a great deal, she, too, professed to never having **heard** of Clarissa

although, as I trace it, she was the great great grand-daughter of Victor Putman, who was Clarissa's brother and whose own nickname was "Clisty." However, any information she might have imparted that day she carried to her grave a few months later.

These failures led me to believe that the few generations following Clarissa had attached a stigma to her name; perhaps because of her unwedded life with Sir John, perhaps because of her association with him, the man considered the scourge of the Valley whom they held principally accountable for their sufferings during the war. Yet, certainly, Simms absolves her, when he states that her friends "greatly respected her." In further support of the belief that she was not censured morally, I quote from a letter written me by Percy Van Epps, the venerable Schenectady County Historian to whom I had turned in an effort to trace Clarissa's lineage. He writes:

> "With all our wealth of historic data on the Mohawk region it really seems strange that nothing definite has yet been disclosed about the parentage of Clara Putman.
>
> "Can it be possible that, angered by her consorting with John Johnson, her parents disowned her and struck her name from the family records?"

This explanation might suffice if only **family** records were concerned but it cannot explain the lack of any mention of her name on **baptismal** records, a ceremony religiously adhered to by these early Dutch families. Seeking some other explanation, and on the theory that "Clarissa" might have been no more than a nickname, I searched and found a "Cornelia" whose birth date corresponded with that of Clarissa as given on her tombstone which I had found and so have told the story on this basis. It's true, Clarissa is listed in certain rather recently published genealogies but I have not been able to support their listings.

I next turned to the real estate records of Schenectady County and there I found a deed transferring to Clarissa Putman a home on the north side of State Street in Schenectady which is now best located by describing it as just west of Erie Boulevard and being the property now owned by the Schenectady Savings and Loan Association. All this and considerably more that I found dove-tailed so accurately with the Simms account that I became convinced he had been correctly informed save the genealogy. Certainly, Clarissa was no figment of the imagination and I now felt sure that further search would reveal still more information.

Clarissa Deeded Property

The next disclosure brought Clarissa close to my own family if only in a minor way and served to still further intensify my interest. I found that my Grandmother's father, David Mix, a tailor whose establishment was but a few doors west of Clarissa's home witnessed her signature to her deed when she later sold the property. David Mix was, therefore, not only Clarissa's neighbor but her friend as well; else why would she have called upon him for so friendly a service?

It may be of interest to state here that this David Mix was a brother of James Mix, the founder of the jewelry business on South Pearl Street, Schenectady, which flourished through several generations and up to recent years.

Six years ago certain historic sites owned by the State were transferred to the Education Department for future administration. I was placed in charge. Because several of them had to do with the story of Clarissa, I was now more eager than ever to continue with it. Unfortunately for me as the story-teller, Fort Johnson, the home where Sir John and

Clarissa lived is **not** the property of the State. But Guy Park, the house Sir William built for his daughter, Polly, who married her cousin Guy Johnson, as well as Johnson Hall occupied by Sir William when he died **are** State owned. Then there are Washington's Headquarters at Newburgh, Schuyler Mansion, Fort Crailo, the home of General Nicholas Herkimer, the Lower Landing and the site of Fort Stanwix, the last two at Rome, Fort Ontario at Oswego and lastly near Geneseo the Sullivan Massacre Monument and the Boyd-Parker Memorial, all of them the property of the State and all of them some part of my story.

Carries Researches To Canada

Within the past five years I have made two or three trips to Canada in search of additional information. In the Canadian Archives at Ottawa I found much material. Perhaps the most helpful were the so-called "Claus Papers." Daniel Claus who figures in my story was Sir John's brother-in-law and his letters to and about the several members of the family contain considerable information. Also, in Montreal, I met Sir Gordon Johnson, the present holder of Sir John's title and from him learned much of interest. As you all know, Sir John, always a staunch Royalist, was in 1776 forced by General Schuyler's troops to abandon Johnson Hall, leaving his family behind, and escape to Canada where he continued to live. Canada is, therefore, a happy hunting-ground for one interested in the **later** life of Sir John but of course I found **there,** nothing of Clarissa.

To answer the WHEN.

I have already said the story deals with the period of the Revolutionary War. It was my intention that the narrative should embrace in more or less detail, the important events of those years from October 1767, when Sir John Johnson returns from London, a knighted Englishman to that dark night in May 1780 when as an enemy of this country he for the last time returns to his old home at Johnstown.

HOW the story should be written was a difficult question. I sought advice on this and was given several answers. One thought it should be handled as a biography of Clarissa. To have written of Sir John would have taken the story out of the Mohawk Valley and this I did not want to do.

A factual biography of Clarissa is impossible. She is far too shadowy a figure across the pages of history. I did find, in addition to those already mentioned, some few essential details such as a newspaper notice of her death and her grave in Vale Cemetery, Schenectady. However, many others are lacking. Her tombstone bears very legibly the date, 1833, as the time of her death yet the Cemetery was not then in existence. I suspect her remains, perhaps with this same stone, were brought to the present site from the original burial place but I have not been able to learn its location. With such important details missing, a biography would have been out of the question but for my purpose this particular information was not essential since Clarissa lived 53 years after the story closes.

I could see but one way to present the material I had gathered: to spin the facts into yarn from which could be woven an historic romance whose interest would resolve itself in the adventures and historically recorded incidents of its principal characters. And so it is that CLARISSA is written; and so it is that the story is, in the main, historically accurate. History sketched the outline—imagination completed the picture.

William Duer of Oswego

(Paper Given Before Oswego County Historical Society by George Joyce, Nov. 18, 1952)

Some people called him a "renegade"—yet local history scarcely contains the record of a personality more intrinsically interesting than that of William Duer of Oswego, one of the last of the old Knickerbocker colonial families, who achieved unheralded recognition as a jurist and politician in those turbulent decades preceding the Civil War. Were his own life and those of his ancestors otherwise quite barren, the mere story of their share in the early development of this country, if properly told should prove a most interesting record.

At first sight, William Duer appears to have been a born leader of lost causes. Such he may seem in any short view of aims and issues. He looked a long way back, however, and ever further forward. His embracement of Nativism — "America for the Americans" is something which may have been motivated from multiple factors, more sincerely embraced than many contemporaries are willing to concede. Nevertheless, his opposition to "militant abolition", as against the principle of manumission, was intelligent and tireless. He was one of the most distinguished and forthright political victims of the mania for emancipation which blazed over the northern states like a prairie fire, only to burn itself out in the anguish of Civil War.

In 1849, Duer would have agreed with Lee that the "holding of slaves was an evil, but that their emancipation would sooner come from the mild and melting influence of time, than from the storms and contests of fiery controversy". These were rational words that fell upon deaf ears.

By 1860, William Duer had nothing more than sound reasoning to offer against the shouts of secession emanating from both abolitionists and slaveholders.

One purpose of this paper is to show the background of the Duer family and why William Duer may have acted to pursue the policies he did.

Origin Of Duer Family

It appears that sometime during or after the raging English Civil War, when Cromwellian forces were deposing King Charles I, a cavalier by the name of De Vere, made his way to the island of Antiqua, in the West Indies, where he sought refuge. As a further precaution he proceeded to change his name to Duer and began to develop plantations, first on Antiqua, and later on the neighboring island of Dominica. A son by the name of John Duer, continued the plantation development upon these two islands, became a member of His Majesty's Council for Antiqua, and in time, married Frances, daughter of Sir Frederick Frye, President of the Council. Eventually, however, he (John) removed to England, though still retaining his property in the West Indies, where on March 18, 1747, at his Devonshire villa, a son, William, later known as "the Colonel", was born[1].

1. The facts regarding the early ancestry of the Duers are drawn chiefly from the anonymous memoirs in the **Knickerbocker Magazine,** (New York, August, 1952) Volume XL, pp 95-103.

Young William's life reads almost like a fairy tale, for it is a story of adventure, and phenomenal success crowned in the end with failure and disgrace. It appears that he completed his early studies at Eton. Any further details concerning his young life are unavailable at this time. In 1764, with the rank of ensign, he went to India, as aide-de-campe to Lord Clive, formerly a country neighbor of his father's. Young Duer spent almost a year in India, when having been taken down with a fever and upon Clive's advice, he returned home. Shortly after his return to England, his father died leaving him a moderate fortune, consisting of a share in the Dominica estate, and a "handsome pecuniary legacy". Indications are that his inheritance prompted him to forsake the army for a business career, and he shortly managed to obtain a contract for furnishing spars and masts for the British Navy[2]. With this aim in mind, of providing lumber to fulfill this contract and to supply the family estates in the West Indies, young Duer landed in New York in 1768. He was well equipped with credentials, letters of introduction and apparently a winning disposition.

Becomes An American

At the suggestion of William Alexander (self-styled Lord Stirling), a member of His Majesty's Council for New York and New Jersey, he visited Philip Schuyler at Albany, and upon the advice of Schuyler, purchased a suitable tract of land at Fort Miller on the east bank of the upper Hudson, a few miles above Saratoga. Here he erected saw mills and proceeded to get out the timber he needed. Here, too, he built a mansion, and in time, added a grist mill, and snuff mill. When it became evident that hostilities between the mother country and the colonies might break out, Duer added a gun-powder mill, and promptly became an American[3].

His activities during the Revolution were many and varied, ranging from his appointment as Deputy-Adjutant-General of the New York troops, with the rank of Colonel, (upon the recommendation of Schuyler), to supplying plank for bridges and masts for ship building on the Hudson[4].

In July 1779, Duer married Catherine Alexander, daughter of William Alexander, whom he had met upon his first arrival in America. The wedding is reputed to have been a brilliant affair with none less than the "Commander-in-chief", General Washington, escorting the young "Lady Kitty" to the altar[5].

Following the war, Colonel William Duer became a giant among the early land speculators in America. In 1789, Alexander Hamilton, whose wife was related to Duer through marriage, appointed him his assistant under the newly formed Treasury Board[6].

Col. Duer's Financial Difficulties

In 1792, Oliver Wolcott, comptroller of the Treasury and second to the secretary, Alexander Ham-

2. William's sister, Theodora, married George Rose, son of the Earl of Marchmont, who later became a prominent official in the English Exchequer. Possibly their relationship had much to do with the grant of this contract: **Dictionary of National Biography,** Volume XLIX, pp 226-230.

3. May have included the upper northeastern region of present New York State extending from Lake Champlain region north to Canada and northeast to Lake Ontario: See: **New York World,** Aungust 27, 1879.

4. Davis, **Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporation,** pp 115.

5. Credited to Mrs. John King Rensselaer, **New Yorkers of the XIX Century** (New York and London, 1897) pp. 16.

6. Davis, **Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations,** pp 174.

ilton, himself, found two charged unbalanced accounts in the books against Col. Duer, amounting to approximately $200,000. It seems the secretary was aware of the discrepancy but out of friendship and Duer's procrastination, it had dangled without settlement. However, in 1792, the stock market was shaky and in consequence Wolcott's hand was forced. He instituted a government suit against Duer in an effort to collect the amount due the government. As soon as word leaked out to financial circles concerning the unstable status of Duer, a minor panic got underway which definitely established that Colonel Duer was insolvent. As a result, he not too unwillingly went to jail. Many who had endorsed his notes, including Livingston, found themselves either unwilling or unable to meet their obligations. The result was to place Duer in even a more unfavorable position before the public, since many of his endorsers claimed that he had made false representations to them. From prison, it must be justly stated, Col. Duer made heroic efforts to redeem himself. However, still hopelessly insolvent, a negligible figure, he died in prison, May 7, 1799[7].

Son Of A Jurist

Colonel William Duer left his wife with nine children. However, for brevity, we shall only make a passing reference to the two eldest sons—William Alexander Duer and John Alexander Duer. Both became jurists of some renown but our specific interest should be focused more upon John Alexander Duer since it is his son, William Duer, who is to be the principal character discussed this evening.

John Alexander Duer was not a person to command much attention to himself, nevertheless, he was eminently successful. His chief interest was centered in Insurance Law, to be more specific, Marine Insurance, and in this he excelled. Some of his court decisions achieved international recognition. He also became Vice-President of the American Life Insurance and Trust Company, and the organizer of "Duer and Babcock" law firm, which practiced in Oswego for a number of years[8]. His marriage to Anna Bunner also strengthened the Duer ties in Oswego.

John Alexander and Anna (Bunner) Duer were residing in New York City when on May 25, 1805, Mrs. Duer gave birth to a baby boy. It is not at all surprising to find that the baby was christened William. It can be readily assumed that the name, William, was taken, not only from his maternal great grandfather, but from his paternal grandfather and uncle as well. While yet a young boy, William moved with his parents to Goshen, Orange County, New York. However, their residence in Goshen was of short duration, and they returned to New York City, where William commenced his studies. The years between this early period of his life and the time when he entered school at Columbia College are non-productive of information. While at Columbia he appears to have been a better than average student[9].

Removes To New Orleans

In 1824, William Duer was graduated from Columbia and immediately began to follow in the footsteps of his father and uncle by taking up the study of law. Within a few years, about 1827, he gained admittance to the bar. There are some conflicting claims at this point because some sources indicate that he began his practice here in Oswego, New York,

7. Hamilton, ed. Lodge, Volume X, p. 244. See also, New York City newspapers for the period 1791-92.

8. Oswego Palladium (Oswego, N. Y.) August 11, 1840.

9. New York World, August 25, 1879. Cf. New York Commercial Advertiser, August 27, 1879.

and also made his first attempt to enter the arena of politics by running for the office of state Assemblyman. These events are reputed to have taken place somewhere between the years 1828-32. However, I am inclined to believe as some other sources point out that sometime after gaining admittance to the bar young William Duer removed to New Orleans[10].

It is not at all surprising to find William Duer following the example of his uncle, William Alexander, who had also practiced in New Orleans years before. He was acute enough to recognize at once, not only that New Orleans offered him unusual facilities for acquiring French and Spanish, but that a thorough familiarity with French and French Law, particularly, would profit him immensely in any career, mercantile or professional. It was an ideal choice in many ways. Indeed, indications are that New Orleans was the rival of Philadelphia as a Mecca for the legal profession. Being located at the mouth of the Mississippi and its great tributaries, which had been applied to transportation and commerce, New Orleans had already witnessed a great period of prosperity. Mississippi boats brought in vast business that was to be increased when steamships replaced the sailing vessels and railways supplemented the steamboats. It was a thriving commercial city, where fortunes were quickly made and when commerce thrives, so also, does the lawyer[11].

Duer's Southern Relatives

Young William Duer, we may assume and for good reason, possessed strong social connections with important families of early New Orleans. His father's sister, Maria Theodora Duer, had married Beverly Chew, a prominent businessman who served as Collector of the Port of New Orleans for many years.

Mr. Chew was also President of the Branch Bank of the United States at New Orleans. It is interesting to note that young William Duer liked his uncle so much as to make him his father-in-law, for he married his cousin —Lucy Chew[12].

Mr. Duer, we may believe, laid his legal foundations among the more able attorneys of the period. Among these men, some of more than local renown, some much older and some the same age as William Duer, were: John Slidell, afterward senator; Pierre Soule of the Ostend Manifesto fame; F. B. and C. M. Conrad, both prominent in the politics of the south; Mazureau—the "greatest of the Creole lawyers"; Juda P. Benjamin—versatile lawyer, businessman, politician and a host of others. Lawyers abounded in the New Orleans of that by-gone period, and from that city came some of the best the country was to know[13].

Intelligent English observers, such as James Bryce, have noted that a very large proportion of American public men are lawyers, at least in training, if not in practice. This was more true in the Old South, perhaps, than today. Many men of that by-gone society were betrayed by the title of

10. **Biographical Directory of American Congress,** 1774-1949, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1950, p. 1105. Cf. Henry F. Landon, **The North Country** (Indianapolis, 1932) Volume 1; See also: John B. Churchill; **Landmarks of Oswego County** (Syracuse, 1895), p. 265. Landon and Churchill (Churchill having interviewed Duer) contends that Duer arrived in Oswego, N. Y. in 1835, having come from New Orleans. Cf. Syracuse University, **Gerrit Smith Miller Collection,** Henry Fitzhugh to Gerrit Smith, August 14, 1835. Fitzhugh makes reference to William Duer's expected arrival, having conferred with John Alexander Duer.

11. Pierce Burler; **Judea P. Benjamin** (Philadelphia, 1906) p. 398.

12. **New York World,** August 25, 1879.

13. Butler, **Judea P. Benjamin,** p. 38.

judge, while even the generals and colonels will frequently be found to be merely lawyer-politicians, masquerading in those most unexceptional and useful marshall titles. Most politicians, in fact, were lawyers, and it might be said that most lawyers were politicians[14]. It is not surprising to discover that the sagacious Mr. Duer, as a young man, may have been very early seduced from the law into politics—at least the seeds of political interest, so manifest in Duer throughout the remainder of his life, may have been sown in those formative years that he resided in the "city on the gulf".

Although New Orleans may have given William Duer his legal training, a wife, economic success and added social prestige, it is in Oswego that he should be best remembered. It was here that he spent the greater number of his productive years and achieved some of his more notable successes. To account for this would be to consider multiple factors, the most significant being the potentialities of the village, and how they were integrated with the interests of the Duer family.

Oswego Becomes Duer's Home

From New Orleans William Duer moved to Oswego in 1835, arriving here sometime in the fall of the year. Oswego, like New Orleans, possessed many opportunities for a young lawyer, although on a much smaller scale. It was located at the mouth of the Oswego River, one of the few rivers of the continent flowing in a northerly direction and draining inland New York. The potential commercial possibilities of the village were recognized early by the French and English who early contested for its strategic location in order to command the commerce of the rapidly developing Great Lakes Basin. Goods could be brought from Albany by way of the Mohawk-Wood Creek-Oneida Lake-Oswego River Water Route, which when projected gave an almost continuous all-water avenue of transportation, joining New York City and the Great Lakes, by adding the Hudson River. With Canadian settlements increasing to the north and the frontiers moving westward into the upper Ohio region, a north-south and an east-west axis of trade offered unlimited opportunities and enhanced the value of this water route. Its importance was clearly recognized by many prominent men of that early period.

For a brief space of time the prospects for Oswego's continued commercial development looked bleak. This resulted from the completion of the Erie Canal which until the Oswego Canal was built years later, threatened the commerce of Oswego with New York. However, with the opening of the Welland Canal connecting Lakes Erie and Ontario and the opening of the Oswego Canal in 1828, the people of Oswego developed a renewed and enthusiastic outlook toward the future. Also by 1830 Oswego could boast a safe and commanding harbor which had been developed by the United States government. Flour mills soon appeared and continued to increase in number until several were in operation, and along the wharves numerous forwarding houses had been erected. Many factors were in evidence to invite any young man with vision to Oswego. But there were other considerations as well which attracted hither young William Duer. There were not simply an opportunity to practice law or to engage in commerce but more especially the need of managing large patrimonial holdings of land which were increasing rapidly in value. The prospects for further land speculations were also increasingly good.

A large portion of the lands which William Duer came to Os-

14. Ibid, p. 40.

wego to manage were part of the old Hamilton tract which following the death of his father, had become the principal assets of the latter's estate.

The Hamilton Lands

Alexander Hamilton had acquired land in the Oswego area from Jacob Marks who had in 1795, purchased them from John and Nicholas Roosevelt. The Roosevelts, in turn, had been associated with George Scriba's original purchase in 1793 of 500,000 acres, largely located in Oswego county. The Marks holdings were acquired by John Lawrence in 1802. Lawrence acted for himself, John B. Church, and Alexander Hamilton, the last two named being sons-in-law of General Philip Schuyler. The three men continued to hold the land jointly until June 28, 1804, when a partition deed was drawn up giving to each specific lots. Hamilton's share being triangular in shape, therefore bore the shape of "Hamilton's Gore" as it appeared upon early county maps. The "gore" included all land on the east side of the Oswego River south of East Bridge Street to the Oswego city line. The apex, extending into the present town of Scriba.

In preparation for his famous duel with Aaron Burr, Hamilton deeded his holdings in Oswego County to John Lawrence, John B. Church and Mathew Clarkson, to be held in trust for the payments of certain specified debts of Hamilton. At a later date Church, Lawrence and Clarkson, trustees under deed, and Nathaniel Pendleton and Nicholas Fish, trustees under will, issued a joint trust deed to: Governeur Morris, Rufus King, Egbert Benson, Oliver Wolcott and Charles Wilkes. A provision of the trust deed provided for the sale of the property to repay subscribers to a shares agreement by which Hamilton had raised money to protect his estate from losses that might arise through a forced sale. The subscribers numbered over 100, many of whom were very prominent men of that time of the state and nation including, Governeur Morris, Richard Varick, John Lawrence, Egbert Benson, Hezikiah Pierpont, DeWitt Clinton, Thomas Buchanan, James Roosevelt and J. Van Rensselear. Whether these people were ever reimbursed we do not know. Title to the land in the Hamilton Gore was eventually vested in Egbert Benson as trustee through the will of John Lawrence, and also vested in Rudolph Bunner and William Alexander Duer as trustees through the will of John B. Church. It appears that young William Duer was to benefit eventually from the activity and position enjoyed by his father, John Duer, and his uncle, William Alexander Duer. These two gentlemen, through inheritance and purchase were able to obtain large holdings in "the gore." William Duer later continued his purchases and enlarged the holdings already obtained. The pattern of transactions seemed to have been to have the lands pass from Rudolph Bunner, wife and others to John Duer and son William or directly to William. The bulk of these transactions occurred in the years 1834-37, but thereafter continued to appear in the records until 1849.

Land Boom Of 1835

Wild speculation in real estate had struck Oswego the year that William Duer took up his residence there (1835). Property values advanced between fifty and seventy-five per cent and so it may be supposed that Duer's holdings ran into a large sum of money. Stories tell of three or four acres of land selling for $107,000 and property within the course of one year being resold at over twenty times its original purchase price. Despite William Duer's long residence in Oswego, it might be noted that no one today seems to know with certainty just where he resided, alhough it

is suspected that he lived with his aunt and uncle in the old Bunner mansion, located on Bronson Street, now occupied by Delta Kappa Fraternity of the Oswego State Teachers College.

Mr. Duer apparently succeeded his father in the old law firm of "Duer and Babcock" whose offices were located on West First Street, in the rear portion of a building which stood on a site now occupied by the offices of the "Oswego Palladium-Times."

Duer Enters Local Politics

William Duer's first activity in the field of politics, which fascinated him for the remainder of his life, came, April 2, 1839, when at an annual meeting of the inhabitants of the village he was elected a Trustee of the Village of Oswego. Another gentleman serving with Duer, was John B. Edwards, land agent of Gerrit Smith in the village. This office was to prove somewhat beneficial in lifting zoning restrictions which would tend to depreciate the value of certain properties.

American politics of the 1830's and 1840's were in a turbulent state. The fiscal policies of the Democrats, the Panic of 1837, the Canadian insurrection of 1838, the "Patriot War", The Main Boundary dispute, coupled with the associated factors of the movement for the abolition of slavery, immigration and the disposition of western lands all tended to keep the political pot boiling. From the northeast, south and west dissatisfaction was to manifest itself in the rise of a new political force, called "Whiggery". Wherever transportation and commerce thrived and men of fine or moderate means gathered the new party was quick to grow. Some have referred to it as "the party of Clay and Webster", yet, it appears that it would have been more correctly described as a loose confederation of opposition parties and groups that consisted of "all body and no head". Conservative businessmen of the northeast favoring the National Bank and protective tariffs; Southerners of fine means favoring low tariffs, but hating Jackson's new "Democracy and Spoils System", westerners seeking greater internal developments, pre-emption of public lands and strong banks were all to be found in the ranks of Whiggery. These groups had little in common, except for their hatred of "King Andrew".

Although Anti-Masonry had never developed great strength in Oswego, it had been a powerful influence throughout New York State. With the demise of that spontaneous movement, new leaders were to join the ranks of Whiggery, adding to it the necessary common touch so needful in American politics. From the Anti-Mason forces came new leaders such as Thurlow Weed and William H. Seward who were to dominate the New York Whigs for many years. On the local level an example may be noted in Richard Oliphant, a former Anti-Masonic editor and leader, who now transferred his energies and deadly pen to the cause of Whiggery as the editor of the "Oswego County Free Press". Although no evidence exists that Duer was ever an Anti-Mason, or even a sympathizer, it is not surprising to find him in the ranks of the new party. It had always been tradition among the Duers to be Whigs, or shall we say to be found among the ranks of the opposition party.

The Campaign Of 1840

The campaign of 1840 in Oswego was to follow familiar patterns. It appears to have followed the same technique employed by Whigs throughout the country. Indications are that the Whig strategy was to commit their party only in the matter of opposition to the Democrats. In Oswego the Whigs were led by such men as William Duer, Seth Swift, Thomas Bond and Henry Fitzhugh with the orators being led

by Duer. Their speeches were long, but confined to denunciations and laudations of William Henry Harrison. Clay's advice to his fellow partisans "to get down to the level of the people" were strictly adhered to because many voters still lived in log cabins and drank hard cider. Here in Oswego, the Tippecanoe Club was formed and the log cabins were erected in conspicuous places by gentlemen of better than moderate means who oddly enough worked in their shirtsleeves packing logs with mud. William Duer and Edward B. Judson were the candidates in Oswego County for the state assembly.

Political meetings were held throughout the county in the newly erected log cabins, and people were asked to enter in to "receive the gospel light of political truth". Young men were warned to vote Whig since all the women were Whigs in sympathy. The gala gatherings consisted of dancing, singing and the serving of hard cider for refreshments. Along the canals small bottles of hard cider, fashioned after a log cabin were distributed to the people. Everywhere the battle cry of "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too" was to catch the fickle fancy of the country. So it went, one of the most spirited elections yet recorded, sweeping Duer into the State Legislature and sending the Democratic candidates down "in a sea of hard cider on the shoals of hard times."

During his two years in the state legislature, William Duer engaged in many verbal outbursts of oratory and became recognized for his deadliness in debate. Always castigating the opposition with vigor and force, while with equal vigor he defended his party and principles from any such attacks. Bills concerning the canal, banks and railroad legislation seem to have been the main issues in the legislature with Duer appearing always to side with the interests of his constituency. His intimacy with Thurlow Weed at this time, was to become stronger.

"Hunkers" And "Barnburners"

To get the impression that New York State was controlled by a united, well disciplined Democratic party would be false. On the contrary, the New York Democrats of the 1840's were divided into two factions, the "Hunkers" (conservative business Democrats) and the "Barnburners" (radical rural voters). Whenever issues between them became too great, the former would always be counted to fall back upon the Whigs. Thus, we have a case where the "Barnburners" appear to be more numerous, but the "Hunkers" seem to have exercised a more conservative influence within their party. This situation was a result of their sliding technique. By gaining Whig support, the "Hunkers" could chastise the more idealistic Democrats, while furthering their own business activities at the same time. The first split of the Democratic Party into "Hunker" and "Barnburner" elements seems to have begun over the "banks".

The election of 1846 was to see John Young, of Geneseo, a Whig, win out in the gubernatorial election over Silas Wright, the Democratic "Barnburner's" champion. With cross currents running so high among the Democrats in New York state, the results could not help but be favorable for the Whigs. Out of 34 representatives in Congress, the Whigs were to elect 23 and among these was to be found our William Duer.

Duer Opposed Slavery

During his first term in Congress, William Duer vehemently attacked the pro-slavery elements and consistently voted in favor of anti-slavery measures. On one occasion, he accused a southern representative of inconsistency and un-gentlemanlike behavior. This altercation resulted in an ex-

change of blows on the floor of the house.

By July 29, 1848, William Duer, it seems, recognizing the dangers of a sectional split in his party over slavery, appealed for unity of Whiggery and tossed barbs at the administration by trying to divert attention to the Mexican War. During one of his speeches, he attacked Calhoun as one who believed that "slavery lies at the foundation of everything that is excellent in government".

Perhaps Duer's attacks may have been to lay the foundation for support of Zachary Taylor as a candidate for the presidency. He reprimanded the administration for using war to serve its advantage, especially in playing politics, by disgracing generals—such as the court-martial of Scott and the proviso given to Taylor.

Duer bluntly asked:

"Would the ideas have entered the president's mind that as a hero of war he might be re-elected?" Then he made reference to Polk's order to Scott to withdraw some of Taylor's troops, inferring it was done for political purposes by stating: " .. and in glorious retreat of inaction is useful discipline for one running about with the affections of the people; another hero he (Polk) feared".

"Durea" Freedmen's Dream

William Duer also struck out in favor of Congress regulating slavery in the territories. It appears that Duer had made a resolution which in effect called for the establishment of a portion of public lands, for the exclusive use and possession of free-black persons above the age of twenty-one. Given so many acres of land to be made productive for so many years, they would be entitled to receive the same land free of all cost or charges whatsoever. Individuals and the government would be barred from making sales in this area to any white person. It also provided for certain portions to be set aside and used for the purpose of education and that this territory would be organized and governed by Congress. Lastly when the numbers of free Negroes reached thousands, they would be vested with such powers of self-government as are usually granted to the territories of the United States. Opponents condemned this proposal in bitter tones, calling the projected area, "Durea".

Here was an attempt to spread oil upon the troubled waters or was it designed to strike a blow at a citadel of abolitionism and thus destroy the growing interest of an east-west axis of Whiggery as viewed by Seward and Weed?

Already the strains upon the Whig Party were noticeable, and in Duer's constituency, meetings of "Free Soil Whigs" were being held. Charges were made against Duer, as being a "Dough-face" although Duer appears to have remained quite consistent in attempting to heal the feelings of the North and South. His emphasis seems to have been directed toward maintaining the north-south axis of Whiggery.

The Silver Grey Movement

In 1850 Duer carried from Washington instructions to the Whig state convention meeting in Syracuse as to what were to be the policies of the National Administration headed by President Fillmore to the Whig Convntion. Duer's instructions were to take any necessary action to assure the nation, that New York Whigs were not in accord with the "Higher Law Doctrine". Indications were that the time had arrived for Seward and Weed to make the break with the Fillmore men, and so, despite efforts to effect a compromise by Duer and Francis Granger of Canandaigua, the Seward wing purposely created an uncompromising issue. William Duer and Francis Granger with 39 men bolted the convention. Duer wired to President Fillmore: "Affairs at a crisis, convention split wide open.

Granger and your friends gone to another house".

This faction led by Granger and Duer has since gone down in history as the Silver-Greys, the name being derived from the fact that Francis Granger had long grey locks of hair as had many of those sympathizing with him who followed him from the Convention Hall.

This split was to signal the death blow to Whiggery as a powerful force. It also marked the withdrawal of William Duer from the national political scene. Only twice had the Whigs been able to elect a President, both men being Generals, and twice death struck, removing each man shortly after he had taken the oath of office.

Duer Removes To California

In 1851, William Duer was appointed United States minister at Valparaiso, Chile. He served in this post until 1853 when he was recalled by President Pierce. From Chile, he proceeded to San Francisco and settled in that city, practicing there his profession of law. In 1856 he appears to have been associated with the Honorable Bailie Peyton, retaining law offices at 157 Montgomery Street. In 1857 he was elected to the office of County Clerk by the "Peoples Party." The "San Francisco Alta" had the following to say pertaining to his candidacy: "Judge Duer is our candidate for County Clerk, a lawyer, deeply read in his profession and possessed of admirable practical ability, he is well qualified for the office for which the people have called him. His appointees will be gentlemen of character and ability". The campaign was apparently conducted on local issues and Duer was elected by an overwhelming vote.

In 1858, Duer was admited to practice in the Supreme Court for the State of California. It is reputed that from 1858 to 1859 he earned well over $40,000. There is some evidence to support the belief that he was still actively engaged in land speculation while a resident in California.

Duer's Return To Oswego

Late in the year 1859 or early 1860 William Duer returned to Oswego. Soon he was in the midst of the presidential campaign which preceeded the Civil War and was to result in the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency. The utter confusion of the political atmosphere of New York in 1860 is almost beyond description. "Barnburners" were now called "Softs"; "Hunkers" became known as the "Hards" while "Nativists" or "Know-nothings" and old-Whigs, plus new Republicans crossed and recrossed party lines so that it is most difficult to discern any pattern. A group of old Whigs now called themselves "Constitutional Unionists" and in their ranks Mr. Duer was to be found.

In Syracuse the Democrats arranged the now famous "Syracuse Juggle"—a fusion of the Douglas and Bell electoral tickets. The "New York Tribune" declared that the Bell electors were to catch the old "Know-Nothings" while Douglas electors, it was hoped, would draw the Irish and Germans. Some had hopes that the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives so that John Bell of Tennessee would be chosen president When in October 1860 the Douglas men held a ratification meeting in New York City, more fusion of tickets took place, Breckinridge being added. The ticket as finally completed represented Douglas, Bell and Breckinridge. A last minute gathering of Constitutional Unionists, held in Troy, endorsed the complete fusion ticket as drawn up in New York City.

Duer Opposed Lincoln's Election

William Duer threw himself wholeheartedly into the campaign. His stump-speaking efforts transcended Oswego County on behalf of the "Fusion Candidates."

"Traitor, Turn-Goat, Renegade, and Political Jackle," were but a few of the condemnatory adjectives of abuse hurled at Duer from the pages of the "Oswego Commercial Times." The paper also mocked the Democratic gatherings as being made up of old "Know-Nothings" and "Fusion Men" as being men of "Confusion, having had too much fusion with spirited waters." The "Oswego Palladium" stormed back that the opposition was made up of those advocating, "disunion, and seeking bloody votes." Meanwhile, Duer withstood the abuse and continued his speaking tours throughout the county. In his speaches he pleaded for harmony, warning that votes against the union ticket would ultimately be votes for war.

In the village of Mexico, a large parade was held with bands and floats. Mounted upon each float was to be found a beautiful young girl depicting each of the states. Those representing the Southern States were chained and dressed in black. Such were the tactics employed by the Republicans in that crucial campaign, and to them William Duer was always to be remembered as the "Renegade" for having shifted his original attitudes upon the slavery question.

Duer Supported War

Following the election of 1860 Duer appears to have withdrawn from politics. However he was still considered as a prominent gentleman, and during the war he used his talents in backing its prosecution in sharp contrast with the "Copperheads", Democrats who opposed the war and Lincoln's efforts to to save the Union.

The last appearance of William Duer in Oswego was made sometime during the winter of 1863. At this time he bid in the sale of lands belonging to George Tallman, and for the sum of $9,000, he was able to obtain large tracts of lands in the First and Third wards of the City of Oswego. From these purchases, we may believe, that he ultimately realized a handsome return.

Sometime in 1863 or 1864 William Duer removed to New Brighton, Richmond County, New York, where he lived in retirement until his sudden death on August 25, 1879. His funeral was held in Trinity Church, New York City, and his body was interred in Silver Mount Cemetery, Tompkinsville, Staten Island, New York

"Renegade" or "Patriot" William Duer was nevertheless a personification of the turbulent politics of a passing era. He had mastered with such skill the difficult art of judging men, that they often overlooked his steadfast devotion to common-sense, compromise, and peace. Much as he admired his own party, often as he praised it wisely, he never thought of the union other than in terms of the welfare of each and every part of it.

Whoever endeavors to look at the record will find it hard to doubt that William Duer loved his country quite as well as any of the brave men from either North or South who heard the guns of Gettysburg. It is not unlikely that he loved it even better.

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15. Fitzhugh to Smith, August 14, 1835: Gerritt Smith Miller Collection, Syracuse University.

16. See: Impressions of the Village of Oswego by a Canadian Visitor, **Oswego Palladium and Republican Chronicle**, June 2, 1830.

17. "Hamilton's Will," copy to be found filed in the **Oswego County Clerk's Office**, Book No. 382, p. 366.

18. See: Document 1825, defining ownership of various parcels. Oswego County Clerk's Records, Oswego, New York. Also Ct. Book Nos. R, S, and P. pp 418 and 319.

19. Ct. Autobiography of Wm. Metcalfe Clark, which is in the possession of the Onondaga Historical Society. Gives description of an auction in Oswego at the height of the land boom.

20. See: Minutes of the meetings, April 8 and April 15, 1839. **Records of the Village of Oswego, New York: 1828-1848**, (Oswego, 1874).

21. **The Oswego Free Press,** Anti-Masonry paper edited by Richard Oliphant, became the Oswego County Whig, in 1838—edited by Richard Oliphant.

22. See: **Oswego County Whig** and **Oswego Palladium,** for the summer and fall of 1840.

23. **Oswego County Whig,** February 10, 1841. Ct. **Albany Evening Journal,** February 5, 1841. Also see, Duer to Weed, May 24, 1841 and October 8, 1841, Thurlow Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

24. Mitchell, Stewart, **Horatio Seymour of New York,** (Cambridge, Mass., 1938) pp 56-58.

25. **Congressional Globe,** 30th Congress, 1st Session, Speech by William Duer in the House of Representatives, February 14, 1848.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Congressional Globe, 30th Congress 1st Session, Speech by Mr. Sawyer of Ohio, June 22, 1848 in the House of Representatives.

29. **Oswego Daily Commercial Times,** Sept. 18, 1848. Ct. Richland Courier, September 17, 1848.

30. Paper read before the **Oswego Historical Society** by Dr. Rayback, concerning Wm. Duer's participation in the "Silver Grey Movement," Oswego, N. Y., 1949.

31. Returns were as follows: Duer—6,278 votes, Hayes—3,903 votes—as reported by the **San Francisco Alta,** Sept. 5, 1857.

32. Ibid.

33. Ct. **New York Tribune,** August 10, 1860. Attacks Duer's actions in California.

34. Mitchell, Horatio Seymour of New York, p. 218.

35. See: **Oswego Palladium and Oswego Times** for September and October, 1860.

36. **Oswego Times,** October, 1860.

37. Oswego County Clerk's Office, Bk. Nos. 94 & 96, pp. 306 and 307—Copies of Tallman Land Sale.

38. Ct. **The New York World,** August 27, 1879.

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