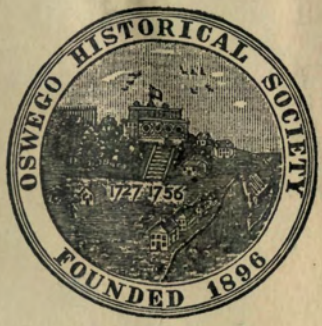


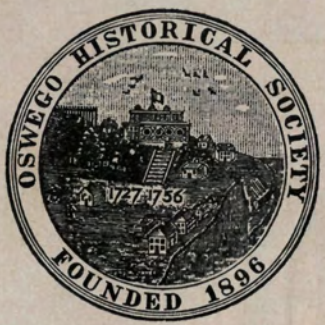



# 1957

Twentieth Publication

of the

# Oswego County Historical Society




1957

PALLADIUM-TIMES, INC.
PRINTERS
OSWEGO, NEW YORK

LIVING ROOM — HEADQUARTERS HOUSE

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## 1957

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**BEFORE THE SOCIETY IN 1957**

# Annual Report of The President

The Oswego County Historical Society, now more than sixty years "young," continued through 1957 to carry on a program designed to foster an interest in local history and to preserve our priceless heritage in mortar and stone. This **Yearbook,** the nineteenth consecutive issue, offers another chapter in the written record of our local history; and the nineteen volumes collectively afford a variety of subjects and materials on local history which are available in but few counties in the state.

Deserving special mention was the creation of a new office, that of Executive Secretary-Curator. It combines the duties of the Corresponding Secretary and Curator, and adds to them the responsibility for the guiding of school groups and other visitors through our museum. It made possible, also, the opening of the museum on a regular schedule from May through October. The result was a record number of visitors. The position provides for professional assistance in the arrangement of exhibits and the filing of records and materials. Finally, it removes some of the details from the President. It is hoped that this modest start may be expanded in the future.

The major accomplishment in house-keeping during the year was the conversion of the heating to gas. It is expected to contribute to both efficiency and economy.

The work of the Society was made possible through the cooperation of its five hundred members, the guidance and leadership of the Board of Managers and committees, and the gifts and services of many others To all I am deeply appreciative.

CHARLES M. SNYDER, President

♦ ♦ ♦

DR. W. SEWARD SALISBURY

# "Lest We Forget"

## DR. W. SEWARD SALISBURY

Twenty years ago a young professor of Social Studies at the Oswego State Normal School signed a membership blank in this Society. Since that time he has labored in and out of season to further its objectives. For a decade he served as program chairman. In 1952 he was elected to the Presidency of the Society, and held this office for two years. More recently he has been a member of the Board of Directors.

Through the years he has presented papers on a variety of topics, including Bradstreet's Expedition against Fort Frontenac in 1758 and The Contributions of Students and Faculty of the Oswego State Teachers College in World War II. Others dealt with subjects as varied as the history of civil rights and Oswego's religious resources.

A native of Phelps, New York, he received his bachelor and doctor's degrees from Cornell University. He taught in the public schools of New York State and at Albany State College prior to accepting an appointment as Professor of Social Studies and Chairman of the Department at Oswego Normal (later State Teachers College). He has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Colorado and the University of Maryland in their Armed Forces Institute in West Germany.

In addition to his contributions to local history, he has presented papers before the American Sociological and other learned societies, and has been a frequent contributor to publications in the areas of Political Science, Sociology and Education.

For his able leadership and valued contributions to the profession the Board of Managers dedicates this volume of the **Yearbook.**

# Dewitt C. Littlejohn: A Study of Leadership in Oswego in the Nineteenth Century

(Presented by Dr. Charles M. Snyder, January 15, 1957)

## PART I

### Business and Politics

In the year 1839 Henry Fitzhugh, prominent Oswego miller and forwarder, made the acquaintance of a young clerk at a forwarding house in Albany. Impressed by his business-sense and hustle, Fitzhugh offered him a position in his office. The young man, Dewitt Clinton Littlejohn, accepted. The decision was to be of great consequence for both Littlejohn and the city of his adoption.

Born February 7, 1818 at Bridgewater, Oneida County, N. Y., the son of Levi S. and Lucy Pratt, he cut-short his collegiate education to get a start in business, and at twenty-one was already an experienced merchandiser. There seems to be no record of his arrival at Oswego, then a village of 5,000. But he must have been impressed with the improvements which he observed: The Oswego Canal, connecting Oswego's harbor with the Erie Canal at Salina; the Oswego Hydraulic Canal, which provided power for the mills lining the east bank of the river and the Varick Canal, a similar power-source on the west bank; extensive docks, a light house and a break-wall. A more minute inspection would have revealed, as it did to another visitor several years earlier, "Flouring mills with twenty-nine runs of stone which manufactured in 1834 about 100,000 barrels of flour, one tannery, a morocco factory, one cotton factory having 1,500 spindles, a machine shop, two saw mills, three cedar mills which sawed in 1834 about 3,000,000 feet of Canada red cedar for shingles, posts, and railroad ties, three cabinet shops, three hat factories, one furnace, a stove foundry, two wagon shops, two watchmakers, one scythe and axe factory, eight blacksmiths, eight tailors, six shoe stores, one tobacco establishment, one burr-stone factory, three tin shops, three printing offices, one upholsterer, nine taverns, two saddlers, fifteen dry goods stores, three hardware stores, a book store, nine groceries, three hat stores, three drug stores, a jewelry store, eight lawyers, six physicians, one bank, a temperance society, twenty-eight schooners (three on stocks), two steamboats, and three lines of canal boats."[1]

Obvious to the business community, though unseen by the observer, was the Welland Canal, 150 miles westward, joining Lakes Erie and Ontario. Its completion a few years earlier had made Oswego a rival of Buffalo for the east-west trade.

If the scene which Littlejohn surveyed reflected achievement in the recent past and promise for

the future, its current activity was scarcely reassuring. The Panic of 1837 clung to the business community and would require another two years to dissipate. But, as we shall see, Littlejohn was not one to be easily discouraged. He saw a bright future for Oswego, and a half-century's vicissitudes did not dim its glow.

Having arrived in Oswego, Littlejohn plunged into the economic and civic life of the community. In a few years he entered into partnership with his employer, and "the firm of Fitzhugh and Littlejohn — as millers, forwarders, vessel and canal boat owners — was one of the best known and most prominent houses of the kind on the whole line of the Great Lakes. Its reputation for enterprise and integrity was unrivaled by any similar firm in the state, and young Littlejohn was particularly distinguished for his activity and efficiency.[2]

The "Old Oswego Line", as their forwarding business was called, was situated on the east side near First and Seneca streets. Fitzhugh and Littlejohn, in combination with a New York partner, also operated the Oneida Lake and River Steamship Co., which built locks, piers and depots and operatd vessels on those waters.

Politics vied with business for Littlejohn's attention, and at times relegated the latter to a secondary role. He affiliated with the Whigh Party; and seven years after settling in Oswego he was elected as a trustee of the village. Two years later he was its President, and incidentally its last, since Oswego became a city the following year. In 1849 he was elected mayor, succeeding James Platt, the first to hold this office.

Meanwhile, Littlejohn did not neglect his personal life. In 1846 he married Alida M. Tabbs, a neice of Mrs. Henry Fitzhugh, and grand-daughter of Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence. If Littlejohn had needed family connections to make a place for himself among the more fashionable social circles, he would have found it here. During the years which followed the Littlejohns had three children, two daughters and a son. They were closely associated with Christ Church, Mr. Littlejohn serving as Vestryman and a participant in the erection of the present church ediface at West Fifth and Cayuga streets.

**Business Scene**

One is apt to assume that business operations in Oswego a century ago were simple and local in scope. They were not. Prosperity depended upon the volume of traffic which passed through the harbor. This, in turn, involved: appropriations from Washington for harbor improvements favorable tariffs, which would encourage Canadian trade; the enactment of legislation at Albany for repairs and enlargements on the Oswego Canal and protection against favors to the Erie Canal, which would place Oswego at a disadvantage with Buffalo; and not to be overlooked in the state capital, charters and financial inducements to railroads, as their significance was comprehended. Public relations, however, was only one facet of the business man's operations.

New communities suffered from a chronic shortage of credit, and even Oswego's richest property owner, Gerrit Smith, required loans from New York bankers running into six figures. Smith, in turn, extended credit to many of his clients. Long-term mortgages and loans were essential to large-scale operation. A business concern which could tap necessary sources of credit might expect handsome profits. During the middle 1840's Smith's Oswego agent, John B. Edwards, observed that "the millers have gotten rich here this fall at a wonderful rate."[3] On the other hand, a sudden money panic might produce a rash of failures.

This, then, was the stage upon which Littlejohn and his business associates played. It offered challenge, rewards and failures, and a frequent change of characters.

Because Littlejohn was a business man and politician simultaneously, it is necessary to sacrifice chronology sometimes as we pursue one or the other through a period of years.

### The Political Scene

President Jackson's impact upon American politics had coalesced the numerous factions among the Jeffersonian Democratic-Republicans into two major parties: his followers, the Democrats, and his opponents, the Whigs. At the time of Littlejohn's entry into politics Oswego usually went Democratic, while the villages and towns in the County more than off-set this with Whig pluralities. By the late forties, however, the situation was complicated by schisms in both parties which reflected the growing dissatisfaction with the western extension of slavery. Democrats were split into Free Soilers, and Hunkers, the latter, willing to accept southern leadership. The Whigs divided similarly into Silver Grays and Conscience Whigs. Then in the early fifties both parties were rent by a surge of nativism which swept the nation, and the resulting Know Nothing Party briefly exerted a powerful influence. It, in turn, was engulfed by the Republican Party, which also destroyed the Whigh Party. Under these circumstances party loyalties were apt to be held lightly and a party's strength wax or wane with startling rapidity.

### Early Politics

As Trustee and President of the Village and Mayor of the city, Littlejohn exhibited a capacity for leadership. I shall refer to a stirring scene on July 4, 1847 to illustrate this point. An altercation between two gangs of sailors, one Canadian and the other, American, took on the proportions of a riot. President Littlejohn hurried to the docks, mounted a piling, and after making himself heard, addressed the crowd, admonishing them of the consequences of their conduct. The assembled throng cheered, but the sailors would not disperse, and he ordered out the Oswego Guards to maintain order. (Incidentally, this was one of three occasions during the nineteenth century when the local militia was called to the docks for duty; the others: in 1839 during the "Patriot War," and in 1883, when longshoremen on strike resisted the landing of strike-breakers). He received favorable notice for his handling of the problem in newspapers on both sides of the lake.

During this same term as village President he was instrumental in securing a city charter for Oswego from the legislature. It was obtained in haste so that the city could keep abreast of Auburn and Syracuse, which were also incorporated in 1848. Littlejohn also promoted the erection of a free bridge across the Oswego River at Utica Street and a projected Susquehanna and Syracuse Railroad, designed to connect Oswego's docks directly with the Pennsylvania coal fields. In the latter he was associated with Alvin Bronson, Fitzhugh, Gerrit Smith and John B. Edwards. They were especially interested in reaching the water front on the east side, where each had substantial investments. The Oswego and Syracuse Railroad, Oswego's first line, completed in 1848, served the west side, but did not cross the river. In 1851, when a Sodus Canal project threatened to tap the Seneca River, and thereby reduce the flow of water in the Oswego River, Littlejohn assumed the leadership to block the bid for a charter.

With these achievements to endorse him he was nominated in 1852 for the Assembly at Albany. Terms at that time were for a single year. He was elected, de-

spite the fact that the county returned majorities for Pierce and Seymour, the Democratic nominees for President and Governor, respectively. His victory was the more significant since few, new, Whig Assemblymen turned up in Albany in Democratic landslide.

In the legislature Littlejohn displayed talents of a high order which were soon to make his name familiar across the state. He was courteous, affable and an excellent mixer, and yet earnest and forthright, and not given to avoid an unpopular issue. As an orator and debater he was soon second to none. Tall, dark and slender in his younger years, graceful in his movements, and speaking with a voice which was deep and resonant, he commanded the attention of his audience, whether supporters or opponents. A favorite gesture was his right arm thrust forward and his index finger pointed directly at his hearers, a mannerism with which he became identified. In Oswego, a notice, that he was to speak, was the guarantee of a full house, and in Albany, it filled the gallery of the Assembly Chamber. It should be remembered in passing that this was as an era when oratory was at its height, and a speaker, worth his salt, was expected to hold the attention of his audience for two or more hours. This is just what Littlejohn did, time and again, and almost daily, during the closing days of a campaign. While I do not wish to overemphasize this point, it is safe to say that from the platform Littlejohn radiated a magnetism, which might have taken him to our highest political office, had not business frequently relegated politics to a secondary position.

In Albany he attracted the attention of Thurlow Weed, the state "Boss" of the Whig Party. They became close friends, and Littlejorn was soon one of Weed's trusted Lieutenants, a relationship which proved mutually beneficial in politics and business.

Littlejohn was also a political associate of William H. Seward, though the latter's career kept him in Washington during the era the former was in Albany.

Undoubtedly, Littlejohn's business and family connections with Henry Fitzhugh were an asset in the Legislature. Fitzhugh had served previously in the Assembly, and in 1851 began the first of two three-year terms as Canal Commissioner. In this office he was a key figure in the up-state Whig Party, where canal support and patronage were closely linked to the party organization. Littlejohn championed local canal appropriations, of course, and learned the art of log-rolling to pool support for canal legislation.

He was reelected in 1853, and again in 1854.

During his three year tenure in the Legislature his primary interest was an enlargement of the Oswego Canal to match one already provided for the Erie. Without it larger boats built for the Erie could not have operated on the Oswego line. He found that his best chance for success was not by obstructing appropriations for the Erie, but rather by supporting them on a quid pro quo arrangement with legislators from districts along the Erie. By such means he secured appropriations for his local project, and saw it completed simultaneously with the Erie.

During his third term he emerged as a state leader of his party. With the backing of the Weed machine he was elected Speaker, an office soon to become familiar to him. The climax of the session was the balloting for a United States Senator. Seward, the incumbent, had the support of the majority party, and his election would have been a formality, had not an undetermined number of Whigs been tinged with Know-nothingism. As Governor, more than a decade before, Seward had shown a willingness to appro-

priate state funds for the support of Catholic schools, and thus, with Nativism now rampant, he was extremely vulnerable. For a time Knownothings and Democrats combined to prevent an election, and as the contest grew fiercer, all other business ceased. "When at last DeWitt C. Littlejohn, vacating the Speaker's Chair, took the floor for the distinguished New Yorker, the excitement reached its climax. The Speaker's bold and fearless defence met a storm of personal denunciation that broke from the ranks of the Knownothings; but his speech minimized their opposition and inspired Seward's forces to work out a magnificent victory." Seward, himself, noted just after the above speech, "Our friends are in good spirits and reasonably confident. Our adversaries are not confident, and are out of temper."[4]

It is of interest to observe that this address was circulated widely. Excerpts appeared in Whig papers and were incorporated into resolutions adopted at Whig rallies. For example, a pamphlet entitled "Proceedings of the Citizens' Convention Held at Pomfret, Vt., March 18, 1855," includes the entire speech.

What was the nature of this highly publicized address? Littlejohn traced his personal contact with Knownothingism. A friend had taken him to a meeting with the promise that it would in no way interfere with "my duties to myself, my family, my Country and my God." When the nature of the gathering was revealed, he had refused to take the oath. He had attended no other meetings. And while sympathetic to some of the original principles, he detested "the base uses to which it has been reduced, and abhor the principles to which it has been prostituted by those in whose hands it has become a hugh and corrupt engine." Both Whigs and Democrats, he alleged, had sought too much to influence the foreign vote, but it was obvious that the Democrats were most at fault. Pointing to the last presidential election he noted that the foreign vote had been cast against Scott, the Whig nominee, though "Mr. Seward (who is charged with excessive friendship for and influence over those who cast that vote) very anxiously desired his election. If he had had the influence he is accused of possessing over this vote, do you suppose that it would have been cast against his favorite candidate? No sir."

An overwhelming majority of the Knownothings were honest people, he conceded, who simply opposed the election of foreign-born to office. But they could no longer remain in the Society without rendering themselves parties to base purposes, for they were no longer free agents. Orders were emanating from the central councils to the members. Assemblymen, he maintained, had received threatening missives from these councils, whose methods were comparable to "the thumbscrews of the inquisition."

His remarks were interrupted frequently by irate Knownothings who repudiated his interpretation of their oath and chain of command. But he had the last word: Washington's warning in his Farewell Address against the "baneful effects of the spirit of party." No one attempted to refute this.[5]

It is doubtful whether so partisan a discourse changed many minds; but Seward's election followed, and jubilant Whigs celebrated with fireworks and bonfires.

Back home, Democrats and Whigs with Knownothings leanings raised a storm of protest over Littlejohn's behavior. His answer came in a dramatic appearance to answer before an overflow audience of friends and foes at Doolittle Hall. "Hundreds who went there to mock and denounce went away to cheer and vote for

D. C. Littlejohn," boasted the partisan **Times.**

For further vindication, he was persuaded to be a candidate for mayor. The business community argued that the projected Susquehanna and Syracuse Railroad required the quality of leadership that he might afford. He won the election and plunged into the promotion, visiting villages and farms along the route, eliciting stock purchases from Oswego's merchants and presiding at public meetings. John B. Edwards, not given to superlatives, referred to Littlejohn as he labored for the railroad as "that noble man . . . He is worth more to Oswego than many Bronsons."[6] The railroad failed, however, not so much to a lack of support at Oswego, but to its abandonment at the Binghamton end of the line.

Meanwhile, as mayor, Littlejohn could not stand for reelection to the Assembly. But he accompanied the Weed-Seward Whig faction into the newly organized Republican Party and campaigned vigorously for its candidates in the fall elections of 1855. In the vacuum created by the demise of the Whigs, however, the "Silver Grays" of Oswego, who had been headed by William Duer and James Platt, gravitated to the Knownothings ,and supported Democratic nominees. Thus Littlejohn's efforts went for naught—the Democrats carried the County and the State.

Retiring from his one-year term as Mayor in 1856, Littlejohn was caught up in the Presidential campaign. He pled business pressures in declining Weed's blandishments that he tour central New York, but he accepted a nomination to the Assembly, running against Orville Robinson, who had been elected the previous year. His popularity was demonstrated by the fact that he reversed a majority of 1,500 votes given to Robinson the year before, and won the seat. Elated by his smashing victory, he observed to Weed, that fearing the loss of the district, "Our friends put me in nomination against Speaker Robinson to beat him. **He was beaten,** and I am to pass another winter in Albany. Of course it is natural that I should desire to hold the same position, as when last in the Assembly. Am I not warranted in asking, and shall I not have your influence."[7]

After a year's absence, however, Littlejohn found the Weed organization had other plans, and he failed to win the chair. The session could scarcely have been a rewarding one for him. Pressing business problems awaited him at home, and politics went into a temporary eclipse.

**Panic Vicissitudes**

The writer has been able to ascertain only a few of the high lights of Littlejohn's business operations in this period, but the outline is clear. Gambling upon Oswego's continued growth, Fitzhugh and Littlejohn invested heavily in land, buildings and ships, much of it on long term credit. Among their purchases were lots 4, 5, and 6 on the eastern harbor adjacent to the Cove from Gerrit Smith for $30,000. Much of this remained unpaid in 1853 when the city's most disastrous fire burned the mill and depot which they had erected there. They promptly rebuilt — with additional credit, supplied in part by Smith after Littlejohn made a hurried trip to Washington to enlist his aid.[8] About this time, also, Fitzhugh and Littlejohn purchased a three-sixteenth interest in the Oswego Pier and Dock Co. (Grampus Bay) in which the principal owner was Smith. It was a profitable business over the years, but Fitzhugh and Littlejohn could not hold their share long enough to profit substantially. Perhaps, if either of the partners had not been absorbed in politics their foundations might have been stronger. In any event, when the Panic of 1857

struck, they were in serious straits. They worked desperately to retain their businesses, but finding no solution, saw their properties slip from their grasp.

The panic exacted its toll upon personal relationships: Littlejohn and Smith, for example. They had been warm friends. Smith had appointed Littlejohn an original trustee of the library which he built for Oswego. A short time prior to the crash, Fitzhugh and Littlejohn had negotiated for the sale of their waterfront lots and properties on the eastern harbor. The sale, however, would have required a further extension of credit by Smith to the purchaser. He declined. Now with his financial structure crashing about him, Littlejohn felt that Smith was partially responsible. Learning of the former's sentiments, Smith sent Edwards to call on Littlejohn as a peace-maker. But Edwards found him embittered. Several similar overtures met with rebuffs. Sometime later Smith wrote to Littlejohn, with Edwards again the intermediary, detailing his side of the controversy. Referring to Littlejohn as "My old friend," Smith noted that his losses from Fitzhugh and Littlejohn's failure totaled as much as $75,000, and that their proposition for the sale of the properties in which he was involved had never been pressed: "Mr. Fitzhugh never spoke to me on the subject, and you but once, and that was for probably not more than a minute, and in the bar room at Syracuse among people."

Edwards reported that Littlejohn remained dissatisfied. "He appears to feel afflicted because you are afflicted with him. He says what he said about you has been much exaggerated, but he says you did them injustice, you not intending to do injustice," and that he stressed, "how useful he and Mr. Fitzhugh have been to this place, and how much your property has been increased in value by means of their labors." And commenting to Smith a few days later, Edwards continued, "The treatment from Littlejohn is indeed hard to bear. Perhaps it ought not to be born. It may be that you ought to bring him up for slander. It is a pity that the poor man does not see his error and folly and confess it." But he ended on a more favorable note: Littlejohn, he reported, wished to see him, and might even vote for him for Governor, (Smith was running on the Liberty-Temperance ticket) if there were a chance that he would win.[9] Smith and Littlejohn were eventually reconciled, though it was not to be their last difference of opinion.

In a letter to Seward, of particular interest because it contains a self-evaluation of his personality and services, Littlejohn observed: "The commercial storm of last autumn found my affairs so extended (imprudently so) that nothing could ease me from shipwreck. From being worth $150,000, as I believed myself to be in the fall of 1856, I am now utterly ruined, so far as property is concerned. My property has nearly all, and all will be, turned over to my creditors. I have the battle of my business life to commence again, and at the best there are great disadvantages. My history is that of many thousands of our most liberal and most enterprising men; those who by their energy are always foremost in developing the wealth and resources of our country, often times at great hazards.

Nothing is to be gained by restraining the energies of this class of men either to the country or their creditors. There seems to be no relief except in a general commercial bankrupt act, one that should be permanent and lasting.

I need and must have its benefits, for I chafe at the thought of even one year of inactivity. Can you give me any assurance that such a measure will pass this session?"[10]

I might add that no general

bankruptcy act was forthcoming for another decade, and Littlejohn was forced to struggle along without its benefits.

His monetary distress finally led to prison—for a few days—an outcome of an incident arising from a propellor collision. An "oppressive creditor" obtained a judgment against Fitzhugh, Littlejohn, and a third Oswego ship owner, Andrew Miller, and had them lodged in the county jail at Pulaski. Families and friends rushed to their rescue, including Mrs. Gerrit Smith and her sister, Mrs. Birney, who arrived from Peterboro with aid and comfort for their brother, Henry Fitzhugh. They were released in several days, but it could have been nothing short of humiliation.[11]

Fortunately for Littlejohn and his associates, the cycle had turned and business was reviving even while they awaited release from confinement at Pulaski. It required a war boom, however, to fully restore Oswego's economy.

**Returns To Politics**

Meanwhile, business set-backs did not impair Littlejohn's political availability. After a year's lay-off, he accepted the Republican nomination for the Assembly in 1858, and campaigned with his usual vigor. He was also ambitious to be Speaker, and reminded Weed of his obligations to him. Though certain newspapers, he noted, tried to place him in a position hostile to Weed, "Since my first vote and during all my political efforts I have been an **Evening Journal** man (Weed's Albany newspaper), the political doctrine of that paper according more with my opinion than any other . . . Had you reposed more confidence in me, my course at times might have been different for my mind has ever been open and free to adopt the best course to promote the success of our party and its principles." Acknowledging aid from Weed for their local campaign, he added, "For six years, when I have not run, a Democrat has been elected to the Assembly." He was hopeful of victory; and if successful would go to Albany as his "personal and political friend." While one sees little evidence of modesty here, the fact remains that he did not exaggerate; and Weed, a political realist, would have been the first to acknowledge its truth.[12] Littlejohn was elected, and was chosen Speaker, a position which he retained through three consecutive terms.

Highlighting this period of his political career was the election of Lincoln to the Presidency in 1860, the splitting of the New York Republicans into Greeley and Weed-Seward factions, and the contest for the United States Senate to fill Seward's seat after his appointment as Secretary of State by Lincoln. The Greeley-Weed rivalry for Republican leadership in the State came to a head at the Republican Convention at Chicago, where Greeley's opposition to Seward's nomination was instrumental in the latter's defeat and Lincoln's victory. The battle continued as the two factions struggled to control the patronage and to name the successor to Seward. The struggle came home to Littlejohn as he campaigned for the Assembly, when Greeley, through his editorial columns in the **Tribune,** attacked him for his support of railroad charters in New York City, alleging that he had been influenced as a legislator by corrupt motives, and was therefore unfit to be reelected. Littlejohn replied promptly to Greeley. The latter published it, but then repeated his accusations. Littlejohn was naturally disturbed and uncertain of his next step. To Governor E. D. Morgan, who had vetoed some of the controversial bills, he confided, "If Mr. Greeley is influenced by honorable considerations, he will, so far as I am concerned, withdraw his charges. Should he reiterate them

I may be obliged to give my views in full. This I should regret as I am convinced that nothing is gained by furnishing our opponents arguments with which to assault us. I earnestly desire and am laboring for your election, and while your triumph is, in my mind, certain, I shall not willingly introduce new matter into the contest. I shall be elected by a larger majority than ever before, notwithstanding Mr. Greeley's advice to my constituents.[13]

And to Seward Littlejohn declared, "Greeley assaults me because I am your friend. I desire to rebuke him by rolling up an increased majority, showing that my constituents sympathize with me in my attachments to you and your principles. Your presence here (before election) would strengthen us very much.[14]

He also consulted Weed: "What shall I do," he wrote, "shall I prosecute Mr. Greeley for libel? I am told he has expressed a wish that I should do so, that he might place you on the stand as a witness. Suppose he does? Between us nothing has occurred that could injure either of us.

Shall I write out my reasons in full for the support of the Rail Road Bills or shall the subject drop until after election?" It is not known how Weed responded, but it can be assumed that he preferred to delay it until a more propitious moment. Littlejohn postponed, but did not forget his plan for vindication.[15]

He subsequently won his contest for the Assembly and returned to Albany. Here he found Greeley on hand with two prominent lieutenants, George Updyke and David Dudley Field, in a bid to prevent his election as Speaker. The candidate of the Greeley faction was Lucius Robinson of Chemung County, later to be Governor of the State. In caucus Robinson led Littlejohn 42 to 38 on the first ballot, with 7 votes scattered, but on the fifth the latter led 38 to 37, and Greeley cast about for a new candidate. The strategy failed, however, and Littlejohn received his party's endorsement on the next ballot. He was then elected Speaker by a party vote.[16]

Littlejohn's victory was but a prelude of the more intense struggle to follow, the choice of a successor to Seward. Greeley coveted the seat for himself, and the Weed-Seward faction countered with Wm. M. Evart. In the caucus the atmosphere was charged with tension, as both Weed and Greeley viewed it as a fight for their political lives. For eight ballots the contest was dead-locked with a few votes going to a "dark-horse," Ira Harris. Fearing that the latter might swing to Greeley, Littlejohn hurried from the chamber to confer with Weed in the anteroom. The ensuing scene was graphically recorded by a witness:

"Pale as ashes, Weed sat smoking a cigar within earshot of the bustle in the crowded Assembly room where the caucus sat. Littlejohn stalked over the heads of the spectators and reported to Weed. Unmindful of the fact that he had a cigar in his mouth, Weed lighted another and put it in, then rose in great excitement, and said to Littlejohn, 'Tell the Evarts men to go right over to Harris—to Harris—to Harris!' The order was given in the caucus. They wheeled into lines like Napoleon's old guard, and Harris was nominated."[17]

Weed had defeated Greeley, but the latter continued to hammer away at the corruption charge against the previous legislature. He also secured the election of George Opdyke as Mayor of New York and another of his aids as Collector of the Port of New York, the fattest political plum in the state, despite Secretary Seward's opposition. Weed was losing his grip upon the party, and in Oswego a Greeley faction challenged Littlejohn's leadership.

The closing chapter of these stirring events was the threatened libel suit, which Littlejohn instituted after Greeley continued to refuse a retraction. The trial, held at Pulaski, Oswego County, in September, 1861, was of interest across the state, not only because the principals were well known, but also due to Weed's involvement. Greeley appears to have felt no animosity toward Littlejohn; it was simply a means of attacking Weed and his faction in the Legislature. Littlejohn surely understood this, but his pride was hurt, and he insisted on pressing his case.

The Village of Pulaski took on a festive air on the day of the trial. Curious crowds turned out from the surrounding area and smaller number from many parts of the state.

Littlejohn, through his council, Marsh and Webb of Oswego, assisted by J. C. Churchill of Oswego and C. B. Sedgwick of Syracuse, held that the defendant had wickedly and maliciously intended to injure him by charging him with having been influenced as a legislator by corrupt motives; also, hat he was corrupt and therefore unfit to be elected. He asked for $25,000 in damages. For his defense Greeley appeared with I. T. Williams of New York City, prominent trial lawyer; also Porter and Cagger of Albany, and Grant and Allen of Oswego. It was an unusual array of legal talent. The defence did not deny Greeley's responsibility for the editorial, but emphasized that the offending statement was prefaced by the words, "On this subject our opinion has been so often expressed, that it can not be in doubt," and that it was given, therefore, as opinion rather than fact. And instead of attempting to prove that allegation against Littlejohn, they simply observed that it was generally agreed that the legislature was corrupt, and that it had been echoed a thousand times. Governor Morgan, they alleged, had stated openly that "eighty members of that legislature took money for their votes," that Littlejohn, himself, had declared in one of his speeches that perhaps more members of that legislature were open to improper influences than of any other former legislature; and that even Mr. Weed had said, "God grant we may never look upon its like again." Littlejohn, they continued, "was the Speaker of the House; he was a very influential man with that legislature. He is a good speaker, and effective debater. He could carry almost any measure he saw fit, and it was important to have just such a man in just that place; and that of all men connected with the whole matter, he must be kept above suspicion — like the chaste lady in the mosque, 'lofty, spotless and serene; not even to be chatted at, but only pointed out and grinned at' by those satyrs and goblins of the legislature — the lobby."

LittleJohn, they noted, had left the Speaker's chair to argue for the passage of five bills, "proposing to grid-iron the streets (of New York) for the benefit of jobbers scattered all over the state," bills which Governor Morgan had vetoed. Conspicious among the lobbyists, they added, were Littlejohn's brother, Frederick S., and Dr. Richard H. Thompson of Brooklyn, his brother-in-law. Each, they alleged, had obtained $40,000 of the stock of one of these roads.

In the previous campaign, they charged, Littlejohn had justified an appropriation of one mililon dollars to a railroad, because the state had built the canals, but he had overlooked the fact that the canals belonged to the state, and that the money was simply given to the railroad, a private company.

With such a barrage of allegations, Littlejohn's charges against Greeley seem to have been all but forgotten. The plaintiff and the

legislature appeared to be on trial.

The outcome was a triumph for Greeley, the jury failing to come to an agreement, with nine voting for the defendant, two for nominal charges and one for large damages to the plaintiff. Fortunately for Littlejohn, he was not given to introspection; furthermore there was little time for it; the Civil War had burst upon the nation.[18]

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6. Edwards to Smith, June 25, 1856, Smith mss.

7. Littlejohn to Weed, November 15, 1856, Weed mss., University of Rochester.

8. Edwards to Smith, March 2, 1854, Smith mss.

9. Edwards to Smith, September 4, 17, 1858.

10. Littlejohn to Seward, March 16, 1858, Seward mss., University of Rochester.

11. Edwards to Smith, August 12, 22, 1859.

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13. Littlejohn to E. D. Morgan, October 1, 1860, Morgan mss. NYSL. See also Rawley, James A., Edwin D. Morgan, New York, 1955.

14. Littlejohn to Seward, October 20, 1860, Seward mss.

15. Littlejohn to Weed, October 9, 1860, Weed mss.

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17. Stanton, H. B. **Random Recollections,** New York, 1887, p. 218.

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# Prelude to Controversy

## Between Sir William Johnson and Major General William Shirley in the Niagara and Crown Point Campaigns

(Presented by Mr. Johnson Cooper, February 19, 1957)

Major General William Shirley, second Commander in Chief of British forces in North America in the war aginst the French was recalled to England in 1756 in semi-disgrace, his place being taken by Lord Loudoun. The recall was a direct result of a dispute which arose in the summer of 1755, between General Shirley and William Johnson, leading to direct charges being levelled at Shirley and brought to England by Thomas Pownall. Johnson was supported in the dispute by Governor James DeLancey of New York and Pownall, whose brother John was an important figure in the government in London. Shirley was supported primarily by his secretary, William Alexander.[1]

This paper concerns itself with the events leading up to this quarrel, the early close cooperation among Johnson, Shirley and DeLancey, as to the direction the campaign against the French should take, and the sudden break in this close relationship leading to the accusations and recall. A later paper will deal with an evaluation of the factors relating to the controversy itself.

William Shirley had become Governor of Massachusetts in 1741 and remained in that assignment until his recall in 1756. In 1745 he led the English expedition against Cape Breton which successfully invested Louisbourg and on his return in 1746 went to London where he was concerned in the demobilization following the war and then to Paris as a British representative which drew up the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle.[2]

Returning to London, he requested an assignment to the Leeward Islands from the Duke of Newcastle, but was turned down and then returned to Massachusetts as Governor in 1753.[3]

It was in his position as Governor of Massachusetts that Shirley took the lead to prepare England and the colonies for the final campaign to drive the French from their encroachments on the Ohio and Great Lakes region of North America. It was this activity and the militarv experience of the Cape Breton campaign which placed Shirley in a position to succeed Braddock in 1755.

Shirley was in England as late as May 27, 1753, when he was in communication with Josiah Willard an important Massachusetts official. He had returned to Massachusetts by August.[4]

The first opportunity to urge action against the French came shortly following his return. On August 28, 1753, the Earl of Holderness wrote a circular letter to all the governors in America

warning them of a march of French Indians and Europeans "intending . . . to commit some hostilities on parts of His Majesty's dominions in America ..."[5] Holderness directed them to be on their guard and to use force if necessary. He requested Shirley to act as the chief correspondent with the other governors in order to coordinate these activities in North America.[6]

Shirley took this opportunity to write each of the governors a letter suggesting they cooperate in the matter and assist each other in case action became necessary. At the same time he took measures to determine the extent of these penetrations made by the "Europeans" and their Indians.

In January, 1754, Shirley made a long reply to Holderness informing him of the action which had been taken. This letter is important in showing clearly the anxiety Shirley felt in the actions of the French. It indicated the exactness and care Shirley displayed in the matter of studying what might be done to counter the French encroachments.[7] He enclosed three papers each dealing with a specific phase of the encroachments and possible answers.

Shirley's letter of January to Holderness dealt at some length with a problem which was to plague the campaign later on, and one which had some bearing on the controversy between Shirley and Johnson in 1755.

. . . I am fully persuaded, that this Province (as the Assembly undertakes for it in their message) will at all times . . . furnish their just and reasonable quota of men or money towards the assistance. . . . Yet unless it be determined by His Majesty, what is each Colony's just quota . . . and they shall be obliged in some effectual manner to conform . . .: Yet I say, My Lord, there seems just reason to apprehend from past experience . . . (it) will be an obstacle to the carrying into execution any general plan for cementing an union among His Majesty's subjects upon this Contenent . . . [8].

That Massachusetts fully lived up to these predictions can be amply demonstrated from official sources. Shirley's knowledge of events and history of North America is tremendous and is continually brought forth in letters or papers he sent to one or another official in North America or England.[9]

A plan of union for all the North American English Colonies was also presented in this letter to Holderness. This proposal appears to have led directly to the Albany Congress of 1754, a meeting which had originally been planned as a gathering to honor the Six Nations Indians with gifts. Shirley displayed his diplomatic skill in this regard by requesting Benjamin Franklin to write him his ideas on how such a plan should be implemented.[10]

The great esteem in which Governor Shirley was held by the Massachusetts Assembly is indicated in the message to the king from the General Court at that same time. Professor Lincoln, who edited the **Correspondence of William Shirley,** states that this is the only instance on record in the Privy Council of such an address to the crown from one of the North American colonies. It is another evidence that Shirley, unlike most of his colleagues, had a cordial relationship with his Assembly and that both had a close and intimate relationship with the Crown.

Two months later, in March 1754, Shirley took direct action in relation to the encroachments being made in the Northern areas of Massachusetts. He requested the Assembly to take action to dislodge the French on a permanent basis and he indicated how dangerous delay would be. He warned that failure to act could result

in a situation similar to that of Fort St. Frederick, at Crown Point in New York. Fort St. Frederick, only a short distance from Albany, endangered the entire Southern frontier.[11] In this case, Shirley indicated by his statement to the Assembly and the actions which followed, that he did know how to deal with the Indians, a factor which came into the dispute later on, in the Niagara and Crown Point campaigns of 1755-56.

Shirley, in a speech to the Massachusetts Assembly in March 1754, made a comparison of the way in which the French and English treated with the Indians. He recommended annual presents to them, but at the same time demanded the Indians live up to treaties they had ratified with the English. He described a conversation with an Indian trader who had been a prisoner of the French and had watched them gain Indian support behind the Appalachians:

That in Novr: 1750, he with sundry other Traders of the English, was taken Prisoner by some Frenchmen belonging to a Fort upon the River Ohio, and from thence was taken from Fort to Fort to Quebeck, by Means of which Forts and the lakes, . . . have a Communication open from Quebeck to Mississipi; . . . have Forts there within 20 or 30 miles Distance of each other, with a Command of from 10 to 20 Men in each; in which he says they put the Squaws and Papooses of the Indians in Alliance with them for Protection, whilst the Men go out to War, and there keep them untill the Men return; and he observes, that by means of these Forts, they bid fair in a little Time to seduce the Indians in Alliance with the English, as the English did not afford the same Protection to their Women and Children, whilst the Men are gone to War, as the French do.[12]

The Massachusetts Court requested Shirley to acquaint the King with this danger and to ask him to take such action as would both counter the moves of the French and cement the Indians to the English. One significant recommendation made was that all Indian affairs be placed under some general command in order that special interests be prevented from interfering with them. He later specifically recommended William Johnson for this position. The Court indicated their strong support of their governor in these words:

In the meantime We assure Your Excellency that we are ready to do every Thing that can be expected from Us on the present Emergency. We think Ourselves happy that we have a Gentleman at the head of the Province who is so perfectly acquainted with His Majesty's just Title to the Country encroached upon by the French, who has just given such distinguished Proofs of his Zeal for His Majesty's Service, whose Endeavors to defend his Territories and enlarge his Dominions in time of War have been attended with . . . Success, and whose abhorrence of such perfidious Invasions . . . we are also well acquainted with.[13]

The Court requested Shirley personally to lead an expedition to the Northern boundaries of Massachusetts to evict the French and deal with the Indians that they might remain loyal to the English. Their confidence in Shirley's ability to convince the Indians of this is evidenced by this statement:

We hope by your Excellency's prudent Management these Indians . . . convinced . . . their interest . . . at peace with Us, and as We are Sincerely desirous . . . to perpetuate the same . . . defray the Charge of Supporting and educating a considerable Number of . . . Indian Children . . . .

We are Situated remote from

the Six Nations and have never had the benefit of a Trade with them, yet . . . in the Treaties . . . contributed . . . Presents . . . attending such Treaties, . . . ready to do all that can be reasonably desired . . . .[14]

The Court strongly backed Shirley's Plan of a strong Union among the North American provinces. He travelled to the Kennebeck, Chaudiere and St John's River country to treat with the Penobscot, Norridgewalk and Arssegunticook Indians. The Penobscots and Norridgewalks both reratified the earlier treaties of 1725 and 1749 and both agreed to send a number of young men to be educated in Boston and Cambridge at the colony's expense.

Shirley's vast knowledge of North American History and Geography was shown in his dealings with these Indians and the report to Holderness concerning it. To the Indians he recited the history of their relationships to the English for the past hundred years, including settlements made, areas of territory belonging to them, treaties signed, etc. Then to Holderness he cited with detailed care the legal grounds for England's claims to the territory on which the French had encroached. He quoted from the Treaty of Breda of 1667; Champlain as to the limits of New France in his explorations; and St. Denis an early French Governor who mapped the territory. He concluded by indicating how this territory abounded in resources needed by the English Navy! This point was sure to be noted in London.

One month later Shirley wrote Sir Thomas Robinson, Secretary of State to His Majesty for the Southern Territories, a detailed plan of action for strengthening England's hold on North America. The final actions of the English in their war against the French followed closely this plan pressed by Shirley. Shirley continued to forward modifications of this plan to London, the last of which was written at Oswego in the summer of 1755.[15] It seems clear that these persistent recommendations were instrumental in moving London to action which saw the French driven from Canada and the Ohio.

The plans which Shirley proposed included special emphasis on building a strong fort at Crown Point, opposite the French Fort St. Frederick. He felt this would be as great a "curb upon the motions of the French in that Quarter as the last before-mentioned Fort . . . in Quebeck."[16] He told Robinson that this fort more than any other would confine the French within their territory and "confirm the Indians . . . in a dependence upon us; from which it seems they have in part been discourag'd by Fort St. Frederick's being suffer'd to remain."[17] Upon this point Johnson and Shirley had every reason to see eye to eye, as they did in the early weeks of their relationship.

The effectiveness of this continuing campaign on the part of Governor Shirley to move London to action is indicated by the reply Robinson made to him in June 1754. In this letter Robinson indicated to Shirley that the King was most pleased at Shirley's endeavors and authorized him to pursue the plan as represented to the Massachusetts Court in March and April. The King further was to act upon Shirley's recommendation as to uniting the North American Colonies in a joint effort to dislodge the French.

. . . I am to acquaint you, that His Majesty extremely approves the resolution . . . by the Assembly . . . to drive the French from the . . . Kennebeck.

. . . His Majesty is graciously pleased to authorize . . . you to proceed upon the plan . . . so well calculated for that purpose.

. . . that everything recommended by the said Assembly . . . fully considered: . . . directions

. . . given for promoting the plan of a general concert between His Majesty's Colonies . . . .

It is with the greatest pleasure . . . the very favorable manner . . . your prudent . . . conduct, . . . have been received by the King . . . will give a proper example to His Majesty's neighbouring Colonies.[18]

The meeting was held at Albany in the same month in which Shirley received the above letter from Robinson. Shirley himself did not attend, but several commissioners from Massachusetts were there and Shirley, as has been noted, corresponded with Franklin relative to the proposed Union. The Commissioners recommended a union, but Shirley, himself a strong Empire politician and diplomat, was displeased with the proposals as giving too much power to the colonies. He felt strongly that Parliament should itself enact a Plan of Union and present it to the colonies.

The Albany Congress did advocate that Indian affairs be taken out of the hands of the Indian Commissioners, and this would certainly have been favored by both Johnson and Shirley who were strongly critical of their (Commissioners) actions in the past. It will be recalled that Governor Clinton had earlier appointed Johnson to the Commission in order to watch the other Commissioners. The followup of this proposal, which the Board of Trade forwarded to the King was Shirley's recommendation of Johnson for that position.[19] Shirley and Johnson had reason, therefor, to press the same plans, which they did. Not only that, but Lieutenant Governor James DeLancey of New York is noted by the Board of Trade as having recommended this same plan to them.[20]

Robinson in October of 1754 wrote to Governor Shirley that specific action had been agreed upon. This letter said that Shirley and Sir William Pepperell were appointed Colonels each to command a regiment of 700 men. This was later raised to 1000 men each, but only about 600 were raised for each of the two regiments by the time the campaign began. One must conclude that one of Governor Shirley's faults was his own enthusiasm for the cause. This often made it appear easier to bring the plans to fruition, than in reality it was. It must, at the same time, be pointed out that Massachusetts almost without exception raised their required quotas, but most of the other colonies were often in arrears.

Robinson's announcement further told of the plan to send two regiments, under Sir Peter Halkett and Colonel Thomas Dunbar, to North America. Part of these ranks were to be enlisted in North America, and again this was not complete by the time Braddock set out for the Ohio.

Shirley was requested to have 3000 men in readiness from Massachusetts for use in the coming Nova Scotia campaign. It was further announced that a general officer would be sent from England to be Commander-in-Chief of all the forces. The final decision was to raise a "common fund" in the colonies for the benefit of all.[21]

The two articles in these plans which most came to plague Shirley and his colleagues in the colonies were the question of quotas from the various colonies and the common fund. It was unanimously agreed among the governors, and communicated by them to Whitehall, that these two points would have to be decided in England, the colonies not being able to agree among themselves. England nevertheless insisted that it be decided in America.

Both factors entered into the later difficulties between Johnson and Shirley. The former was forever complaining about a lack of funds to carry on his work with

the Six Nations Indians; Shirley at one point had to hold back gunpower which Johnson felt he needed because of a shortage of funds; Johnson was being bombarded with letters by Goldsbrow Banyar and DeLancey concerning men Shirley was withdrawing from the Crown Point campaign, or refusing to allot it in the first place;[22] and the contractors, Peter Van Burgh Livingston, Lewis Morris, Jr. and William Alexander, were often paid long after they had purchased the supplies.[23]

The difficulties involved in raising forces for the coming campaign are indicated in a letter Shirley wrote to Robinson in February 1755. Shirley expressed exasperation at what he considered the dilatory tactics of various colonies. Among the troubles might be cited DeLancey's with the New York Legislature.Having defeated Clinton politically, DeLancey himself had little better luck at securing men and funds from that body which more than once adjourned without taking action on his recommendations.[24]

In a letter written to DeLancey in February 1755, Shirley recommended that Johnson be placed in command of the Crown Point venture and stated to DeLancey and the other governors to whom he wrote at the same time, that Johnson by background, training and knowledge was the one man to lead such an expedition. Shirley writes.

In regard to his power to engage them (Six Nations) now, no gentleman can stand in competition with him; besides his military qualifications for this particular Service, and knowledge of the Country and place, against which this expedition is destined, are very conspicuous.[25]

No specific mention of the Niagara campaign is noted in this letter so neither Shirley nor Johnson, at this point, knew Shirley would command such an expedition, which might compete with the Crown Point campaign for both personnel and supplies.

Within another month, however, the question of the Niagara campaign had become known to both men. Robinson had written Shirley, in a letter delivered by Braddock, that Shirley was to command a campaign against Niagara, which was to be waged simultaneously with the Ohio, Crown Point and Nova Scotia ones.[26] The plans were ambitious and logical, but the manpower available and the common fund from the colonies were not adequate to their success.

Johnson wrote Shirley on March 17 1755, agreeing to command the Crown Point expedition and to take charge of Indian affairs as sole agent. He writes:

It is my own and the opinion of every one I converse with that should the General begin the attack at Niagara . . . it would be the speediest method to deprive them of their encroachments on the Ohio, which they would soon find themselves under a necessity even to abandon, if we take and keep possession of that important pass.[27]

Shirley agreed and made this same proposal in a letter to Robinson, enclosing Johnson's letter to reinformce his own.

However, if the General should finally judge it not adviseable to make both attempts with his forces divided, but proceed forst . . . to attack the French Forts . . . at Niagara, sending only . . . a detachment to the Ohio . . . the reduction of the first would penetrate into the heart . . . and cutting off all communications between Canada and their forces upon that river, leave them an easy prey to famine . . . .[28]

Shirley did not plan to head such a campaign, leaving that to Braddock. Johnson still did not know that Shirley was to lead the campaign against Niagara, nor did he know that Shirley would

assume complete command upon Braddock's death. In this letter to Robinson Shirley calls Johnson "the best judge in America of their (the Iroquois') dispositions" and stated that this "must greatly facilitate the reduction of the French Forts near the falls at Niagara . . . ."[29]

The meeting with General Braddock took place at Alexandria, Virginia on the 14th of April, 1755. This was a meeting between Braddock and the governors concerned in the coming venture. Johnson was in attendance of Shirley at Alexandria, as was Thomas Pownall, but neither was invited to the Council of War.[30] No written record has come to light indicating if this offended either man. The question of who was to accompany Shirley to the Alexandria meeting was in the meantime being discussed in political circles in New York, and it is in the direction of New York to which attention is now turned.

William Johnson had come to North America and the Mohawk Valley in 1738, as the agent of his uncle Sir Peter Warren. Sir Peter was a Vice-Admiral in the English Navy and an important political figure in English affairs. He served in Parliament from 1749 until his death in 1752 and had been associated with Shirley in the seige of Louisbourg. Then, Shirley had earned Warren's enmity when he prevented Sir Peter from dividing Cape Breton among the victors. Shirley remained as unofficial governor and earned the praise of London for his actions there.

Johnson and Sir Peter's close association had cooled when Johnson purchased land on the North side of the Mohawk against Warren's wishes. However they continued to correspond and Warren continued to issue advice to his agent.[30] Warren married Susannah, daughter of Stephen DeLancey, the father of James and Oliver. Thus came into being a rather close relationship between Johnson and the DeLancey family, wealthy merchants and powerful politicians in the province of New York.[31]

By 1748 Johnson had been twice a colonel, both Indian and New York militia, appointed by Governor Clinton. He was the closest associate of the Six Nations Indians and an important Mohawk Chief, Warrighiyagay. Johnson was a creditor of New York, a supporter of Clinton in the fight against the DeLanceys, and Commissioner for Indian Affairs in the Province. He was the most important trader in the Mohawk region. Johnson's biographer — but not an uncritical one — Arthur Pound, states that Johnson's most important and profitable trade was with Oswego.[32] Most of the furs from that post reached New York via Johnson, and John Lydius was his Albany Agent in this trade. Lydius, who was to play a significant role in the Johnson-Shirley affair, was a member of the Tortoise Indian Tribe. He broke with Johnson, after he built a mansion near the latter's home on the Mohawk. It may be that Lydius became too close a rival of Johnson in gaining favor among the Six Nations. Lydius later became involved in the notorious sale of Indian lands in the Wyoming Valley of New York, a sale generally recognized as illegal.[33] Lydius and Johnson became bitter enemies and thus when Shirley, despairing of assistance from Johnson in securing Indians for the Niagara campaign, hired Lydius and commissioned him a Colonel, Johnson became incensed.

Governor Clinton had appointed Johnson as one of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs in 1746 because he felt that the Commissioners were involved in deals with the Six Nations which were injurious to the relationships between Indians and English. the

DeLanceys, according to Arthur Pound, were closely involved in this trade and friends of the Commissioners. The feud between DeLancey and Clinton at least in part was the result of Clinton's accusations against Oliver DeLancey in the DeLancey dealings with the so-called French Indians, particularly the Caghnewagas.[34] As a result of this, Johnson and James DeLancey parted company temporarily. Johnson had known for some time that the "non-loyal" Indians, particularly the Caghnewagas, had plagued the traders going to and from Oswego.[35] It was these with whom DeLancey was in contact. James DeLancey later made a secret treaty of neutrality with them, for which he was strongly criticized by Governor Shirley, in a letter to Governor Morris of Pennsylvania.[36] Apparently Johnson had forgotten this when he later informed Shirley there was no danger of unfriendly Indians disrupting his supplies between Albany and Oswego. This became an important factor in the controversy between the two men.

Johnson's position in the Clinton administration during "King George's War" had placed him in heavy debt and in 1749, the war over, his debtors began to demand payment. Johnson turned in his accounts to New York, but the Assembly refused to honor them, siding with James DeLancey in the then current DeLancey-Clinton feud. This grievance was aggravated when Johnson was charged by Clinton to entertain French Commissioners come to New York concerning war prisoners. Johnson, having accumulated more debts in this assignment — Johnson never was economy minded in his entertainment — turned to Sir Peter and That gentleman referred him to James DeLancey, not knowing of the political battle in New York. DeLancey refused even to see Johnson and Johnson was not paid. In 1751 Johnson resigned all his offices in the Clinton administration and accused the Oswego Commissioners, friends of the DeLanceys, of dishonesty in the Oswego accounts. Clinton appointed Johnson to the Crown Council and assigned Johnson to investigate the Oswego affair. In the meantime it had become obvious that Clinton was losing out in his battle with the DeLanceys. Curiously enough, Johnson aware of this, turned in a very weak report on the Oswego affair. He claimed that Peter Schuyler — who was later to lead the New Jersey troops in the Shirley campaign against Niagara — refused to turn the account books over to him. Clinton resigned and DeLancey became Acting Governor of New York, a position he held until the arrival of Sir Charles Hardy in late 1755.

Paradoxically, DeLancey's rise to the Acting Governorship did not finish Johnson politically. He was the only New York figure with real influence among the Mohawks and the Mohawks were the most influential tribe of the Six Nations. Political expediency proved a strong factor in mending the break; DeLancey threw his support to Johnson, and when Shirley recommended the Squire of Mount Johnson as Commander for the Crown Point campaign, DeLancey agreed quickly to the move.[37]

As has been pointed out earlier in this report, Shirley wrote DeLancey in February of 1755 relative to the Johnson appointment. Johnson replied in March, expressing himself as unworthy of the military assignment, but willing to accept it, and assured Shirley he hoped to secure the services of at least 300 Indians. He endorsed Shirley's recommendations and was profuse in his praise of the Massachusetts Governor.

This (meaning the plans) and the success of Your Excellency's Plan of Operations to the Eastward which we have little rea-

son to doubt of, would revive their spirits and convince them we mean in ernest to oppose the French vigorously: . . . .

Your Excellency's letter to Govr. DeLancey of the 24th Ultmo. hath determined him to call the Assembly . . . on the proposals from your Govt., which I heartily wish may be attended with the desired Success: . . . .

Your Excellency's zeal for His Majesty's Service and the welfare and Security of his Colonies is not more conspicuous in anything than the Measures you are at present taking, and if all the Colonies proposed to be engaged in the operations this way, act with equal spirit with your own I think, . . . well grounded hopes of a happy issue. It is my opinion and . . . of everyone I converse with, that should the General begin the attack at Niagara . . . it would be the speediest method to deprive them of their encroachments on the Ohio.[38]

A week later Johnson received a letter from Goldsbrow Banyar, Deputy Secretary of the Province of New York, and a close colleague of both DeLancey and Johnson. This letter related to the coming Alexandria meeting and Shirley's plan to take Johnson and Pownall to the meeting, to meet Braddock. Thomas Pownall, the Board of Trade's official observer in North America was also acting as Shirley's representative to the DeLancey administration in New York. Banyar writes to Johnson as follows:

The Governor and myself were present with him (Pownall) . . . and I have the pleasure to assure you that not only the Regard of the Publick Service but to your own honour and Interest made us wish you would comply with Mr. Shirley's request. . . . whatever it may be necessary for him (Braddock) to be informed of . . . state of the Indians, . . . No person can better acquaint him with, than yourself, and so great a Confidence must be place in you . . . it will strongly influence him to turn his operations toward Niagara, if . . . you can assure him of a considerable number of Indians . . . favourable opportunity . . . as an Introduction to the General, . . . to make you some Amends for the hard Measure you have hitherto met with . . . . You have a convincing proof of Mr. Shirley's Friendship, . . . no room to doubt . . . he will exert it to his utmost on this occasion.[39]

There was apparently some fear that Johnson might refuse the assignment, because of past refusals to reimburse him — and DeLancey apparently wished to make up for his earlier opposition to this payment, opposition which had been supported by the New York Assembly.

In another letter between Shirley and Johnson, the date of which is subsequent to the one quoted above from Banyar, does not even mention the plan to have Johnson accompany Shirley. Shirley repeatedly urged Johnson to recruit more Indians for the coming campaign and states he will see Johnson upon return from Alexandria. Shirley assures Johnson that he (Shirley) will secure the money from some source and indicated it was his belief that London would liberally recompense Johnson for both past and future expenditures. London did this shortly following the engagement at Lake George in which Baron Dieskau, the French Commander was wounded and captured. Johnson was made a Baronet and received a large sum of money, in the form of a grant from the Crown. Shirley further informed Johnson he would speak to the General regarding the Niagara campaign, which Johnson, DeLancey and Shirley thought should precede that against the Ohio.[40]

If the date of this letter is correct, Johnson attended the General at Alexandria, regardless. It

may be that some of the resentment developed from it, although I find no direct evidence that this is so.

The meeting at Alexandria took place on the 14th and 15th of April, 1755. Present at the Council of War were Braddock, who was to be the Army Commander, Augustus Keppel, Commander in Chief of the British Navy in North America, Shirley of Massachusetts, Robert Dinwiddie, Governor of Virginia, James DeLancey of New York, Horatio Sharpe, Governor of Maryland and Robert Hunter Morris, Governor of Pennsylvania. As noted above, Johnson and Pownall were at Alexandria, but did not attend the Council.[41]

Shirley was made Secretary of the meeting and Braddock's secret instructions were read, each point being discussed by the conferees.[42] Braddock proposed 1) that the "general fund" be established, 2) that a proper person should be sent with full powers from Braddock to treat with the Six Nations and that Colonel Johnson "being the fittest person" should be sent.[43] He further proposed that suitable presents be made to the Indians, 3) proposed to attack Crown Point and Niagara and asked the opinion of the conferees as to whether Crown Point should be attacked with forces supplied by the colonies — in the number of 4400 men — and if Colonel Johnson was the proper one to command, 4) considering the importance of Oswego as a vital base for the proposed attack on Niagara, and securing the retreat of Troops in that service, and understanding its present defenceless condition and poor garrison, he should order it reinforced by the two Independent companies of New York and two companies of the Pepperell Regiment, and 5) he asked the advice of the conferees as to the building of vessels on Lake Ontario to control the lake and support the Niagara campaign.

The members of the conference considered each point and agreed 1) that the "common fund" could not be established without the aid of Parliament — the Governors assembled agreed unanimously on this point, each having been refused by their respective Assemblies —2) asked His Majesty to find other ways of raising the assessments in proportion to their abilities, 3) said they would do their utmost to secure the necessary supplies, but if no delays were to be encountered, General Braddock would have to make use of his credit upon the Government in London, 4) agreed that Johnson should be appointed to treat with the Six Nations, that 800 pounds sterling be paid into his hands for buying commodities to give the Northern and Western Indians, to be paid at Oswego. The General would advance the money and the Governors agreed to request repayment from their Assemblies (actually Braddock advanced Johnson a credit of 2000 pounds sterling, placed in the hands of Oliver DeLancey, a fact which Shirley learned only by accident later on), 5) all agreed on the attack on Crown Point and Niagara and on Johnson as commander of the Crown Point expedition. They agreed on the strengthening of Oswego, the building of several vessels on Lake Ontario, both of which were placed in the hands of Governor Shirley ,and 6) they agreed on garrisoning of the Ohio forts, once they were established, and that Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania were to provide funds for this measure.[43]

Braddock directly commissioned Johnson to be the sole manager and director of the affairs of the Six Nations Indians and their allies. That Shirley agreed with this commission is indicated not only by his earlier correspondence to DeLancey, Robinson and Johnson, but also by the fact the commission came through Shirley and was signed by him as Braddock's

Chief of Staff. Johnson immediately appointed Peter Wraxell, who had been Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Province of New York, as his own Secretary and Assistant. Wraxell also became Johnson's military aide.[44]

Shirley commissioned Johnson on April 16, 1755 and at the same time sent him his official instructions relative to the coming campaign. One of the first signs of the coming split is indicated in this commissioning of Johnson, for DeLancey then insisted upon commissioning Johnson himself and issuing a separate set of instructions, which he did soon after. The DeLancey instructions differed from Shirley's in one important point. They instructed Johnson to send all information to DeLancey, rather than to Shirley and further instructed Johnson to plan his moves not from any instructions sent by Shirley, but from a council of war among his own staff. Banyar wrote to Johnson relative to this commissioning on May 19, 1755:

. . . Pray send me a Copy of your Commission from the General, and of that from Mr. Shirley, if you've no Objection to it. As far as I can judge, all the Govrs. will give you a Commission, and agree on the Instructions you have received from Mr. Shirley or in such form as may be approved of. Our Govr. has Mr. Shirley's sent him; but not your Commission. He is determined to give you a Commission. He has no Objection to your Instructions but that instead of following such other Instructions as you may receive from Mr. Shirley, which Mr. DeLancey says is putting the intire Direction of all the troops under him, It must be to act (in such matters as your Instructions are silent in) by advice of a Council of War. There will I apprehend be no difficulty relating to this affair. . . .[45]

Banyar was obviously much too optimistic relative to the last sentence of his letter quoted above. It may well be that no difficulties would have arisen if Braddock had begun the campaign at Niagara as Shirley, Johnson and DeLancey wished, or if he had been successful at Fort Duquesne and had lived to personally lead the move against Niagara and Crown Point.

It would appear then, that except for the matter of the commissioning and instructions, seemingly minor matters, the future antagonists at the close of the Alexandria meeting were in almost complete accord on the coming measures to be taken to force the French from their encroachments on English territory in North America. It should be noted that no declaration of war was yet intended, nor was it as yet the intent of the English to drive the French from North America. That was to await the coming to power in London of Pitt.

Shirley had recommended Johnson both as sole director of Indian Affairs and commander for the Crown Point campaign. DeLancey had agreed, Johnson had accepted and Braddock had made the appointment. Shirley had commended Johnson to Sir Thomas Robinson in the highest terms, and had enclosed Johnson's plans for the campaign in the same letter to Robinson. DeLancey and Shirley had exchanged communications in which both recommended the same plan of action and Johnson had endorsed these plans with enthusiasm. What then could have happened that within two months — by June 1755 at the latest — an almost complete breakdown occured? The answer may be found among these factors: 1) Shirley's appointment of Colonel Jydius and his interference in Six Nations affairs, 2) DeLancey's resentment against criticism by Governor Shirley concerning French Indian spies in Albany, 3)

Johnson's concern over financial matters in the coming campaign —after all he had experienced one encounter in this regard and did not intend to have another—, 4) failure to secure adequate supplies and equipment for Crown Point and Oswego causing the failure of the latter campaign and a delay of the former, 5) the differences over allotment of men to Niagara and Crown Point, resulting from scarcity of enlistments, 6) Shirley's resentment against Johnson in what he thought was Johnson's failure to provide Indians for his trip to Oswego and the Niagara campaign to follow, 7) Johnson's failure to follow up his victory over Dieskau at Lake George, or 8) jealousy of Shirley by the New Yorkers when Shirley succeeded Braddock in command. Probably a combination of several of these factors lies at the foot of the controversy. There seems little doubt but that the differences developed slowly from May until July 18, 1755. This is the date on which notification was received of Braddock's defeat and death. There is little question but that the split developed rapidly following this disclosure, and Shirley's assumption of command. This will be studied further in a later paper.

JOHNSON G. COOPER

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**Secret Instructions Issued To Edward Braddock[46]**

Secret Instruction to General Braddock — George R.

Secret Instructions for Our Trusty and Wellbeloved Edward Braddock Esq. Major General of Our forces, and whom we have appointed General and Commander, of all and singular Troops and Forces, that are now in North America, and that shall be sent, or raised there, to vindicate Our just rights, and possessions, in those parts. Given at our Court at St. James the 25th day of Novr 1754 in the 28th year of Our Reign.

**paraphrase**

1st — mentioned the French reinforcements of their posts on the Ohio and in the West; therefore the British were to take the field in the South — because of the earlier season, move up the Potomac to Will's Creek and establish there a base — at this point it noted instructions for Sir John St. Clair, the Deputy Quartermaster, in this regard.

2nd — after driving the French from their posts on the Ohio, Braddock was instructed to erect a strong fort there. This fort was to be strongly garrisoned in order to protect Indians and settlers in those areas. They were to be garrisoned by men from the Southern colonies.

3rd — Braddock's next service was to dislodge the French from their forts at Niagara Falls; erect a strong fort there to make the English masters of Lake Ontario; cutting off French communications to the Mississippi. Braddock was to establish a fleet there if necessary for control of the Lake.

4th — If the Shirley-Pepperell Regiments are ready he was to appoint a commander — or commanders — and use them immediately in the reduction of Niagara and Crown Point. The wording is "to take command thereof, in case you shall find your presence elsewhere more conducive to the general service."

5th — If the Shirley-Pepperell forces were not ready, Braddock was to move on the Ohio first and then personally join forces with the others to move against Niagara. He is to strongly garrison the posts he builds at these two points. (IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NIAGARA IS MENTIONED PRIOR TO CROWN POINT IN EVERY INSTANCE).

6th — If the British forces are sufficient for Niagara, he may use the Shirley-Pepperell forces at Crown Point, Lake "Chamblois" campaign. (THE IF HERE IS AN

IMPORTANT ONE AS REGARDS THE CONTROVERSY). Braddock is to be the sole judge of the order of these ventures, and whether alone or together. Importance of maintainence of communications to and from Oswego is stressed in the loyalty of the Indians to the English.

7th — This refers to the reduction of the French fort at Crown Point, known as Fort St. Frederick. Again, it directed that an English post should be erected at this point and strongly garrisoned.

8th — "The last and most material service . . . destroying the French Fort at Beausejour . . . recovering Nova Scotia . . . ." Braddock was instructed to base the timing of this campaign on the communications with Colonel Sir John Lawrence. It may occur simultaneously if he judges the forces strong enough. (APPARANTLY BRADDOCK DID SO JUDGE THEM, FOR ALL THREE TOOK PLACE TOGETHER — THAT IS THEY COMMENCED TOGETHER!)

## FOOTNOTES

2. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., **Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York** (Albany 1855, VI, 959, footnote.

3. C. H. Lincoln, ed., **The Correspondence of William Shirley,** (New York, MacMillan Co., 1912) II, 1-4

4. **Ibid,** Shirley to Willard April 27 & May 16, 1753, II, 11

5. **Ibid.,** Holderness to Shirley, II, 12

6. **Ibid.,** II, 13

7. **Ibid.,** Shirley to Holderness, Jan. 1754, II, 18-23

8. **Ibid.,** p. 19

9. **Ibid.,** pp 20-23

10. **Ibid.,** Franklin to Shirley, II, 103-107

11. **Ibid.,** II, pp 33-39

12. **Ibid.,** Speech to Massachusetts Court, II, 43

13. **Ibid.,** II, 49

14. **Ibid.,** II, 50

15. **Ibid.,** Shirley to Robinson, Sept. 1755, pp 261-270

16. **Ibid.,** 67

17. **Ibiid,** 67

18. **Ibid.,** Robinson to Shirley, June 1754, II, 70 & 71

19. O'Callaghan, **Documents relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York,** VI, 917-920

20. **Ibid.**

21. **Ibid., VI,** 915-16

22. **Sir William Johnson Papers,** University of State of New York, ed., 1921, VI, 500-532

23. Theodore Thayer ("the Army Contractors for the Niagara Campaign, 1755-1756"), **William and Mary Quarterly,** XIV (Jan 1957), 32

24. O'Callaghan, VI, several citations appear on this point

25. (Shirley to DeLancey) **Sir William Johnson Papers,** I, 448-449.

26. **Correspondence of William Shirley,** II, 144.

27. Johnson to Shirley, March 17, 1755, **Johnson Manuscripts,** State Library, Albany, N. Y., I, 146.

28. **Correspondence of William Shirley,** II, 147-8.

29. **Ibid.**

31. O'Callaghan, **Documents relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York,** VI, 1009 footnote

32. Arthur Pound, **Johnson of the Mohawk,** (New York), MacMillan Co., 1930, p. 109.

33. **Ibid.,** 108

34. O'Callaghan, **Documents relating to the Colonial History of New York,** VI, 413-414

35. Pound, **Johnson of the Mohawks,** 118

36. Lincoln, ed., **Correspondence of William Shirley,** II, 95 & 96.

37. Pound, **Johnson of the Mohawks,** 119 et. seq.

38. Lincoln, ed., **Correspondence of William Shirley,** II, 153 & 154, footnote.

39. **Sir William Johnson Papers,** 1, 458

40. **Ibid.,** 462 & 463

41. Lawrence Henry Gibson, **The Great War for the Empire,** Vol. VI, of **The British Empire Prior to the American Revolution,** 24-28 (New York), Alfred Knopf, 1954.

42. Appendix 1.

43. See Minutes of the Conference which apper in O'Callaghan, **Documentary History of New York,** (Albany, N. Y.) Wood-Parsons 1849, II 648-651.

43. **Ibid.**

44. For both commissions and instructions see, the **Sir William Johnson Papers,** I, 465-475.

45. **Ibid.**

46. O'Callaghan, **Documents relating to the Colonial History of New York,** VI, 920-922. Also found in Stanley M. Pargellis, **Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765** (New York), D. Appleton-Century, 1936, p. 45.

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# Early Roads in the Oswego Area

(Presented by Mrs. C. Fred Peckham, March 19, 1957)

Water-ways and land-trails are always the first means of man's communication. These trails become roads, and the roads become highways when man attains a higher civilization. They are a necessity to the development of a civilization such as ours.

Oswego's first roads were those built by military necessity. They were mostly woodland trails to inland depots of supply, to Fort Brewerton, to Salt Point, and on to Niagara.

The non-military work of the soldier was largely devoted to the felling of trees, and the making of such roads as were needed.

Entrance to the Oswego area before the time of permanent settlers was by boat, either by the way of Lake Ontario or by the route from the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, Oneida Lake, Oneida River, and Oswego River. The boat was essential for entrance but the road was vital for penetration. A civilization cannot be extended or trade carried on without roads.

Trade was carried on for a good many years, however, at Oswego before roads began to make their appearance. The story of the Dutch, French, and English fur traders is one that precedes the story of roads. Fur traders were visiting Oswego as early as the time when LaSalle's lieutenant, LaForest, had stopped at Oswego when returning to Canada, after the ill-fated "Griffon" had been launched in 1680. He spent several days here exchanging French brandy for beaver skins.

Fur traders visited Oswego in the summer, returning to civilization in the fall. About fifteen hundred "packs" of furs were purchased each year at Oswego. Seven "packs" could be carried in a thirty-five foot Indian canoe of which about two hundred traded at Oswego each year.

Oswego was late in getting a start as a permanent settlement. Not until after the English soldiers left the fort in 1796 did settlers feel that the danger of war was really over.

The first roads were built to connect homes or settlements, so the story of roads around Oswego has also to do with settlement of surrounding areas. These two go "hand in hand."

The first settlers in various places surrounding, or leading to Oswego were as follows:

1784—Utica—Hugh White

1786—Syracuse—Ephriam Webster, Major Asa Danford

1789—Oneida Lake near Fort Brewerton—Oliver Stevens

1791—Constantia—Mr. Bruce

1791—Frenchmen's Island in Lake Oneida—Mr. Desvatines and wife

1791—Mexico — Calvin Tiffany (Miss Simpson says in **Mexico, Mother of Towns,** that he did not come until 1798 and that there were others there when he came).

1792—Oswego Falls (Fulton)—Major Van Valkenburgh and his colored servant, "Har," Mr. Valentine (later killed by the Indians), Mr. Shermerhorn, Mr. Olcutt, and Mr. Fowler.

1792 — Constantia (additional settlers)—George Scriba, Francis Vanderkamp

1795—First road cut through the twenty-two miles of intervening wilderness of Oswego County for George Scriba, between Rotterdam and Vera Cruz.

This so-called road, while of ample width, was not in any respect "improved," but the trees had been felled and the underbrush cleared away. The first ox-carts or horse teams to attempt the journey between the two places must have been forced to do a great deal of dodging about to get through the tangle of stumps. Years were to pass before the road would become worthy of the name of a highway. The finest roads were only cleared trails that became almost impassable in wet weather, and deserts of dust when summer's heat had left the muck and ruts to be pulverized by wide-rimmed ox-carts and wagons.

1797—Union Village (Fruit Valley)—Asa Rice

1797—Oswego—John Love, Ziba Phillips, Neil McMullin and family

1797—Jefferson County—Nodiah Hubbard

1797—Ellisburg—Lyman Elliot

1797—Caughdenoy

1797—New Haven — Mr. Rook, Mr .Dolittle

1798—Vera Cruz — Benjamin Winch

1799—Three Rivers—Esq. Bingham

1800—Redfield Square — Rev. Joshua Johnson

1800—Brownville—Jacob Brown

1800—Watertown—Henry Coffeen

1802 — Hannibal — Thomas Sprague

1803—Constableville—John Constable

1803—Lacona—William Skinner

1803—Sandy Creek — Stephen Lindsey

1803—Parish — Rev. Gamaliel Barnes

Thus from 1784 until the Scriba Road, there are no records of other roads in surrounding territories. This road was built to encourage the development of Vera Cruz which George Scriba thought would become a great city.

Roads in those days were made by just clearing a way through the forest. The turnpikes, a bit later, were made in various ways. Where the land was level, firm and dry, the pike was kept passable by the simple means of plowing and scraping the soil into the center of the right of way where it formed a sharp ridge. Sod was raked in and thrown on top of the dirt, and all stones in sight were thrown out of the road or in depressions to be covered by earth. This method was used by the makers of country highways until not too many years ago. Originally the proprietors did the building. Later the State required farmers to work out their road taxes or pay money to have someone else do it under the supervision of a pathmaster. Whenever a turnpike had to cross swamps, then the corduroy road method was used. This type of road was made by laying down trunks of trees, layer above layer, until a solid, but rugged platform was elevated above the level of the swamp. These logs were piled upon each other without any kind of squaring or adjustment, and the jolting of the wheels from one to another was described by a Scotchman, who visited our State in 1818, as being "perfectly horrible."

As the early settlers gathered to make the roads, opportunity was offered to discuss the news, politics, religion, war, and the state of crops.

The best of roads were poor, and winter travel was far more comfortable, as the pioneers could enter the territory on the frozen surfaces of rivers, lakes, and

streams, even though they had to brave the winter weather.

1802—A road from Camden to Mexico was completed according to John Bloomfield in his report to George Scriba.

1803—There was a ferry across the Oswego River, at Oswego, operated by Daniel Burt. There was no bridge at this time. This ferry was at East Seneca Street.

1804—Calvin Bradner Burt was appointed pathmaster of Oswego and under his direction a road was cut from Oswego to Oswego Falls on the east side of the river.

1804—A Cato resident named King came to Oswego and offered to cut a road through the woods from Cato to Oswego with the aid of three companions, for $40.00. The amount was a large one in the form of cash for that time, and it was raised with difficulty. It was fully provided, however, and in mid-summer the populace greeted with cheers King and his companions as they came riding into Oswego on an ox-cart from Cato, to give a demonstration that their task had been completed.

1804—Hiel Stone and William Burt "moved out along the **State road** recently cut from Oswego to Scriba Corners."

1805—Esquire Hamilton reported a road nearly completed from Mexico to Brewerton.

1807—A state road, six rods wide, laid out from Onondaga Hill to the mouth of Ox Creek in the present town of Granby and from there to Oswego. A branch road ran from Ox Creek to Salt Point.

In 1807 mention is made that Dr. Deodatus Clarke had established his home on the north side of what is known as the Oneida Street Road just before the city line is reached. This was on the east side of the river. The road from Dr. Clark's house to that of Daniel Burt, Sr., which stood at the intersection of East First and Seneca streets, lay through woods for its entire distance although some of the trees were of second growth, the earlier timber having been cut away to meet the needs of the fort garrison and the early traders.

There is also mention of an early constructed road in the county as being one running between East Oswego and Scriba. This was later extended through New Haven to Mexico. The original road from Oswego to Mexico passed in an easterly direction through what later became known as the "Cheever District" in New Haven, and from there closely followed the shoreline of Lake Ontario to Oswego.

As late as 1808, there were no roads passable with a wagon in the entire town of Richland, one of the largest of the towns of the county, nor were there any roads in any of the towns now included in the counties which were located north or east of Richland except in the towns of Redfield and Williamstown, the former town having been one of the earliest of the towns of the county to be settled.

The road today known as the North Road, running from Oswego through North Scriba to Texas and continuing on until it affects a junction with the road now known as the "Scenic Highway," was completed sometime before 1812, as a map bearing that date, shows this road, a portion of which is in the vicinity of Texas and was constructed further north and nearer to Lake Ontario shore than the present road.

1807—Road from Union Village (Fruit Valley) to Oswego Center laid out by the pathmaster, Asa Rice, Johathan Buell, and Matthew McNair. This survey was made three years before the River Road was surveyed and six years before the Gray Road.

Roads used to be public pastures. A Mr. James Pierce gets the credit for having a law passed to prohibit cattle from running at

large. The road mentioned above was named "Paradise Street" by a vote in 1878 at a meeting in Union Village. It was ascertained that a John Cooley had noticed "that the old unsightly fences which had been erected for the purpose of making the highway a public pasture ground were being removed, the elders and thistles cut down, and the highway, instead of being a propagation of weeds was being made to contribute to the pleasure and profit of the scenery." Apparently the name did not meet with the approval of the people, as the road which turns left at the foot of Perry Hill and runs by the cemetery is known today as the Rural Cemetery Road.

The State gave assistance in the building of roads. In 1803, the Legislature sanctioned the raising of funds by a means of lotteries for the building of roads in the State.

The story of the French emigres. James D. LeRay, and Joseph Bonaparte and their part in the settlement of northern New York and their financial help in the building of roads, is an interesting one. Mr. LeRay presented his friend, David Parish of Ogdensburg, a check for $10,000 to help build the St. Lawrence turnpike from Sackets Harbor to Plattsburgh. He financed the construction of the first road to pass from Cape Vincent to Chaumont and on to Watertown. He supervised part of the building of the road from Carthage to Alexandria Bay.

1810—The Rome Road had been completed north from Rome through Williamstown and Fishville (Pulaski).

1810—A road at this date was running north and south through Pulaski following roughly the route of U. S. 11 of today.

1811—The Legislature authorized a public road to be laid out from the court house in Onondaga to Oswego village.

1812—By this year the State Road built between Utica and Oswego and destined to become a mail route was passable throughout its length. It entered Scriba, coming from the East over the road today known as the "Middle Road," and thence south to Scriba Corners.

1812—Before 1812, the road between Sackets Harbor and Oswego had been completed. It ran through Port Ontario, Texas, and the northern part of New Haven into Oswego. United States regulars marched over this road in 1814, coming to the defense of Fort Ontario from Sackets Harbor.

1813—Road from Rome to Sackets Harbor. It was built by funds from the sale of unappropriated lands. The road was made a stage road and was one of the chief routes of travel.

1813—In Oswego, West Fifth Street Road laid out by William Moore, surveyor.

1814—The Salt Point Road between Salina (Syracuse) and Smith's Mills (Adams) was constructed with a fund derived from duties on salt and a tax on the land benefited. The road was later continued to Dexter, intersecting the road from Rome to Brownville at Adams.

In 1811, Water Street in Oswego was merely a lane, kept open as a matter of convenience between Bridge and Cayuga Streets. After twenty years of use it was made a public highway, extended south to Oneida Street and still later opened to the north for several blocks. Its history explains how it came about that the street was so narrow as compared with the unusually broad streets laid out by the engineer for the rest of the village.

In 1812, John Wart came from Cherry Valley by ox-sled with his family to carve out a homestead for himself in the Boylston Woods where he became the first settler. He was followed two days later by Michael Sweetman of Mont-

gomery County with the same means of travel. The men had no previous knowledge of one another.

1814—First bridge to span the Oswego River at Oswego Falls. It was a toll bridge, just above the "Upper Landing," extending from the East Side to Yelverton Island and from there to the West Side.

1818—Joseph and Arvin Rice cut through the woods the first road connecting Oswego Falls and Oswego Town. (This must refer to some place in the Township, and not to Oswego Village).

1822—First bridge across Oswego River at site of present lower bridge in Oswego. It was built of wood at a cost of $2,000. It was 700 feet long and was called a "tremendous structure." The bridge was supported by wooden caissons, filled with stone which were sunk in the river. It was built by a contractor named Church for the Oswego Bridge Company chartered by the State and authorized to continue in business and charge tolls until 1855. A toll gate was authorized at each end of the bridge. No other toll bridge was to be built within two miles of this one.

1825—Mail left Oswego Post Office every Wednesday at six o'clock for Onondaga and arrived there every Thursday morning at three o'clock. Mail for Rome left every Monday and Thursday morning at three o'clock and arrived at Rome every Tuesday and Friday morning at six o'clock.

1826—Second bridge at Fulton nearly on site of present lower bridge was erected.

By 1830 roads were plentiful enough so that stage coaches were used. There was a regular stage coach route between Utica and Watertown, and Syracuse and Watertown, and from Watertown to Ogdensburg. It took six hours to go from Watertown to Canton. Some of the taverns along the way are still standing: Brick hotel at Evans Mills, Brick Tavern at Gouverneur, The Orleans House at LaFargeville and others.

Before the days of railroads and when the middle west was being settled, travel was solely by stage coach or by packet boat and steamer on the river and lakes and the most direct route from the East and West was across the State — Rome through Union Square (Maple View), the junction of the three trunk line highway routes to Oswego, whence the steamers went westward on the lakes. It was in those days that the tavern flourished and in its time there was no better or more favorably known hotel in the country than that kept by Judge Avery Skinner. The highway from Rome to Union Square was later planked and the stages made remarkably fast trips. Relays of six horses were used, the first stop being at New Haven. Change of horses were made with the rapidity of the hitching of later fire department teams. The passage of the stage coach was an event.

1823—An advertisement in the "Palladium" read as follows: "The subscribers will commence running a STAGE from Utica to Cato Four Corners, once a week, on the 3rd of December which will leave Utica every Wednesday at four o'clock in the morning and arrive at Hampton village at Hallock's at six o'clock. From thence to Rome at 8 o'clock; from there to Hummaston's, Vienna, at 11 o'clock; Williamstown at six o'clock; from thence Thursday morning at 4 o'clock start for Richland and arrive at 8 o'clock; at Mexico at 12 o'clock; New Haven at 2 O'clock; at Oswego village at 6; and on Monday morning at 4 leave Oswego for Hannibal. Arrive there at 8 o'clock; Cato Four Corners at 12; and at Elbridge at 4. On return at Oswego on Saturday at 6, and on Monday morning leave Oswego for Utica and arrive at 6 P. M. on Tuesday at Gay's Mansion House."

At Cato Four Corners, the passengers would have had an opportunity to go to Wolcott, Rochester, Lewiston, or Buffalo, if they so wished, as there was another stage line which would take them over that route.

Quite the most dashing of the stage coach lines which operated in and out of Oswego, carrying the mails and passengers over a period of half a century was the Lewiston-Rochester-Oswego Line of post coaches each drawn by four horses. This line traveled over the highway built along the "Ridge Road" from Lewiston to Oswego. Between the time the road had been completed and the time when the stage line started, mails had been carried a part of the time by riders on horseback and a part of the time by wagons. This Ridge Road had been used as a means of communication between Fort Niagara and Fort Ontario, and at times armies moved over it.

The coaches had to be stoutly built as the roads traveled were very rough and even when in their best condition, and the drivers thought more of keeping their schedules than of the comfort of their passengers. The "Concord" coaches were without springs, but the bodies swung on heavy leather straps which afforded a degree of resiliency. From twelve to sixteen passengers could be carried in a single coach. Passengers who rode on the inside, protected against the weather, paid a higher rate than the ones who rode outside. During the winter months when there was sleighing, the coaches were mounted on bobsleds. In the springtime when the frost was emerging from the ground the dirt roadways were full of quagmires and they were often almost impassable.

1845—State Legislature granted a charter to a company to build the first plank road to be built anywhere in the United States. This road was to run from Central Square to Salina.

Hard surfaced roads, made of heavy planks laid crosswise had been tried successfully in Canada. Timber was still relatively plentiful and cheap, and so these roads seemed to offer a solution to the transportation problem. Interest in this type of highway mounted rapidly and by the time of the panic of 1857, the state had chartered more than 350 companies which had built and put into operation hundreds of miles of such roads. Plank roads, when in good condition, afforded pleasant and amazingly easy transportation. Their superiority was especially evident after prolonged wet weather and in early spring. For economic reasons they were generally made no more than eight feet wide as it was found that drivers tended to keep to the middle, regardless of the width, and the calks on the horses' shoes wore out the center first. They were often built on top of the old road, but sometimes only on one side. Hemlock because of its relative cheapness was commonly used for sills and cross pieces, each of which was preferably as much as four inches thick. The weight of such heavy planks was generally sufficient to hold them in place, so but few spikes were necessary.

1848—Construction of a plank road, north and south through the center of our county from Syracuse towards Watertown with the near completion of a plank road east and west from Rome to Oswego.

In an article concerning the entry of the first train into Oswego, on November 15, 1848, it said that "there were already five miles of Plank Road from here to Hannibal and Sterling finished, and it is being pushed on to completion."

The Rome-Oswego road was improved by planking in 1848. This was run by the Rome and Oswego Plank Road Company, organized in 1847, and Mexico furnished its first president, James S. Chandler.

1848—Two accidents which have to do with roads happened in Oswego this year. A child was killed instantly by being run over by a wagon, and a Peter Wright, cartman, backed his horse and cart off the high bank above Lewis and Beardsley's mill, and was drowned.

1848—Oswego-Syracuse plank-road was started in this year.

1849—Oswego-Hastings Center plank-road started.

Tolls were collected on all these roads to reimburse the companies which had built them and to provide for upkeep. There were toll houses and toll gates every few miles along the way. One on the Oswego-Rome road was located just between the farm homes of Mrs. H. W. Bales and the Reeds on what is now U. S. 104. In later years after the popularity of the plank roads had begun to wane and farmers were resentful at paying tolls. This toll house and gate were burned by a group of exubriant farmers returning home after a visit to Oswego. While the introduction of railroad service into this county killed some of the plank road lines through reducing the travel over them, the rapid destruction of the plank under the constant wear of travel was chiefly responsible for their early death.

1848—Free bridge built over Oswego River at Utica Street.

1849—Third bridge built at Fulton on site of later iron one.

1850—Fire burned one-third of Oswego toll bridge.

1855—New lower bridge of iron built at Oswego on site of former wooden one.

1857—Daily stage coaches operating between Oswego and Pulaski; Oswego and Kasoag; Oswego and Auburn; Oswego and Richland; Oswego and Rochester (three trips weekly); Pulaski and Fort Brewerton and thence to Syracuse; Pulaski and Oswego.

Looking back, as the eighteenth century closed, bulk transportation was by boats, and roads remained hazards that few desired to risk. But fifty years later, the whole territory was criss-crossed with roads of various kinds. Traffic had now become very heavy on the roads, especially after the closing of navigation on the waterways during the winter season. Before the Syracuse and Oswego Railroad was opened in 1848, the stage coach lines to all points out of Oswego carried thousands of passengers annually, where they had arrived on the steamer lines, over Lake Ontario, to those main-line stations on the New York Central.

1853—Oswego's streets paved with cobblestones.

1866—Arrangements were made for construction of iron bridge at Utica Street, Oswego.

1868—Bridge constructed at a cost of $100,000.

1895—Macadam first used on Oswego Streets. Asphalt was also used.

Oswego pioneered in the type of paving known as macadam. Oswego had had for many years pavements of the granite block and cobblestone type, rough, irregular, noisy, and illy suited for the traffic that was to come with the advent of the bicycle and the automobile. The first permanent paving effort under modern design was to lay blocks of macadam in West Fifth Street, between Bridge and Oneida Streets. This attracted such favorable comment and cost so much less than anticipated, that the paving was extended from Bridge Street in West Fifth Street north to Lake St. and south to Utica Street.

In the same year, after much discussion, the first block of asphalt pavement was laid in West First Street between Bridge Street and Cayuga Streets upon old cobblestone pavement as a foundation. The Warren-Scharf Asphalt Company used that single block of pavement for years as a

reference as to durability of that type of pavement. This was probably due in part to the good foundation of cobblestone, as asphalt laid elsewhere in the city was not so durable.

1906—First paved highway five and one half miles long from Oswego to the town line of New Haven. It was a waterbound macadam highway. Early auto owners used the completed highway for their demonstrations.

The old turnpikes and plank roads, cobblestone pavements, and asphalt have all been improved and modernized. These roads of yesterday would not recognize themselves as the roads of today. However, the building and improving of roads is not a thing of the past, but will continue into the future as long as man needs to communicate with man. The super-highways of today will be the transformed super-highways of tomorrow. They are a necessity in the development of a civilization such as ours.

Edris W. Peckham.

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# Old Cemeteries in Oswego

(Presented by Mr. Anthony Slosek, April 16, 1957)

As cemeteries are important sources of historical data, this paper has been prepared so that the scattered facts may be brought together for future reference. Like all human institutions resting places of the dead have their periods of growth, fullness and decline. Time is relentless, and the burial place of one generation may become the playground of the next. There is no disrespect of the dead in this transition. Life's aspect changes, and as generation follows generation, more room for the living is needed.

A city grows up to the walls of a cemetery and spreads around the abode of the dead. Sooner or later the cemetery must go. Bodies are disinterred and moved to another resting place. The graves are filled up and the grounds are graded and seeded. Streets are cut through, or the land is set apart for public recreation or other purposes of the living. The habitations of the living replace the monuments of the dead. Soon there is no trace of the cemetery except in the memory of a few older residents.

**Military Burials**

Oswego had long been occupied as a military post and resorted to by the inhabitants of the colony of New York for the purpose of traffic with Indians of Canada and the West. Fort Oswego and Fort Ontario was established in 1727 and 1756 respectively.

During the period of 100 years many interments had taken place but no spot seems to have been exclusively devoted to that purpose. Ancient graves had been found in all parts of both east and west Oswego, principally however on the bank of the Lake east of and in First Street. A spot also about eighty rods east of Fort Ontario and nearly the same from the lake in the eastern village was used by the British garrison as a depository for their dead from the erection of that fort until the evacuation in 1796. In the latter place many stones with rude inscriptions were standing in good preservation until after the War of 1812. There were also found in west Oswego as late as the 1830's a number of stones bearing the date and name or initials of the occupant of the grave.

DeWitt Clinton visited this area in 1810 and left a vivid picture of this frontier land.[1] He noticed that there was a burying ground near (Fort Oswego) and a few headstones. The only one inscribed has the following:—"Roger Cor Bert, 1742." "When Indians are interred, their guns, kettles and wampum are buried with them. An Indian grave was dug up on the banks of the lake a few days ago. The bones were in a high state of preservation. His wampum and kettle were found with him but no gun. This interment must have taken place seventy years ago."

On the 6th day of May 1814 Oswego was attacked by the British fleet under the command of Commodore Sir James L. Yeo accompanied by a large land force under General Drummond, and after a sharp contest the American

troops, about 300 in number, commanded by Colonel Mitchell, retreated, leaving the fort and village in possession of the enemy. They remained about 12 hours and departed.

In the battle there were nineteen of the enemy and six Americans slain. Among the latter, Lieutenant Blaney, U. S. A., a sergeant named Wright, and four privates. The enemy had two officers killed, one of them Captain Haltaway of the Marines. Their remains were taken away, but the bodies of the seventeen privates were left on the field.

During their stay the British collected the dead of both parties and put them in two piles in natural hollows of the earth and covered them slightly with turf torn up for that purpose. The battle ground and the place of burial was about sixty rods east of Fort Ontario. After the enemy had retreated, these mounds were overhauled and the bodies of the Americans taken out, enclosed in coffins, and interred with martial ceremonies on a rise of ground about eighty rods southeast angle of Fort Ontario. Lieutenant Blaney, however, was buried in the west village cemetery. Seven soldiers wounded in the battle subsequently died and were buried with their comrades.

After the close of the war there were interments of citizens made on a knoll at the southeast angle of East Third and Cayuga Streets.

Twenty-seven unknown soldiers are buried in the little Fort Ontario cemetery. There are a few interesting headstones of stone presumably taken from the shore of the lake. On one of those is inscribed the name of George Fykes who served under the King with loyalty, and died October 24th, 1782, aged 32 years. Previous to 1861 no record of deaths was kept. Since that year a record of National Cemeteries has been required.

In 1947 the War Department issued an order to remove bodies from the Fort Ontario Cemetery but held the order in abeyance pending action on Congressman Fuller's bill to transfer the site to the State. The cemetery was relinquished to the State the following year. Oswego County Historical Society and supervisors requested the legislation.

**Rice Cemetery**

The oldest cemetery in this vicinity besides Fort Ontario is that in Fruit Valley. The first interment, in February 1798, was that of one year old son of Asa Rice. Asa Rice came from Connecticut in October of 1797 and settled at the mouth of Three Mile Creek.

The old cemetery is on a knoll on the West bank of the creek about twenty rods below the bridge, route 104.[2] Here lie the remains of 40 or 50 persons, which were marked by rude stones, all without inscriptions except five—Mr. and Mrs. Rice, two of their children and one other. In the days when they were deposited here there were no marble cutters who could carve their names, births ,or deaths on marble or granite, and no records were kept. Here, without doubt, were interred the fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers and friends of many of the hardy and energetic pioneers.

Around the graves of the Rices, some of their descendants have erected a substantial stone wall, laid in mortar, about four feet high, with stepping stones set in the wall to make access to the inclosure. The graves, four in number, are marked with gray slabs, probably of sandstone, plainly and correctly lettered. That of Mr. Rice is as follows:

In Memory of
ASA RICE, who
died Aug. 22
1823
aged 69

The slab at the head of Mrs. Rice's grave is uniform with that of her husband. She died August 11, 1819. Those of the children are also uniform except smaller in size. Horace died February 18, 1798, aged one year; Nathaniel died in January 1807, aged three. The other lettered slab of marble (now broken) is that of William Thompson, died June 6, 1815, aged 23 years.

The first person to be buried in the Union Village Rural Cemetery (Fruit Valley) was in 1820.[3] This cemetery association was incorporated in March of 1860. Immediately next to the Rural Cemetery is a privately owned cemetery which has been in the possession of the Pierce family since the 1850's.[4] Many Oswego families have burial lots in the Rural Cemetery. In addition of these two cemeteries is the Irish Settlement Cemetery in Oswego Town where burials are now infrequent.

### West Oswego Cemetery

In the original plotting of the Village of West Oswego by Simeon DeWitt, Surveyor General of the State of New York in the year 1796 ,a map whereof was filed in the Secretary's office April 6, 1798.[5] That part of the village which lies between Second and Fifth Streets and North of Aries, now Schuyler Street, and extending on the East line about 630 feet to within a few rods of the lake shore and on the West line about 970 feet to point also near the shore, was reserved and laid out as a cemetery. Except the south 100 feet thereof adjacent to Aries Street which was designated as a site for churches. In all subsequent sales of village lots by the State, this land was reserved. At the first settlement of the village by its inhabitants about the beginning of the nineteenth century, the occupation of the cemetery described above was commenced and the inhabitants continued there to inter their dead until the year 1828. This ground was never laid out or even enclosed nor was any order observed in making burials.

The part occupied was on the eastern edge a little south of the present intersection of Van Buren Street with Second and Third Streets; the only portion of which the soil was suitably dry and of sufficient depth. Some children were buried near the southeast corner at the intersection of Second with Schuyler Street, and several attempts were made to sink graves for adults, but the rock which formed the foundation of this part of the village was too near the surface.

Nearly half of the ground was an alder swamp and the western side a thick forest of chestnut, oak, and hickory. Prior to the year 1828 about 150 burials had been made. When it is considered that this number included all the soldiers who died at the garrison during the Embargo of 1808 and the War of 1812 as well as those persons who had been drowned in the harbor for thirty years, the salubrity of the climate and healthfulness of the place are manifest. One fact is worth of record. It is that from the month of May 1815 to October 1820, a period of five years and five months, there was not within the bounds of the village a single death of an adult except those occasioned by accident and only three children. The last death previous to this period was that of Mrs. Sophia O. Beach, wife of Samuel B. Beach and the first death after that period was that of Joseph Hooker formerly a merchant of the villege but who had been spending the preceding summer in Oswego Falls as a clerk in a forwarding house where he was attacked with a fever, was brought home sick and died. During this period there were from 350 to 500 inhabitants in the village. Boswell Ellis, a young merchant, was taken sick and

died while absent from home in 1819.

On the 10th day of January, 1827, the Legislature of the State of New York, upon the petition of the inhabitants, passed an act vesting the ground laid out as a cemetery in West Oswego by the Surveyor General in commissioners with power to sell the same and from the proceeds to purchase a more suitable site, level and prepare the same and remove thither the bodies previously interred in the old grounds.[6] The commissioners named in the act were John Grant, Jr., George Fisher, Henry Eagle, Daniel C. VanTine and David Bailey.

The old cemetery was immediately laid out into 6 blocks and 35 lots and a map filed in the Clerk's office of Oswego County. The lots were sold at auction in 1827 with the provision that one quarter be paid down and the residue in three equal annual installments.

In July 1827 the Commissioners bought from the State for $350.00 the blocks numbers 95 and 96 (Kingsford Park) on the west side with the immediate street comprising nearly six acres of land. In common with the whole southwest part of the village it was a dense forest. The Commissioners immediately cleared it of timber and leveled the west half. The Commissioners adopted a plan by which the parallelogram measured by the width of the west side was divided into four sections separated by broad alleys crossing each other in the center. The triangle lying on the south side of the plot was designated as the Potters field and was separated from the sections by an alley six feet wide. The whole of the four sections was laid out on the map in uniform manner in ranges and lots. Each range being 14 feet in width with intermediate alleys 4 feet wide and the lots 8x14 feet. Only the southwest section containing 12 ranges and 192 lots was actually laid out on the ground. The ranges were inclosed with a pine rail with red cedar posts sunk three feet in the ground and anchored. In the month of April 1828, the weather being extremely favorable, the removal of the bodies from the old cemetery to the new one was effected in about a fortnight's time under the direction of Edwin W. Clarke. Every citizen who had friends to remove was permitted to select a lot. The strangers were interred in range number 1 of the west section of the Potter's field. The southeast corner 16x14 feet of the southwest section was filled with the remains of persons who were known but who had no friends resident here. The whole ground was enclosed by a substantial stone wall and a stone hearse house built in the northwest corner in 1828. The Commissioners continued in charge of the cemetery. George W. Burt replaced D. C. VanTine and in 1836 they relinquished their trust to the Corporation of Oswego Village agreeably to an act passed May 10, 1836.[7] By Chapter 116 of the laws of 1848 the City of Oswego was incorporated and succeeded to all the rights and property of the Village of Oswego.[8]

At the time of the transfer all the lots in the southwest section had been taken up. Early in the year 1837 the northwest section was laid out in a different plan, the ranges being 8 feet wide and the lots 14 feet long. The lots were ordered sold to those wishing them for five dollars each. Mr. Edwin W. Clarke was appointed the superintendent. Much of the information about the vollage cemetery is taken from the superintendent's register book now in the City Clerk's office.[9]

The following items are taken from the register entries. The entries tell other tales than those of Lieutenant Blaney; for him the entry was "slain in battle." That after Captain Turner of New

York Militia from Camillus was the laconic note "fever" and after Sergeant Copp, of the same troops "shot by a sentinel." That was in 1812. In the same year John S. Fitch was "drowned in Lake Ontario." Henry Eckford Eagle, not a year old in 1820, was named by his father for the celebrated shipwright who had come to build the U. S. S. Brig "Oneida," at Oswego, and the fleet at Sacketts Harbor in the 1812 War. In 1820 died James Cooley, father of Robert Cooley, a blacksmith, the entry reads, and on December 16, 1812, there was interred Mrs. Anna Adams, wife Dr. Truman Adams.

There were implied tales of tragedy in burial of Thaddeus Clarke, 56, "lost in the schooner Medora"; of Hazekiah Morse, 36, son of Jacob Morse, and Benjamin Dusenbury, 36, son-in-law of Jacob Morse, lost, also on the "Medora," and all interred on November 10, 1835.

Colonel Eli Parsons, dead at 82, on September 25, 1830, had followed his wife, Mrs. Persis Parsons, 76, to the wooded knoll, by 23 days, and after the Colonel's name was the natation "Revolutionary Officer," and his grave and the resting place of his family thereupon become "free." Marian Letitia Parsons, 31, a daughter, had died on September 6, 1813.

Orrin Munger's entry in 1831 was "fell from factory"; Mrs. Anna Ford, 58, mother of Captain Augustus Ford. Mrs. Abigail Perry, mother of Eli and Philo Stevens, died May 27, 1837, at the age of 79 years, and Mrs. Catherine Howe, 37, wife of Major John Howe, on December 16, 1829.

William Boyd Bunner, 7, son of Rudolph Bunner, member of Congress, for whom Bunner Street was named, died December 9, 1828 and the Congressman followed in 1837. Another Revolutionary War soldier, Captain Edward Connor, early Oswego school teacher who first saw Oswego as the commander of a company in Colonel Marinus Willett's expedition against Fort Ontario in 1783, 78, died July 2, 1831 and Mrs. Alida Woolsey, 85, died July 13, 1843 and was interred in the "new" cemetery. Her husband had been a Revolutionary War General, commanding along the border, and her son, Commodore Melancthon T. Woolsey, U. S. Navy, commanded at Oswego in 1812, and later on the Ontario.

Names recalling early Oswego manufacturing occur frequently, families of Burts, pioneers in water power and milling; Mrs. Mary DeZeng, mother of R. L. DeZeng who built the west side power canal, dying at 70, October 8, 1835; children of Elias Trowbridge; Major Theophillius Morgan, father of T. S. Morgan; Children of F. T. Carrington; Children of Luther Wright, pioneer banker; Mrs. Minerva B. Grant, wife of Hon. Joseph Grant; Daniel Hugunin, who died July 23, 1828 at 72; C. J. Burckle, for whom Burckle Street was named, and a score of others.

**East Oswego Cemetery**

In July 1827 blocks 92 and 93 (Fitzhugh Park) in East Oswego were reserved in the State sale and appropriated for a cemetery. It was immediately commenced to be used for that purpose, though very unsuitable. It was never enclosed and interments were made without regard to order or arrangement. On January 30, 1837 the Village Trustees resolved that the President in conjunction with the citizens of East Oswego petitioned the Legislature for an act authorizing the Board to dispose of the cemetery in East Oswego and procure and improve another in some other appropriate location and remove the bodies from one to the other.[10] Their petition was answered; for, on April 17, 1837, an act was passed authorizing the Corporation of Oswego Village to dispose of this ground and procure and prepare a more

suitable site, and remove the dead.[11] Yet nothing was done under this authority; for, three years later on March 23, a committee was appointed by the Board of Trustees to examine the present situation of the cemetery in East Oswego, and to ascertain what improvements were required, and the probable expense of making the same. Or in their opinion if it was advisable to change the location of the present cemetery, then to inquire whether a more suitable place of ground can be procured, and on what terms and also as to the disposal of the present site and report their doings herein to the Board at their next regular meeting, in order that the same may be submitted to the citizens of East Oswego at the ensuing annual meeting.

Not being able to uncover a report of the above committee, it is known that the cemetery was not abandoned; for, the Board on August 10, 1840 authorized the Trustees from East Oswego to contract for building a fence around the cemetery ground. It was so done at a cost of $180 but not until a tax of $200 was assessed on real and personal property of the East Siders. Evidently the residents of East Oswego wanted the cemetery improved and it was as a result of a petition by further tax levies in 1841 and 1846. The grounds were surveyed and laid out in lots and the resident citizens were allowed to select a lot for a sum of $4.00 which was spent for further improvements. In addition local taxes made possible the erection of a hearse house. Burials in cemeteries on both sides of the river were soon to become infrequent because other cemeteries were opened.

### Abandonment of Fourth and Fifth Ward Cemeteries

With the gradual abandonment of the two public burying grounds steps were taken to organize a cemetery. As early as July 1849, a meeting was held at which James Platt presided. Nothing was done, however, and it was not until July 18, 1855 that the Oswego Rural Cemetery Association (Riverside) was organized with the following trustees: John C. Churchill, John B. Edwards, Abraham P. Grant, Gilbert Mollison, Frederick T. Carrington, Thomas Kingsford, Samuel B. Johnson, Simeon Bates and William F. Allen. Every one of these founders now lie buried in Riverside. The site was originally a farm of 110 acres in the town of Scriba, owned by Thomas Robinson, and which was purchased for $5,600.

On September 25, 1857 the City of Oswego purchased of the Oswego Rural Cemetery Association a plot of ground in Riverside Cemetery for the gratuitous burial of such persons as shall be buried at the expense of the city and which was believed to be much larger than would be necessary for those interments for all the bodies which would become necessary to be removed at the expense of the City of Oswego.[12]

Since the commencement of interments in Riverside only a few interments had been made in the Fifth Ward cemetery and most of those in the Potter's field and without any license from the city authorities. Friends and relatives had removed the dead bodies of the friends from the Fifth Ward cemetery to Riverside, St. Paul's, St. Peter's and other cemeteries near the city of Oswego and a very few of those interned in the Fifth Ward cemetery remained there. For thirty years prior to its abandonment, the Fifth Ward cemetery had no improvement made in it and had been almost entirely neglected and presented an unsightly appearance. The place had been for a number of years a trysting spot of disreputable people and a resort of the

bad element of the city, it was alleged.

Agitation for the abandonment of this cemetery continued for some years. It was argued that the unsightly burial ground, a disgrace to the neighborhood, would become a beautiful park in a rapidly improving neighborhood. It would be sanitary, inexpensive and double the value of the real estate in that section of the city and make all real estate thereabouts very desirable as building lots. Mr. Thompson Kingsford offered to convert the grounds into an elegant park in return for the stone in the cemetery wall.

Mr. S. M. Coon introduced a bill in the Assembly in January 1888 to convert the Fifth Ward cemetery into a public park. Everything bid fair for an early consummation of that very desirable end but the gentleman who represented the city in the Assembly at that time came home and was severely denounced by a citizen and he immediately allowed the bill to become as dead as any of the bodies the bill proposed to remove. Pressure was again applied and the bill passed the Assembly. The East Siders petitioned the Common Council to include the Fourth Ward cemetery in the bill and the favorable action of the Common Council caused the bill to be changed to the cemetery.[13] With the assistance of Senator Sloan the bill became law on April 5, 1888.[14] A notice published by the city clerk informed the people that the city would disinter dead bodies from the Fourth and Fifth Ward cemeteries after the time limit set by the state law. Relatives and friends could remove bodies before that time.

Removals were made in November and December 1889. The dead bodies were sent to Riverside, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, Rural and elsewhere and the number of removals, known and unknown, totaled 1025. Translation of the cemeteries into playgrounds soon followed and in 1928 the playgrounds have been utilized as educational centers. At that time Kingsford and Fitzhugh Park schools had been erected, an excellent monument to the generations that had gone before.

St. Paul's cemetery on the lake shore was opened in 1853 and St. Peter's on the East River Road was incorporated on May 2, 1880 although burials took place as early as 1871.

The division of Archives and History, New York State Education Department, published a bulletin (July 1956, number 1442) of selected New York State laws relating to cemeteries. This pamphlet contains excerpts of laws that relate to the establishment, maintenance, preservation and abondment of cemeteries. It will be of interest to all persons who are seeking information, or are concerned, about the location and commemoration of deceased civilians and members of the Armed Forces.

## FOOTNOTES

1. William W. Campbell, **The Life and Writings of DeWitt Clinton,** (Baker and Scribner, 1849).

2. Information obtained by a visit to the cemetery.

3. Information obtained by a visit with Mr. A. C. Pease. Mr. Pease (now 93 years of age) has records of the cemetery.

4. From records in possession of the Pierce family.

5. Copy of map is here included.

6. Laws of 1827, Chapter 5. Letters Patent dated October 15, 1833 were given to the commissioners.

7. Laws of 1836, Section 20.

8. Laws of 1848, Chapter 116.

9. In the handwriting of E. W. Clarke.

10. Proceedings of the Board of Trustees, 1828-1848.

11. Laws of 1837, Chapter 225.

12. Deed dated September 25, 1857; recorded in Oswego County Clerk's office January 3, 1863, Book 94 of Deeds p. 76 and 77. The plot cost $600.

13. Copy of petition can be found in Bradley B. Burt's Scrapbook, Vol. III.

14. Laws of 1888, Chapter 106.

# Oswego at the Turn of the Century

(Presented by Mr. Alfred G. Tucker, May 21, 1957)

My first impression of Oswego was a gloomy one. I came to this city on one of the many trains once scheduled during a January thaw. The snow was dirty; the roads poor. There were many wooden poles strung with wires having an appearance of a frontier town. Looking back fifty years ago, that is what one would find. Some folks have said and still do that Oswego never changes. Let me correct this statement now. I am pretty certain that not one single place of business in the downtown area is still being operated by the same people in the same location.

The population was predominantly Irish, with a few Italians, French, German and English. One illustration of this could be seen by the tavern owners, lawyers and storekeepers in general. Oswego, like other towns, naturally had its characters in all walks of life amongst its citizens. This was the whisker period; every professional and business man had one trimmed to his particular taste.

Among the doctors there were: Eddy (300 lbs.), Irwin, Mansfield, Wallace, Ringland, O'Brien, Dowd, DuBois, Albertson, Calish and Elder. Ontstanding attorneys were: George N. Burt, Charles Bulger, O'Gorman, Ward Robinson, Stowell, Cullinan, Rowe, King, Bentley, Cullen, Udelle Bartlett, and D. P. Morehouse. Among the dentists were Cays, Cullen, Thomas E. Watts, Lewis, Slocum and Barry. Bankers were: Mott, McDowell, Thrall, Downey, Sweetland and Treadwell. In insurance there were J. P. Doyle, F. Parker, Fred Riley, Mollison and Dowdle, and W. R. Hosmer. Some of the clergy were: Barry, Hopkins, Sizer, Kettle, Wills, Greensmith, Savage and Kessler.

Suppose we go on a tour of some of the downtown; a good place to start is on the east end of the lower bridge. Has Oswego changed? Can any of our audience visualize Oswego without Campbells, Wells, McDonald's, Kline's, Woolworths, Whelan's, the supermarkets or in fact any single chain store? All business houses were individually and locally owned. Even the factories and plants were mostly so. Can you imagine West First Street without the Candy Works, the Armory, Y. M. C.A., Pontiac Hotel, High School?

In a tour of the downtown section Mr. Tucker reminisced about the many businesses and businessmen who no longer are with us. Many of the old schools are gone; the Normal school (West Seneca between Sixth and Seventh Streets) has been razed. The Welland was at one time used as a dormitory. The starch, grain and lumber industries are gone. New churches have appeared.

There were no public appeals for funds. The hospital deficit was met by a bazaar and the rest by three prominent residents. The church deficits were met by some one prominent member.

Baseball and cricket were popular. As yet there was no softball. The only place where baseball

could be played on Sunday was inside of Fort Ontario where the local police had no jurisdiction.

The livery stables were replaced by taxis. Pat Keating owned and operated the first garage. A Mr. Pell owned the first automobile.

Transportation to Oswego depended on numerous trains; today there are no passenger trains. An interurban trolley line ran between Oswego and Syracuse. The urban trolley line was replaced by buses in 1927. The boat service has been discontinued.

There were two lighting companies: the Citizens and the Peoples Gas and Electric.

The county jail stood at the foot of East Second Street. East Seneca Street from Second to Fourth is closed and the land used by the Ames Iron Works.

In the fields of politics there were two factions in each party. There was great rivalry between the Republican Eastsiders led by Judge Stowell and Sweetland versus Westsiders of the Motts and Parsons. East Side Democrats, Fitzgibbons and Mansfield, opposed Judge Bulger and his brother.

Yes, Oswego has changed in the last fifty years.

# County Historical Society Tour

(August 17, 1957)

Members of the Society participated in their annual summer tour Saturday, August 17, 1957. Plans and arrangements were made by a committee composed of Grove A. Gilbert, Chairman, Mrs. Hugh Barclay, Charles Groat, Dr. B. T. Mason and Dr. Seward Salisbury.

The tour began at Fort Ontario at 9:30 Saturday morning. Members of the historical society and their guests were given an opportunity to inspect the extensive restoration which is being carried out at the Fort by the State Education Department. Under the direction of Dr. Albert B. Corey, state historian and Miss Anna K. Cunningham, supervisor of the state historical sites, the work at the old fortification is dedicated to restoring the fort so that it appears as it would have in 1839 when the present stone buildings were built.

Rodney E. Johnson, curator at the Fort, gave the members an opportunity to preview the interior restoration which was in progress and which was not yet opened to the public. This included work on one of the two officers' quarters so that its interior will represent the furnished building of 1839 as well as the military museum and orientation center which is being developed in the old soldiers barracks. This was the first official Fort visit of the society since 1951.

The tour left the Fort and followed a pre-determined route to Douglaston Manor, at Pulaski, arriving in time to enjoy a picnic lunch on the grounds. They were the guests of the owners, General and Mrs. Hugh Barclay.

The afternoon's activity began with a short talk by Dr. Seward Salisbury and then introduced General Barclay who gave a short paper, the title of which was "The Family on the Land." This paper dealt with the family ancestors who settled the land after the Revolutionary War and their experiences through the succeeding generations.

Following the General's paper, members visited the stables and inspected the Manor's outstanding herds and blooded horses. The grounds, well known in the county for their outstanding beauty, were of interest to the members and their guests.

Touring members disbanded at Pulaski and returned to their respective homes throughout the area.

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# Remarks of Dr. W. Seward Salisbury At Annual Tour of the Society, August 17, 1957

A summary of Dr. Salisbury's remarks:

The intrepid frontiersmen who cleared the forests and founded the villages in Richland and other towns in northern Oswego County entered the region during the decade following the withdrawal of the British from Fort Ontario in 1796. They preferred the healthy uplands; and it is surprising, perhaps, to note, that Redfield plateau was occupied earlier than the more fertile plain south and east of Lake Ontario.

It is said that Nathan Tuttle and Nathan Wilcox were the first settlers in Richland and that Benjamin Winch became the first permanent occupant within the corporate limits of Pulaski. We know that he constructed a tavern there, on the site of the Randall House, in 1804. Winch was a surveyor for George Scriba and later practiced law here. Most of these early residents were New Englanders, who were attracted here by the land. Land hunger led generations of New Englanders from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Settlements were promoted by the land speculators, who surveyed the land, built roads and offered tracts on credit. Among the incentives, land for agriculture, was the foremost attraction. In 1820 more than seventy-five per cent of our people lived on farms; today this figure has decreased to less than ten per cent.

The Salmon River offered water power; and its mouth, Port Ontario, held out the intriguing possibility of becoming a lake port which might rival Oswego or Vera Cruz, Scriba's dream-city, just around the curve of the lake in Mexico Town. Fisheries on the Salmon were also an incentive; a Charles Mathewson, e.g., speared 134 salmon there in four hours.

The timber here was also an attraction, though its abundance farther east and transportation problems limited its production on a commercial basis. Potash, obtained from wood ashes, however, was a money maker, and was frequently the pioneer's best source of cash. There are records that it was marketed at points as far distant as Montreal and Albany.

Later, farming, and still later, dairying became the region's most extensive occupation.

The early history of this locale was also closely related to the military rivalry on the frontier. Champlain, on his journey to the Iroquois villages in the early seventeenth century beached his canoes at the mouth of Salmon River, and a century later General De la Barre launched a campaign against the Onondagas from the same vicinity. It is of interest to observe that Champlain described the river as teeming with fish, whereas De la Barre dubbed it La Famine.

Montcalm's famous assault upon Oswego in 1756 moved along this margin of the lake, and the retaliatory expeditions of Bradstreet against Fort Frontenac and Am-

herst against Montreal might have been viewed by an observer looking westward across the lake. In the Revolution Silas Town is said to have spied upon the British invasion force at nearby Mexico Point, and in the War of 1812 the great cable was floated into Sandy Creek, and then carried overland to Sacketts Harbor.

The village green at Pulaski was a drill ground during this period, and the local company was twice called to Sacketts Harbor during the War of 1812.

Military ardor again spilled over in the exciting days of the "Patriot's War" of 1839, when Americans were ready to aid Canadian insurgents in their bid for independence.

It was during this crisis that Fort Ontario was rebuilt of stone. And it is this fort which is being restored today by the State of New York as a permanent commemorative monument.

# History of Baldwinsville

(Presented by Mr. A. J. Christopher, October 15, 1957)

Baldwinsville lies in a beautiful river valley near the center of the state. The Seneca River at this place used to be shallow and there were rapids, with the wooded banks rising some thirty feet above the water. Before the arrival of the white man the Indians came to this spot to hunt and fish; it was their summer playground. They called the locality, "Ste-ha-ha," which meant stones in the water.

John McHarrie, of Scotch descent and hailing from Baltimore is accredited as being the first white man to settle in the present village area. In the summer of 1792 he found his way by land and by water to the head of Seneca Lake. There, at an Indian village, he obtained a canoe and was told: "To the rising sun, Ste-ha-ha." McHarrie took the advice, paddled eastward on the river till he came to the "rifts." Mac, as a soldier of the Revolution, had received a lot in the Military Tract of central and northern New York but it was not in his possession at this time. The south bank opposite the rifts must have appealed to McHarrie for he soon built a log house and later sent for his family. Ste-ha-ha then changed to "McHarrie's Rifts." Within a few years the McHarries acquired neighbors and the hamlet became known as Mackville or Macksville.

A Dr. James Baldwin, in 1797, passing thru on the river noted the beautiful scenery of the region opposite Mackville and a purchase followed. Two years later he returned with men and machinery intent on developing the property. In spite of difficulties a rough dam was built followed by a grist and saw mill. Next a flat log bridge was thrown across the river below the dam. Another project, a canal, was necessary since the dam obstructed the river traffic, and it soon served a two-fold purpose—for navigation and power. Baldwin called his land "Columbia"; possibly this was Mrs. Baldwin's idea. Thus started the prosperity of the village which later considered Baldwin as its founder and to receive his name. Much of what followed was possible because Dr. Baldwin, one of the wealthiest men in Onondaga County, in the employ of the State Navigation Service was considered the "kingpin" of all the industrial enterprises of the town.

In 1814 a state road was put thru between Onondaga Hill and Oswego passing over Baldwin's bridge. In coming to Oswego this evening I traveled over the same route but at that time it was only an enlarged trail thru the wilderness.

The cold year of 1816 prevented crops from ripening and a famine almost followed. For this reason, the next winter, Dr. Baldwin harbored and fed one-half the Oneida Nation, then numbering about five hundred. The grateful Indians gave young Harvey, Baldwin's son, a fine deerskin coat which is now on display in the Onondaga Historical Building at Syracuse.

The next year a post office was given to the community resulting in the joining of the two hamlets into one, namely "Baldwinsville." There had been mail service as early as 1806 when an Onondaga Indian chief, once a week, covered the forty some miles between Onondaga and Oswego in two laps, staying over night at Halfway tavern. He was so punctual that people set their time pieces by his coming and going.

The village, with abundant waterpower, plenty of virgin forest, rich soil and strategically located was prospering fast. In the 1830's Baldwinsville was as large as Syracuse or, putting it the other way, Syracuse was as small as the neighboring Seneca river village. The salt industry and the business of the Erie canal soon forged Syracuse ahead.

Then came the era of railroads with the Oswego & Syracuse passing thru the eastern part of town in 1848. Years later, when the D. L. & W. took over, a branch ran to the center of the village to contact the various mills. Another railroad connected Baldwinsville with the N. Y. C. system at Amboy. At the height of local railroading (1890-1910) at least twelve passenger trains passed thru Baldwinsville each day, and the freights were always loaded to capacity. Now, only the main line remains.

Wars always slow things up. The Civil War was no exception but Baldwinsville was well represented on the battlefield as the monuments at Gettysburg testify. After this strife the real boom started — to last for more than fifty years.

At the beginning of the century the eight flouring mills in Baldwinsville ground more wheat than any other community in the country excepting Richmond, Va. The factories made pumps, wagons, leaf springs, candles, furniture, milwork, knitted goods, paper and many other things. The area had so much natural gas that it was piped to Fulton and Syracuse. Baldwinsville was for three score years the metropolis of a large tobacco growing region. I must not forget to mention that the village has the purest water obtainable in the state.

In 1899 a one track trolley line came from Syracuse. Ten years later it was supplanted by a double track system which passed thru the village on its way to Oswego.

Today most of the industries have receded. The old Baldwin Canal, about to be filled in, has been replaced by the Barge or Improved Erie Canal, Baldwin's log bridge has had four successors. Two mills remain to represent the industries of a past day. These are Morris Machine Works still a leader in the centrifugal pump field and the International Mill which can outproduce the eight old flour mills combined. when they existed.

Perhaps the desire now is towards a nice, clean, quiet residential village.

(Mr. Christopher illustrated his remarks with a film depicting scenes and events in the history of the village. The film was photographed and produced by the speaker.)

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# Necrology

1957

MR. ELLIOTT B. MOTT
94 West Fifth Street, Oswego, January 4, 1957

RALPH M. YOUNG
152 West Eighth Street, Oswego, January 25, 1957

DR. HARVEY ALBERTSON
131 West Fourth Street, Oswego, February 7, 1957

MR. FRED PALMER
705 Seneca Street, Fulton, February 13, 1957

MRS. PARKER O. WRIGHT
784 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, Cal., March 3, 1957

MRS. LOUISE CRAIGIE
99 West Third Street, Oswego, March 7, 1957

MR. CLARK MORRISON
115 West Fifth Street, Oswego, March 8, 1957

MRS. NORMAN MELLOR
131 Harvey Street, Germantown, Pa., March 17, 1957

MISS RUTH HAWKS
Phoenix, March 26, 1957

MISS ELSIE M. HANDLEY
119 West Third Street, Oswego, May 1, 1957

MISS M. WINIFRED TURNER
Middle Road, Scriba, May 22, 1957

MRS. WARREN M. CARRIER
65 East Utica Street, Oswego, May 28, 1957

MR. JOSEPH T. McCAFFREY
51 East Mohawk Street, Oswego, August 31, 1957

MRS. LOUISE HAXTON
150 East Third Street, Oswego, September 21, 1957

MR. DWIGHT L. MURPHY
351 Highland Street, Fulton, September 21, 1957

MR. ROBERT C. JONES
172 West Fourth Street, Oswego, October 26, 1957

MR. NEIL T. HAYES
64 West Fourth Street, Oswego, November 13, 1957