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1958

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Annual Report of the President

This issue of the YEARBOOK marks the twentieth consecutive year of publication. It is an achievement worthy of mention. For twenty years manuscripts presented before the Society have thus been preserved as a part of our growing history. In the earlier years military history was emphasized, and with good reason. Few regions were as strategic in the wars of the Colonial and early Federal eras. More recently, economic, political and social topics have achieved attention.

When these articles are added to the city and county histories of Ralph Faust and the older works of Johnson and Churchill, there is a wealth of local history surpassed by few counties in the State. The Society plans to continue to encourage further scholarship in the future, and hopes to make Headquarters House of increasing value as an historical museum.

During the past year the museum has been visited by dozens of school groups and hundreds of visitors from all parts of the United States. The museum was open three afternoons per week during the tourist season. Thanks are in order to members who volunteered to serve as hosts and hostesses on Sundays.

As we move into 1959 we are entering "A Year of History," as defined by the State Historian, Dr. Albert B. Corey. It has been so-designated in commemoration of the 350th anniversary of two momentous events in the State's early history: First, the voyage of exploration of Henry Hudson in the Half Moon up the Hudson River to the present site at Albany; and Second, the initial explorations of Samuel de Champlain in northern New York. Both of these events will be celebrated throughout the year in many communities, and there will be special observances in the Hudson Valley and Champlain region. Here in Oswego we will mark the 200th anniversary of the construction of the second stockade on the site of Fort Ontario.

May these historic events serve to stimulate interest in our Society, including attendance and new memberships. During 1958 our membership remained near five hundred. Fulton members added substantially to their membership.

As President I would like to thank the members for their many contributions, with special mention to Mr. Thomas Cloutier and Mr. Frank M. McDonough, Chairmen of the Headquarters House Committee, who, in addition to the usual tasks, supervised extensive repairs to the roof.

I would also like to commend the officers for their guidance and support.

Charles M. Snyder, President

J. C. BIRDLEBOUGH

"Lest We Forget"

J. C. Birdlebough

Twenty-five years ago an educator, Mr. J. C. Birdlebough, came to Phoenix from Trumansburg, New York, to be Principal of the Village schools. A native of Western New York, he entered upon a teaching career after graduation from the State Normal School at Cortland. He later did graduate work at New York University and Cornell University. During a quarter-century of leadership the Phoenix Central School was organized and the system expanded to accommodate a growth of pupils from 500 to 2,300. The new school, completed in 1956 is a model of utility and artistry.

In their new home he and his wife, Jesse Oakes Birdlebough, identified themselves with the community, and were soon participating in a wide variety of civic causes. Included, was leadership in the Red Cross, Christmas Seal and Salvation Army drives, and the summer home program for city children.

Beyond professional and civic duties, Mr. and Mrs. Birdlebough have found time to cultivate a variety of hobbies. Notable among these is horology. Members of the Society will recall a meeting at their spacious home, "Tick-Tockerage," on Chestnut Street in Phoenix, and an informal inspection of dozens of clocks, including the fabulous Schroeppel Clock, which was preserved and restored by the host. On another occasion Mr. Birdlebough read a paper before the Society on this unusual clock, which among other things, includes a pipe organ!

The Birdleboughs are also flower lovers. They have sponsored the Junior Garden Clubs of America and have exhibited at many flower shows and New York fairs.

When the scope of the Oswego Historical Society was broadened to encompass the County about twenty years ago, "Mr. B." entered upon an active career in the Society. He has served as Vice President for many years, and only the most pressing duties and worst storms of winter have prevented his attendance. He has added vitality to the Society and promoted local history in the Phoenix schools. The Yorkers, a society of Junior Historians, have been actively affiliated with the State organization at Cooperstown.

For his dedication to local history and his long and valued services to the Society, the Board of Managers takes pleasure in dedicating this volume of the Yearbook to Mr. J. C. Birdlebough.

Village of Minetto

(Illustrated with Slides)

(Presented by Mrs. Helen M. Hall of Minetto at January Meeting, January 21, 1958)

As far as being an independent town is concerned Minetto is the youngest and the smallest of all the Oswego County towns. Prior to 1916 it was a part of Oswego Town, all of which had originally been a part of the old town of Hannibal. For some years previous to 1916 controversy had raged between the people living on the property along the Oswego River and the tax assessors of Oswego Town regarding what residents of that section felt were too high and unfair assessments. When repeated protests failed to bring any reduction or equalization action was taken by those living in a rather narrow strip between the Oswego River and the West Fifth Street Road to break from Oswego Town and create a town of their own. A resolution to this effect was presented to the County Board of Supervisors by Supervisor Volkert Vant of Volney. Arguments for and against were heard and on February 26, 1916 the resolution was passed to create a new town to be known as Minetto, whose boundaries were designed as the Oswego City line on the north, the Oswego River on the east, the Granby town line on the South and the West Fifth Road on the west. The resolution passed by a vote of 28 to 2, only the supervisors of Oswego town and Hannibal dissenting. The first town meeting was held shortly afterwards in Perry's Hall—now the shop where Edward Kennedy manufactures Venetian blinds—with Edward Stewart and Frank Stevenson presiding. Thomas McCann was elected the first supervisor.

However, long before Minetto became a separate town the name had been applied to that settlement that had grown up along the banks of the Oswego River at that point. According to early accounts the land that is now Minetto was originally covered with a dense growth of very fine timber. Early Indian trails followed the ridge that separates what is now the Granby Road from the West River Road. Numerous Indian arrowheads and other relics have been dug up along this ridge.

Soon after the first pioneers came to Oswego and Oswego Falls —now Fulton—roads were cut through the forests. The first of these followed the river from Oswego through Minetto to Oswego Falls and beyond and was built in 1810. Shortly afterwards William Moore, a surveyor, laid out the West Fifth Street Road. That was completed in 1813. Early bridges on these roads were made of logs.

This land was a part of the military land grants given to many of the soldiers who had served in the Revolution. However, very few of these men ever settled on the land they were given, most of them selling it to land companies without ever seeing it. The land was surveyed and divided into lots for this purpose and there is still to be seen on one corner of our property in Minetto a broken old stone marker bearing the words Lot Number 22.

The first person I could find out about who actually settled permanently in Minetto was Schuyler Worden who moved here from Cayuga County in 1819. At that time the two roads mentioned previously had been built but the

land between was a complete wilderness. Mr. Worden built a home and cleared land on the site of the present property of Frank Ranous. In later years Mr Worden attained recognition as the originator of the Worden grape, still raised by many grape growers. Several of the Worden family are still living in and around this vicinity.

In 1820 a family by the name of Pease came to Minetto, and Mrs. Betsy Pease opened a rude tavern offering meals and lodging to river boatmen, trappers, traders and travelers along the river.

Settlement must have been rather slow because the next settler seems to have been Benjamin Burt who settled in Minetto in 1837, coming here from Oswego where he had operated a mill on the banks of the Varick Canal. The land boom of 1837 induced him to sell his water-power rights and mill for a very high price and with the proceeds he moved to Minetto and established a lumber mill near the rapids in the river there. This mill was soon producing 20,000 feet of lumber daily. Benjamin Burt was the son of Daniel Burt who had settled in Oswego in 1803, coming there from Warwick, Orange County, New York. Daniel Burt had come to Oswego for a visit and was so impressed with the location that he stopped in Albany on the return trip and bought from Mr. Van Rensselaer Lot No. 1 and all of military Lot No. 7, comprising about seven hundred acres. He had seven sons and one daughter, all of whom came to Oswego with him. They left Warwick in the spring of 1803 with all their belongings, came up the Hudson River on a sloop to Albany, from there by land to Schenectady, then up the Mohawk River by batteaux to the carrying place just west of Rome, then by land to the navigable waters of Wood Creek, down that stream to the Oneida Lake, then up the Oneida River to the Oswego River, and finally arrived in Oswego in late June. Daniel Burt's great grandson, Marcus Wadsworth, still operates a fruit and dairy farm on the West Fifth Road, and I am indebted to him for much of the information about the Burt family. The Burts at one time owned the entire tract of land between Minetto and Oswego. Only in recent years has the last of the property been sold.

In some of the Burt papers it is stated that at the time Benjamin settled in Minetto there were only two other houses there. He built the third on the site now occupied by Columbia Mills. The house was destroyed by fire but another was built on the same site. When the property was sold to the shade cloth factory this house was moved by Benjamin's daughters to a new location on a hill just north of the present Columbia Mills parking lot. They lived in it until their deaths. It is now the pleasant home of Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Baker and their two children.

In 1853 Alanson Page bought the Burt mill and operated it under the name of Clark and Page. When domestic logs ran out they were brought across the lake from Canada.

In 1879 the Oswego Shade Cloth Company was the only manufacturers of window shades in the United States. So Mr. Page, together with C. B. Benson and Charles Tremaine, started the Minetto Shade Cloth factory. The old Burt sawmill was remodeled and a new structure 300 feet by 40 feet was erected. Business began with twenty-five workmen, but soon under the management of Mr. Page it became one of the largest industries of northern New York. By 1908 it had built additional buildings and was employing about three hundred workmen. In that year it was merged with the Meriden Company, makers of shade cloth in Meriden,

Connecticut, and for the next six years was known as the Minetto-Meriden Company. Then in 1914 it was purchased by Columbia Mills, Incorporated, of New York City. During the years since then it has, besides shades, manufactured at various times, Venetian blinds, book cloth, label cloth, cotton bagging, surgical gauze and at present is doing a great deal with plastics, particularly that used for automobile seat covers and upholstery. During the war millions of yards of camouflage materials, mosquito netting, special cases for packaging weapons and ordnance, and glider parts were turned out. At one time Columbia Mills built and owned a great many of the homes in Minetto in which their employees lived. However, with the exception of a couple of apartment houses these have now been sold to individual owners. These homes had the advantage of not looking like the traditional "company houses." Each one was different and were among the most attractive and best built houses in town. Columbia Mills was instrumental in bringing the city water to Minetto, in establishing the fire department, and in making many other improvements in the town.

Among other early industries in Minetto was a grist mill built in the 1830's by Samuel Taggart near Burt's lumber mill. In 1847 Moses Myrich built a large flour mill located just north of the old bridge by the side of the canal just south of the canal lock there. This mill used the water power from the east end of the dam. The mill had fifteen run of stone with a separate wheel to each run. It had a capacity of grinding and packing 1200 barrels of flour per day and was said to be the largest producer of any mill in the world at that time. The grain was shipped in by canal boat and most of the flour was shipped out the same way. This mill was destroyed by fire in 1864—but some of the wheelpits of the mill can still be seen.

In 1862 Griffin and Mott's cider mill was started. At the height of their business from 3000 to 4000 barrels of cider were turned out annually, much of it attractively bottled and shipped all over the country..

About a mile from the center of the village on the West River Road toward Oswego was L. Brosemer's brewery, noted especially for its fine ales. Huge quantities of wood cut in four foot lengths were used to operate this brewery. The cutting and hauling of this wood provided employment for a great many workmen.

The origin of the name Minetto seems to have been an old Indian legend. It was originally called Burtville — but Mr. Burt objected, saying he expected it to grow into more than a ville, and it was he who suggested the name Minetto. According to an old Indian legend an Indian maiden was burned at the stake here for loving a white man. Her name was supposed to have been Minyetta. There is no conformation of this legend — although in the early history of Oswego Falls there is an account of the British garrison at Fort Ontario being called to quell the excitement arising over an Indian husband being killed with a hoe in self defense by a white settler named Valentine whom he accused of making love to his wife. It is possible there is some connection here.

The first church society in this area was a group of Methodists who met in the Denis School House, located on the site of the present school in Minetto. On November 15, 1848 the male members of this society met with Rev. M. H. Gaylord and Samuel Lent presiding and organized the first Methodist Church in Oswego Town. Among the charter members was a Mr. Harry Miller. When he had first moved to this vicinity Mr. Miller had attended church in Oswego Falls, following a blazed trail through the woods to get there. This group began

collecting funds to build a church building, and the church, a wooden one, located at the present site of the Minetto Methodist was finished and dedicated sometime between 1854 and 1860. It was thirty feet by forty feet and cost seven hundred dollars. Most of the lumber was donated by the farmers and sawed at the Burt mill. The first pastor in the new building was the Rev. Hiram Mattison. In 1892 because of the increase in population it seemed necessary to build a larger church. A building committee was appointed and work was commenced that summer .The cornerstone was laid in October, 1892 — and the building was completed and dedicated on March 30, 1893. It had cost $7900. All of this had been raised by local pledges with the exception of $500 which had been furnished by the Board of Church Extension. In 1893 a house and lot were purchased for $1500 to be used as a parsonage. In the fall of 1921 work was started on a hall to be joined onto the church building, containing an auditorium with a stage and dressing rooms, which also doubled as a basketball court and a gymnasium, a choir room, kitchen, dining room, game and shower room, Sunday School rooms, a pastor's office and library. This building, at a cost of $26,000 was completed and dedicated on May 28, 1923. Under the splendid leadership of the Rev. Charles T. Holcombe it was soon being used to its fullest. Its program served as a model to many of the other churches in the conference. The mortgage on this building was burned on February 13, 1937.

In 1921 Mrs. C. B. Benson volunteered to defray the cost of a new parsonage. Her offer was accepted and a beautiful new parsonage was built at the cost of $15,000 and formally presented to the church by Mrs. Benson on September 1, 1922. The parsonage was built on the lot adjoining the church and is one of the most beautiful parsonages in this section. The house originally on this site was the former home of Samuel Perkins, the first blacksmith in Minetto. This house was moved to the lot adjoining in the back and is now the home of the church janitor.

Prior to 1931, the Catholics of the Minetto district were cared for by St. John's and St. Paul's churches in Oswego. But in the fall of 1931 Bishop Curley ordered a census of Catholic families south of the city line of Oswego on both sides of the river. The result was that there were sufficient families to establish a separate parish in the town of Minetto. In September, 1931, the Rev. Francis May was appointed pastor and services were held in Perry's Hall until a new church building could be built. This new building, a beautiful brick structure on the West River Road and called The Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was completed and the congregation moved into it on December 4, 1932. The church was blessed on that occasion by the Rt. Rev. J. J. Doody — but there were no large public ceremonies due to the recent death of Bishop Curley. An attractive home directly across from the church was purchased from the Columbia Mills as a rectory.

From July 1922 to about 1942 the Episcopal Church had a mission in the former Clark home on Benson Avenue, which was purchased and remodeled for that purpose. Services were held Sunday afternoons by the rector of the Church of the Evangelists in Oswego. In 1942 this was discontinued, the building was sold and re-converted into a home. It is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Henry and their family. The Episcopal members of the community now attend church in Oswego.

Another interesting activity carried on in Minetto which few people know about is the Cornell University Field Laboratory, located

on the Wadsworth farm on the Myers Road. In 1933 Mr. Wadsworth discovered that some insect was causing severe damage to the alfalfa roots in his fields, causing much of his crop to die. He wrote Dean Ladd of the Cornell University Agricultural College for help. As a result Charles Palm was sent to investigate and carry on experimental research. The first year a small building was erected for temporary use and the following year a more permanent structure was built. The insect was found to be the alfalfa snout beetle and methods of controlling it were instigated. However, this laboratory has since been maintained as a research center for work on all types of forage crop and vegetable crop insects. Each summer a group of young men students working toward their degrees in entomology are sent here to carry on experimental and research work in this field. Although residents of Minetto often jokingly refer to it as "the bug farm" we are very glad to have these young men as part of our community each summer.

There also used to be quite a flax industry in Minetto. Just back of the present home of Tremaine Sweet on the Granby Road near the D. L. & W. tracks is a pond in which the flax raised on the farms in the vicinity was soaked to remove the fibers, and on the banks of this pond can still be seen the old stone foundations of the building in which the flax was prepared for market.

Minetto is today a rapidly growing little community. Many new homes have been constructed in recent years. A whole new section known as Ridgeway Sites has been opened up on the West River Road on the former Myron Burt property. We are now in the process of building a large addition to our school with the hopes that by next September the children will all be under the same roof. At present six of the home rooms are in the Benson Annex — the former home of the Benson family— and three rooms and the instrumental music department in the Methodist Church hall. The Minetto School has an enrollment of about six hundred pupils—kindergarten through ninth grade. The Senior High School students attend school in either Fulton or Oswego. We have two well stocked grocery stores, a drug store, a hardware store, an electric appliance store, a barber shop, a beauty parlor, two garages, two doctors, a post office, a troopers' barracks, and a fire department. Niagara Mohawk has a hydro-electric generating station here. There are active troops of Boy Scouts, Cubs, Girl Scouts, and Brownies. The Leadbetter Brinklow Post of the American Legion is here. The DuBois Hotel, long one of the most famous eating places in this section, has been here for years. The Dubois family have been connected with the hotel business around Minetto for a long time, some of the family having also operated a hotel on the east side on the lot opposite the present Seneca Hill garage. This hotel was known as the Briggs House before it was purchased from Mr. Briggs by Daniel Dubois in 1908. Just this winter Niagara Mohawk built a new substation on the lot where this hotel once stood. Nearly opposite this and quite close to the river was the Wells House, operated by Eugene Wells. In regard to this hotel I received a letter from the daughter of Mr. Wells, Mrs. Ada Wells Mahar, now living in Waukegan, Illinois, and I quote from it: "The hotel was built and managed by my father about the year 1900. It was a four story wooden structure. The first floor was occupied by a confectionery store and ice cream parlor and a waiting room for patrons of the trolley line which ran from "Beach Oswego" to this hotel. My father had a contract for ten years with the Oswego Traction Company. The second and third floors had living quarters, a bil-

liard room and barber shop and the entire fourth floor was oncupied by a large ballroom and check room. Both public and private dances were held here for many years. The ball room was also rented to the Minetto Grange for their meetings." Many of the older residents of Minetto told me of the good times they had at parties at the Wells House. When the Barge Canal was built in 1913 this hotel was condemned by the state as being in the way and demolished. The entrance to the old bridge was in front of this hotel. Part of the stone buttments of the old bridge can be seen in the river at this point.

Toward the southern end of the town a few years ago Irving Cantor built and operates each summer the only drive-in theatre in this vicinity.

Some of the people living in Minetto work in Columbia, but many are also employed in the nearby cities of Oswego and Fulton and even in Syracuse. With the modern facilities available in Minetto, and the pleasant living conditions everything points to its continued growth in the future.

Early Days in Volney and Mount Pleasant Neighborhood

(Presented by Mrs. Wilbur (Janice Rowlee) Fay, March 18, 1958)

Within Scriba's Patent, which today covers much of Oswego County, the Town of Volney holds the most interest for me, as my family roots go deep in two parts of this township; the crossroads called Volney Centre and the hamlet of Mt. Pleasant. My mother's paternal ancesters, Candees ,pioneered at Volney Centre. All of my father's family were of old Mt. Pleasant stock.

In historic delvings we find people, places, and events of major interest. Personalities arouse my curiosity the most, so I have attempted to give sketches of some of the early settlers whose many descendants still live in this vicinity.

Why did our ancestors leave their civilized, fairly comfortable New England homes to become pioneers? Perhaps we might stress their youth, and the enthusiasms which mark this period of life. An 1800 census in Vermont revealed that two thirds of all inhabitants of that state were 25 years old, or younger—those who left to pioneer in York state were usually younger. Most of our local pioneers were from the Hudson Valley, Massachusetts, or Connecticut, which has often been called "The Mother of the States" because of the huge number of her citizens who emigrated West. Transients heading for more distant parts were ordinarily the restless, the less educated and propertied, the more optimistic, who preferred a rough frontier to the adjustments demanded by civilization. Ambition for material success drove them on. Before we stress the human beings involved, let us briefly consider this "Promised Land" to which they came.

After the Revolutionary War, New York State had control of almost all the lands in what is now called Oswego County. All of the area west of the Oswego River was incorporated in a Military tract to be given to veterans; east of the river, the land was divided into two sections, still known by the names of Scriba's Patent and the Boylston Tract.

In 1792 John and Nicholas Roosevelt of N. Y. City, interested in land speculation, purchased from the State land lying between Oneida Lake and Oneida River, Oswego River, Lake Ontario and Macomb's Purchase (now Jefferson, Lewis counties). They had this land surveyed and published a map of their property, calling it The Roosevelt Purchase. Very soon they sold the acreage to George Ludwig Christian Scriba, a native of Holland, and at the time, a wealthy N. Y. C. merchant. The patent, which he received in 1794, showed 499,-135 acres. Benjamin Wright resurveyed the land and divided it into 24 townships—16 in the present County of Oswego. Townships which were a part of this original patent are Constantia, West Monroe, Hastings, Palermo, Volney, Schroeppel, Scriba, New Haven, Mexico, Amboy, Williamstown, Parish and parts of Richland and Albion.

In March 1806, a large tract of Scriba Patent land was taken from the old town of Mexico (then belonging to Oneida Co.) This tract, including most of the present towns of Scriba, Volney, Palermo and Schroeppel, was

formed into a new town called Fredericksburg in honor of Mr. Scriba's son Fred. Wm. In April 1811, boundaries were again changed, the name Fredericksburgh dropped, the name Scriba given to a large part of the township, the rest of the territory being called Volney. In April 1832, Palermo and Schroeppel were taken off, leaving Volney at its present size. Volney received its' name at the suggestion of Noah Whitney who lived at Oswego Falls. In 1808 the celebrated French Philosopher, Volney, had been visiting this area. He completely captivated the Whitney family with whom he stayed for a few days after having been battered by a Lake Ontario storm—thus their desire to name their township for the Frenchman.

The first settler of the West bank of Oswego River was Major Lawrence Van Valkenburgh, who had acquired Military lot No. 75. He came there from the east in 1792 with two laborers named Valentine and Schermerhorn and a Negro slave boy called "Har." Having set his men to work clearing the land, Van Valkenburg returned east to come back in the Spring of 1793 with his family, including his son Abram and the boy's 16 yr .old bride. The first born of the youthful couple—a boy born Nov. 1793 and named Lawrence for his grandfather—was the 1st white child born in what is now the City of Fulton. With the Van Valkenburghs, came Henry Bush, and a Mr. and Mrs. Lary who also settled at Oswego Falls.

In that same year, 1793, Daniel Masters located at the Upper landing on the east side of the river and became the 1st settler in what is now the Town of Volney. He established the first blacksmith shop in Oswego County, near Bradstreets' Fort and in 1794 opened a tavern. In 1795 the Van Valkenburgh's purchased 600 acres of land across the river in the present Town of Volney at a spot called Orchard Lock. They soon constructed, on their new property, a frame house, with log sections at each end. The frame portion of the house was used as a tavern where dances, town meetings and public entertainments were held. The first town meeting of Fredericksburg was held here.

In 1799, John Van Buren, a cousin of the president, and his family also located on the east side of the Oswego River near Orchard Lock, which is north of the present City of Fulton. The first schoolhouse in the Town of Volney was erected in 1810 near the Van Buren residence.

In 1806 four men came to what is now Volney Centre, and stayed for the night in Major Van Valkenburghs' hunting shanty, with dense forests and wild beasts all around them. In the morning they selected their future homes and prepared to build cabins. They were Gideon Seymour, Gideon Candee, Wm. Dean and Amos Bishop. Mr. Seymour kept the first hotel; Mr. Candee was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1810.

A curious incident is connected with the early life in Volney. In 1808 the young people of Mexico wanted to get up a "log-house dance." There was a reasonable number of young men in the vicinity, but very few girls. The young men put their heads together to see about getting some girls from Oswego Falls. At first they proposed to take a boat at Vera Cruz (now Texas), go up the lake to Oswego, and then up the river to the falls, but fearing the ladies to be invited might be afraid to go by water, they abandoned that project to go on foot through the woods. They provided themselves with an axe and pocket-compass, and started from a homestead north of Vermillion, taking a "bee-line," as they supposed, for the falls, and marking the trees as they went along. Before reaching that point, however,

they came to a settlement, previously unknown to them, which proved to be what was afterwards Volney Centre.

Here they found three young women, two of them being hired girls of Mr. Seymour and Mr. Candee. These were promptly invited to walk at least fifteen miles to the dance, which they were willing to do if their employers and parents would consent. The latter objected at first, but finally concluded to let them go if they were willing to run the risk of the bears. So in the morning the three couples started through the woods for their dance, crossing brooks and marshes, the girls taking off their shoes and stockings when water impeded their progress. They stopped overnight at the home of one of the boys, and the next day went on to the "loghouse dance" where they danced all the next night. The next forenoon they all came back to the boy's house where they slept until the next morning. Then the young men escorted their companions home the same way they had come. They stayed all night at Volney Center and returned the following day, making six days in all.

One of the earliest merchants outside of Fulton was Elisha Candee, who established a store at Volney Center in 1816. Irvin Clark, of Mt. Pleasant, has in his possession the account book of a store at Volney. The unknown owner of the store had made entries as early as 1812. The second hotel outside of Fulton was operated at Volney Center in 1809 by Gideon Seymour. The second school in the township was built at Volney Center in 1811. Volney Center also boasted the first doctors in the township. Seven doctors practised there at various times between about 1810 and 1850. In Dec. 1825 a post office was established at Volney Center with John Bristol as the first post master. The first Congregational Church of Volney was formed in June, 1812, being the fifth church in age in Oswego County. One of the first deacons was Gideon Candee. Meetings were held in the schoolhouse until the church was built on Bristol Hill at a cost of $2500. The first Sunday School, outside of Fulton, was organized by this church in 1820. The oldest cemetery in the township is at Volney Center. The oldest marble shaft is over the grave of Gideon Seymour who died in 1817 at the age of 35. One of three secret societies, outside of the city, was located at Volney Center. It was a division of the Sons of Temperance.

Slaves were owned in the town of Volney as late as 1817, and no doubt, later. On the town record is the following entry—

"I certify that Bell, a Negro woman, a slave belonging to me, had a male child on the 27th day of July last ,whose name is Richard, or Dick."

Signed: James Lyon
Volney, 26 Feb., 1817

The pretty rural hamlet of Mt. Pleasant, formerly called Hubbard's Corners, is situated on a rise of land in the midst of dairy and truck gardening farms. It consists of a picturesque church, a well kept old cemetery (one of the four in the town of Volney), a grange hall, a small country store, the Hubbard schoolhouse, and the remains of a once thriving cheese factory. An active brook winds behind the old section of the cemetery along the south side of the old Vant homestead, and takes a north westerly course toward Paddy Lake. The Vant homestead has been called "Springbrook" for several generations.

The cheese factory at first was a community project, originally built rent-free on Vant property. One of the early operators was Isaac Hale, the father of Marian Scudder, who was born in the living quarters of the cheese factory. Later the Bargy brothers —Lyman and Jay—ran the fac-

tory. During this period Lucy and Herbert Graves occupied the living quarters above the factory, and provided room and board for the Bargys. At the time, Lucy was teaching in the Rowlee school house. Grace and George Peckham (parents of Mrs. Fred Vant) spent their honeymoon at the factory as guests of the Graves, about 1897. Around 1910 Elijah Hale was running the factory. Later a Mr. Beaks from New York City purchased the factory and enlarged it, building a large ice conveyor over the road, among other improvements. Following this, James Bartlett managed the plant for a period. The last operators were of Italian extraction, and attempted to make a type of Italian cheese. This venture proved unsuccessful. After these people left, the buildings were unused. The property gradually fell into a state of decay, until only traces of the factory may now be seen. For many years the Mt. Pleasant Grange met in the converted living quarters of the factory, until the present grange hall was erected.

In 1872 a post office was established at Mt. Pleasant, with Joel Wright as master, but it was discontinued in 1876. At one time the store was situated across the road from its present location. Allan Osborne recalls it as being on the plot of ground which is now the Vant burial ground in the cemetery. In 1867 the store was owned by Josiah Derby. Later it was operated by Mrs. Wright. Eugene Bartlett ran it for a period. The store was operated for many years by George Peckham until his retirement and death a few years ago. The first school was built at Hubbard's Corners in 1817. It was located east of the church, very close to the present schoolhouse. Methodist Church meetings were first held in private homes, the various neighborhood groups being known as classes. The earliest classes, outside of Fulton, were held before 1820 in the Arnold home at Ives' Corners, near Mt. Pleasant. Leading members were Mr. Arnold and Ira Ives. The second Methodist church edifice of Volney was erected at Hubbard's Corners in 1870, and included the four classes of Weed's, Rowlee's, Hubbard's, and Greenman's. The Vant family donated the land for the church. The Vants and the John Ives family, as well as many others, did much of the actual work of constructing the church. A Sunday School was held here from the first.

The new church was named Mt. Pleasant, and gradually the area adjacent took on the same name, until few people would today identify this spot as Hubbard's Corners.

Thomas Hubbard and his brother, Ansel, came from Pittsfield, Mass., in 1811. They came by way of Salina and Liverpool to the Upper Landing, then to Volney Centre, where they stayed one year before going into virgin wilderness to establish the settlement of Hubbard's Corners. On their trip to Oswego County they traveled by ox-sled, the snow being four feet deep on the level. The men estimated they cut down at least a 100 saplings between Liverpool and Oswego Falls, to make way for their team.

The first few years at Hubbard's Corners were typical of pioneer life. Wandering cattle and sheep were slaughtered by wolves, and the corn ravaged by bears. Angered by the boldness of the bruins, Tom walked several miles to borrow a 60 lb. bear trap which he carried home on his back. However, he soon had the pleasure of catching two bears. In one instance, the trap was suspended in a tree 7 feet from the ground. A great aunt (Florence Distin) recalls hearing that Tom and Ansel had log houses perhaps a quarter of a mile apart, located close to where the present Silk Road bisects the Palermo-Mt. Pleasant Road. The

men had only one musket between them. We may assume that Tom and Ansel established a sprinting record of some sort, for whenever wolves or game were sighted, the fellow who needed the gun had to dash next door for it, if it wasn't in his own cabin at the time!

It is estimated that Tom Hubbard personally chopped and cleared more land than any other pioneer in the township. He was one of a large family, the majority of which followed him to his wilderness home. Following are some notes on this family, jotted down by his nephew.

Notes on his family written by my great-grandfather, John W. Distin, in 1927:

"The Rev. Thomas Hubbard, my maternal grandfather, was born near Pittsfield, Mass., in the year 1764.

He was ordained as a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1805 by the first bishop of America, Francis Asbury. Grandfather came to Oswego County in 1818 at the age of 54, and remained here until his death on Jan. 7, 1850. His grave is marked by a plain marble slab in the first row of graves as you go in, on the left hand. (In the old section of Mt. Pleasant cemetery) While here, he lived with his son, Halsey Hubbard. He had a family of twelve children, four girls and eight boys. My mother, Harriet, was the eleventh child. She was born in Mass. in 1806, and came to Oswego Co. with her father and the rest of the family.

She taught the first school in District no. 11, the Weed school. It was held in the chamber of a log house, on property now owned by George Paddock .(Now owned —1957—by Fred Rath, whose father purchased the farm of Grandpa Distin when he retired and moved to Fulton in the 1900's). A little later, she taught in a new log school at Hubbard's Corners, now Mt. Pleasant. The log house was built on the south side, across from the present school building. Among her pupils were John Ives, David Arnold and Ebenezer Arnold. The latter became a noted minister and missionary. Other of the old settlers were her pupils.

At that time the wild animals were yet in the woods, and often came to destroy the corn in the fields.

Thomas and Ansel Hubbard, mother's two oldest brothers, came to Volney in 1807. They came out to Mt. Pleasant to locate their homes; Thomas on the farm now owned by Frank Wright, Ansel nearer the church. It was all a wilderness. They cut the trees down and slept on the ground while they were building their log houses. Uncle Tom, as everyone called him, spent the rest of his life there, and was one of the first road commissioners in the Town of Volney.

When the British came to Oswego in 1812, they were called out to fight in a battle at Oswego. Thomas was captain of a company of men to go through the woods to help the settlers at Watertown.

He lived to see the country transformed to a fine farming community. He died just before his ninety-sixth birthday on Jan. 13, 1850.

Children of the Rev. Thomas Hubbard:

1. Ansel Hubbard—shoemaker married twice—two sets of children
2. Thomas Hubbard—farmer—married twice*
3. Lavina Hubbard—married Samuel Parker; her daughter married a Howard
4. Lucretia Hubbard—married Jonathan Root
5. Russell Hubbard—went west when young—have no record of him.
6. Jabes Hubbard—medical doctor—practiced in Fulton and Red Creek.

7. Polly Hubbard — married Horace Keeler—six children have all died.

8. Elija Hubbard—a minister**

9. Halsey Hubbard—farmer***

10. John Hubbard—farmer—lived and died down in central part of state

12. Harriet Hubbard—married Charles Markham, then J. H. Distin

12. Seth Hubbard—farmer—married, but no issue—an invalid for years.

* Thomas Hubbard, Jr., had three sons: Gaylord, Thomas and George, and two daughters: Mrs. Chatterton, Mrs. Hart.

** Rev. Elija: died at Fort Edward in middle life. Four sons: William, James, Charles, Brainard. All dead. Brainard killed at Vicksburg during Civil War.

*** Halsey Hubbard married Racheal Hugsmon. Six children, now all dead. Three oldest boys never married; Horace and Thomas died in California; Leonard at Vicksburg. Other children were named Eber, Lucretia, and Julie.

My mother, Harriet, was a widow when father married her. Her first husband was Charles Markham who was drowned in the Oswego River at Battle Island. He left three little children, two of whom died soon after their father. The oldest, Seth, lived to be twenty-one, and died from an injury that brought on quick consumption. My father, John H. Distin, and mother had three children: Harriet, Josephine and myself, John W. Distin.

My sister, Harriet, married Henry Hubbard, who died after two years of marriage, leaving a little girl, Jessie, who died at four years. Later Harriet married James Pittinger of Brooklyn. They have one son, Harry. Harriet is now eighty seven.

Josephine married Mr. Lindsley, and she died two years ago at the age of eighty two. She had a son, Clarence, and three daughters: Edith, Jessie and Hattie. This family has been in Jersey City for many years.

I, John W. Distin married Elizabeth T. Kellogg. We had one child, Rhoda E. Distin, born July 4, 1873. Elizabeth died about eight months later on April 20, 1874. Later I married Miss Sarah Jan Van Valkenburgh, and we had two children, Arthur and Florence.

Rhoda married C. W. Rowlee and they have Evelyn, Elon, Esther, and Erma."

John Distin's father, John H. Distin, was born in New Haven, Conn. on March 17, 1813. His great-grandfather, Joseph Distin, having been bound out to the British Navy because he was not the eldest son, was an enlisted man aboard a British man-o-war during the Revolutionary War. His sympathies seem to have been with the yankees. Perhaps this was due to the fact that he fell in love with a daughter of the Parker household, which was compelled to board him, and five other British sailors, for the duration. There is one family story to the effect that he actually deserted with a friend, and hid in the woods some distance from the Parker home. Searching parties came periodically to look for the sailors, and they would seek more dense shelter when they heard the Parkers give a blast on a conch shell, this being a prearranged signal. Family records indicate that he was eventually captured at West Point on the Hudson. I presume he was taken by yankees, as no doubt he would have been shot as a deserter by the British. After his marriage to Olive Parker he made Wallingford, Conn., his home, remaining there until his death. Miss Florence Distin, his great-great - granddaughter, recently gave the wallet of Joseph Distin to the Oswego County Historical Society. Close to 200 years old, the wallet is remarkably well preserved. It is engraved with the name "Constantinople" and

was purchased while he was serving with the British Navy in the Mediterranean.

His son, Joseph, Junior, and his wife, Hannah, went to Greene County, N. Y. in 1813. Being unsuccessful there, he moved with his family to Oneida Co. where he settled. He continued his trade of wagon making until 1856.

His son, John H., left his father in 1835, and at the age of 24 went to Volney, Oswego County. After a few years he settled on lot 62 ,about three miles northwest of Hubbard's Corners. On Oct. 12, 1839 he married Harriet Hubbard Markham, a widow, as is related in the foregoing pages written by his son.

This son, by great-grandfather, John W. Distin, operated the family farm (now owned by William Rath) until he retired in 1908 to move to Hannibal Street, Fulton. He enjoyed the many years of service he gave as a member of the official board of the Mt. Pleasant Church, and later the First Methodist Church in Fulton. For many years he was a supervisor of the town of Volney. During his period of office the villages of Fulton and Oswego Falls combined to form the City of Fulton.

He was commander of the local G.A.R. post for a period. Always he derived keen pleasure from his Civil War memories, and visited Gettysburg several times. In Aug. 1930, he expressed the desire to make "one more" trip to Gettysburg. Arrangements were made to have his grandson, Elon Rowlee, accompany him and his wife. A week after his return, he died. His wife, the former Sarah Van Valkenburg who was descended from the first Volney settlers of that name, died in July, 1946. Both are buried in Mt. Adnah Cemetery, Fulton.

His daughter, Florence, graduated from the college of Fine Arts, Syracuse Univ. in 1904. She spent the year 1910-11 in Berlin, Germany, studying music. Later she taught music at Ft. Dodge, Iowa, Dover, Del., and at Cazenovia Seminary, where she remained for 21 years. After this, she conducted a music studio in Fulton, and was a librarian for many years. At present she is retired, remaining active in church affairs, and the local D.A.R. chapter.

His son ,Arthur, graduated from Syracuse Univ. in 1908. He married Edna Wilber of Herkimer, N. Y. and they had one son, Wilber, born in 1912. Arthur Distin was salesmanager of the Halcomb Steel Co., Syracuse. He died in 1917, at the age of 37, in a tragic auto crash. His widow and unmarried son live in Syracuse.

My grandmother, Rhoda, eldest daughter of John Distin, was cared for by her maternal grandmother, after the death of her mother ,Elizabeth Kellogg. When John remarried, Rhoda, aged five, rejoined the Distin household. In her teens she boarded in Fulton during the winter months so that she might attend high school. About 1891 she went to Jersey City, N. J. where she enrolled in the 1st class of the Christ Hospital school of nursing, one of the first nurse's training programs in the United States. She remained there for three years, and was later surgical nurse in the hospital operating rooms.

Upon her return to Mt. Pleasant she married Charles W. Rowlee on April 8, 1896. She was always very proud of the fact that she was a "trained" nurse. Her son recalls that she always kept a basket of medical supplies packed, as neighbor's wagons or rigs called for her unexpectedly at any hour of the day or night. In those days of slow transportation to and from the town doctors, she often served as midwife, and cared for the otherwise ill or injured as well.

Charles Rowlee also boarded winters in Fulton to attend high school. Upon completion, he went

to Auburn, N. Y. where he commenced study for the legal profession, "reading law" as it used to be called, in the offices of an uncle, Judge Skeele, known as Uncle Prim. He remained there almost two years, until the depression of the mid 90's made it necessary for him to return home to help operate his father's farm. Prior to his marriage he taught school for a few years in the Rowlee, Hawks, Weed, and Hubbard district schools.

Charles and Rhoda Rowlee operated dairy farms all of their married life, first at Bundyville, then on the Whitaker Rd., later on his father's homestead. They were active in the affairs of the Mt. Pleasant Church, and sang duets at many functions, entertainments, and almost all neighborhood funerals. They were members of the church choir for 45 years. They had a family of four children—Evelyn, Elon, Esther, and Erma. Charles Rowlee died in June 1944, and Rhoda in Feb., 1956. Both are buried in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.

The ancestor of the many Rowlees in this section was Nathan, born Apr. 6, 1782, the sixth child and third son of Heman Rowlee who served as a lieutenant in the Florida and Warwick Co. of the Fourth Reg. Orange County militia. Heman was born Nov. 17, 1746 ,and grew up in the hills east of the Hudson River. When he was old enough, he was apprenticed to learn the stone mason's trade, by which he afterwards earned his living. In 1769 he bought a farm in southern Orance Co., a region already quite heavily settled by the Dutch, Scotch and Irish. On Jan. 9, 1770 he married Lydia Seely, a descendant of Robert Seely said to have come to America with Gov. Winthrop's fleet.

Heman Rowlee first appears in Revolutionary records as lieutenant of the Orange County militia under Col. John Hathorn. The only specimen of his handwriting known is where he signed a receipt for pay on Col. Hathorn's voucher, now filed in the Controller's office at Albany. He did not sign the Revolutionary pledge. Orange Co. was part of the frontier during the war, and was subjected to murderous raids from time to time. The most notable of these was led by Brandt and ended in the battle of Minisink, which was a massacre of Orange Co. provincials. The militia performed service much like guerilla warfare, rather than regular army duty.

A humorous story of colonial times has been handed down. Heman at one time had but one pair of pants. His wife washed them after he retired and hung them in front of the fire place to dry; in the night they fell over and were reduced to ashes. The next day he remained in bed while a hastily summoned neighbor helped his wife make a new pair. Ten years after the Revolutionary War, Heman had a family of ten children who overran their log home. So he excavated to bedrock, and constructed a roomy stone house made of dressed rock. The chimney was a massive one of stone, the walls were 18" thick, the windows narrow, and provided with solid board shutters. Fifty years ago the house was still in excellent condition. It was occupied by Rowlees until 1866.

Hundreds of descendants of the ten children brought up in this house are now in all parts of the United States, and very few know of the comfortable home and happy family life of their Revolutionary ancestor.

Willard Rowlee, a botany teacher at Cornell Univ. for many years, traced the family of Heman Rowlee back to 1632 when the original ancestor first came to America. Excerpts from his published genealogy appear on the next pages.

A Direct Line of Fathers and Sons From 1630:

Henry Rowlee born in England in vicinity of Shrewsbury which is on the Wales border. Came to Plymouth, Mass. around 1630-32. Was an early planter.* Married Sarah Palmer. Their 3 children born in England, presumably she died after family migrated to America. The widow, Anne Blossom, was his second wife to whom he was married Oct. 17, 1633. They moved to Scituate, Mass. in 1634. In 1638 they went to Barnstable, Mass. when their pastor, John Lothrop moved his church there. In 1650 he moved with his step-son, Peter Blossom, to Falmouth, Mass. Henry died in 1673.

Moses Rowlee born prior to 1630 in England, died 1705 at E. Haddam, Conn. Married Elizabeth Fuller on Apr. 22, 1652 at Barnstable, Mass. Had 10 children. Elizabeth was daughter of Capt. Matthew Fuller, first physician of Barnstable, whose estate was appraised at 667.046 pounds, including "pearls, diamonds, and precious stones." It was Moses who changed the spelling of the name, although the rest of his family didn't follow suit immediately.

Shubael Rowley born Jan. 11, 1660 in Barnstable, Mass., died Mar. 28, 1714 in Colchester, Conn. Married Catherine Crippen. Had 8 children.

Shubel Rowley born 1686 in Falmouth, Mass. Married Hannah Brown of Colchester, Conn. Had 8 children. In 1734 they were living in North Castle, Winchester, N. Y.

Matthew Rowley born Oct. 8, 1720 at Colchester, Conn., was sixth child of Shubel. No record of his wife's name.

Heman Rowlee born Nov. 14, 1746, died Dec. 16, 1818. Married Lydia Seely (born Dec. 26, 1749) on Jan. 9, 1770. Had 10 children. He is buried in Amity burying ground in Orange Co.

Nathan Rowlee born Apr. 6, 1782. Married Dorothy Carr of Orange Co. Had 10 children. It was this family which came to Fulton.

Heman Rowlee born Jan. 5, 1823. Married Janette Dunsmore. Offspring: 1. Alonzo; 2. Anna, died as baby; 3. Jay 1861-1897.

Alonzo B. Rowlee born Sept. 30, 1846 in Town of Volney. Married Amanda E. Skeele on Dec. 18, 1867. Offspring: 1. Charles Williams; 2. Grace S. Foster; 3. Melvin; 4. Gertrude Colosimo.

Charles W. Rowlee born Dec. 28, 1873 at Redfield, N. Y. Married Rhoda E. Distin on Apr. 8, 1896. Offspring: 1. Evelyn; 2. Elon; 3. Esther; 4. Erma.

* It may please the smallfry of the family to see the name of their early ancestor associated with some of the famous ones they read about on each Thanksgiving. On the first tax rating (1632-33) for Plymouth Colony we see:

	L.	P.
Henry Rowlee	—00	09
Gov. Edward Winslow	—02	05
Myles Standish	—00	18
John Alden	—01	04

Second Tax Rating (1633-34)

	L.	P.
Henry Rowley	—00	18
Gov. Edward Winslow	—02	05
Myles Standish	—00	18
John Alden	—01	04

I have picked out of the genealogy, to list on the previous page, *only the direct line of fathers and sons of the most interest to my own branch of the Rowlee family.*

The period of migration in the last half of the 18th century scattered New England families so much, that especially in pioneer district, the traces of famliy connection became scant or lost altogether.

The family name is spelled differently from the accepted English form of Rowley. The spelling of Rowlee is used by the first Moses in signing his will. During the 18th century the spelling Rowlee was used by a considerable number of families, some of

whom returned to the original "ley." Lieut. Heman's children always insisted that Rowlee was correct.

Heman's son Nathan married Dorothy Carr of Orange Co. She was born in 1783. They migrated to Groton, N. Y. in 1817, and from there came to Fulton in 1826. Like his father, he was a stone mason by trade. All but two of their ten children accompanied them to Fulton. Thus the nucleus of the Rowlee families now in this area. Dorothy Rowlee died in 1834. Nathan married the Widow Graham, later died on Feb. 15, 1839. Nathan and Dorothy were both buried in the original Fulton cemetery located at the corner of the present Seventh and Utica Sts. Their remains and gravestones were moved to the Mt. Pleasant cemetery about 1870.

Children of Nathan and Dorothy Rowlee:

1. John Carr—born May, 1805
2. Abiram L.—born May 1807 —drowned in the Erie Canal 1825
3. Charles Seely—born march, 1811
4. George Washington—March, 1813
5. Harriet—Aug. 1815
6. Nathan—1817
7. Esquire—Apr. 1819
8. Dorothy—Jan. 1823
9. Heman—Jan. 1824 (our great-great-grandfather.
10. Daniel—1825—died a bachelor in 1885.

Our great-grandfather, Alonzo Belmont Rowlee, was born Sept. 30, 1847, the oldest of three children born to Heman and Janette Dunsmore Rowlee. His father, Heman, lived on the river across from Battle Island, and for some time owned and operated a canal boat along the Erie Canal. As a boy "Lonnie" accompanied his father, and developed a love for canal life which he never lost.

Later the family moved inland, closer to Hubbard's Corners, to operate a farm. In August of 1864, Lonnie stretched both his age and his height to enlist with his neighborhood friends in Co. A of the 184th Regiment. His close friend, John Distin, fibbed about his age to be an adult, also! When the boys were being measured for height at the time of enlistment, his friend, Orlando Cole, urged the tiny Alonzo to his utmost, saying, "Stretch, damn it, Lonnie, stretch!" For two generations after, this admonition was a family joke, being repeated to anyone who was expected to achieve the impossible. Despite his diminutive size, Lonnie became a First Sergeant in Co. A, a rank never reached by his buddies.

The 184th Reg. was authorized by Gov. Seymour upon the personal application of the Hon. Elias Root of Oswego. To kindle enthusiasm, a series of war meetings were held throughout the county. Although Oswego Co. had already sent thousands to the front, and home ranks were sadly thinned, the recruiting for this 5th Oswego regiment went forward rapidly. Over 1400 men were recruited from this county, plus 200 from Madison and Cayuga counties to form the 184th. It was mustered into service during August and September, 1864, with Col. W. W. Robinson at its head. Many of the Hubbard's Corners boys, including the ones we are discussing, were in Co. A, captained by Joel S. Palmer.

To use modern army slang, the majority of the regiment "sure had it soft." After stopping briefly at Washington, D. C., City Pt., Virginia, and a spot called Bermuda Hundred, it went to Harrison's Landing where it remained during its term of service. It participated in no severe conflicts and was in reality a behind-the-lines group. However, Companies A, B, D and F saw more active duty. They were detached from the rest of the regiment at Elmira, N. Y., as the group was heading south, and did

not rejoin their regiment until discharge time.

On Sept. 23rd these four companies marched from Washington, D. C. to Winchester, Va. They stopped over at Harper's Ferry for four days and left for Harrisburg as guard for a provision train. They joined the army of Gen. Sheridan and were with him during the celebrated raid thru the Shenandoah Valley. In three days they marched 104 miles, on the track of rebel Gen. Early, burning and destroying property. They were under fire from guerrillas, and participated in a sharp engagement at Fisher's Hill. Subsequently they were ordered to Martinsburg. Here they remained two days, were ordered back up the valley and encamped at Cedar Creek. Early in the morning of Oct. 19, 1864 while most men were still asleep, an orderly dashed in from the commanding general with orders to fall into battle lines at once. No sooner were tents struck, then the enemy struck, and the memorable battle of Cedar Creek began. The battle raged until late at night with the Oswegonians being driven from their ground three times, and three times regaining it.

The famous Custer headed the cavalry unit at this battle. Sixteen of the Yankees were killed and forty wounded, but they were the victors. Gen. Early was defeated, the Union forces taking 5000 prisoners and 62 pieces of artillery.

Eventually companies A, B, D, and F returned to Harrison's Landing to rejoin their regiment. Here they all stayed for several months. They spent so much time beautifying their camp that it was said to be one of the finest camp grounds in the army! On June 30, 1865 camp was broken up, the entire command shipped to Baltimore where it took "the cars" for Elmira, N. Y. The group was paid off and mustered out at Syracuse, N. Y.

These Hubbard Corner's boys had been homesick, hungry at times, wounded, dirty, and had added their bit to the orgy that is war. But let us not forget that for most of them it was Life's big adventure. The pioneering of their folks was two generations behind them, theirs had, until the advent of war, been placid, rural lives with not many special occasions or events. Naturally these men regaled their offspring with army tales. John Distin often told of nightly card games and long chats held by farm boys from both the North and the South, who met under cover of darkness at a Gettysburg battlefield spring, used by both armies as a source of drinking water. This has always been a poignant, throat-lumping story to me; to see in one's imagination these curious, friendly lads who met without rancour by night and were expected to fight one another bitterly by day. Many years later, on a visit to Gettysburg, he showed the spot to my father.

In the 1860's there were no K rations, no canned foods for boys on the march. Flour, meat, etc., together with a minimum of cooking utensils, were issued to tentmates who had to prepare the ingredients as best they could. In those days, cooking was strictly the housewife's affair; farm boys, busy in barns and fields, were not initiated to the mysteries of the kitchen. Alonzo and Budge Rowlee, tentmates, were to tell many hilarious tales of their cooking endeavors. For one of their first meals they decided upon pancakes which were concocted and put in the pan to fry, whereupon a dilemma! No pancake turner! Lonnie decided he could flip the pan, tried, and the meal landed on his boots. No breakfast for the boys, and a reprimand later for Lonnie who had dough covered boots for inspection.

On the three day, one hundred

mile march, they became so hungry that they swarmed over a bean field which they found, stripped from the vines, and ate, the seed beans which had come up with each plant.

And now to pick up the story of Alonzo Rowlee. On Dec. 18, 1867 he married 18 year old Amanda E. Steele, daughter of Truman and Sally Cooper Steele of Mt. Pleasant. Sally Cooper Steele was born in Sterling, N. Y., an older sister of Lieut. Alonzo Cooper, whose story is told in the 1950 yearbook of the Oswego Co. Historical Society. Alonzo Cooper well known for his book, "In And Out of Rebel Prisons," also had published the once popular patriotic song "Old Glory." His great nephew, Elon Rowlee, and his sisters, were to sing this song at public gatherings in the early 1900's. A great aunt, Gertrude Colosimo, has in her possession a china sugar bowl which had belonged to the family of Sally Cooper. It was one of a set of dishes brought from England and the only piece saved when rampaging Indians burned settler's cabins near Lake Ontario, perhaps around 1800.

Amanda Steele's family attempted to dissuade their daughter from marriage, as they were about to go West and wished her to accompany them. She dissented, so her family went on and that branch of the Steele's is now settled in the midwest.

Perhaps to match the pioneering fervor of her family, Alonzo and Amanda left Mt. Pleasant to move to Redfield, N. Y. at the invitation of a Mr. Williams residing there. In partnership with a Mr. Powers, they operated a tannery, using bark from tamarack trees in the leather processing. Because of the lumber involved, they soon opened a sawmill, and were successful in both endeavors. Three of their four children were born there—the oldest being my grandfather, Charles Williams Rowlee.

However, the family became homesick for Mt. Pleasant and the old friends, so around 1883 they returned, living first on what is known as the old Sanford place on the Mt. Pleasant-Minetto Rd., and then to the farm on the Rowlee Rd. The depression of the 1890's affected farm income. His son, Charles, was called home from law study in Auburn to help on the farm, and Alonzo returned to his early love, the canal. His family remembers one of his favorite canal stories. One night his boat was tied up at one of the usual rowdy waterfronts. On a neighboring boat a cowering wife was receiving a terrific beating from her husband. After watching just so long, Alonzo jumped into their boat and attempted to separate the two, whereupon the wife grabbed a plank and hit Alonzo over the head! He always ended this story with a chuckle, and the words, "Never come between a man and his wife!"

He returned to farming in the 1900's, and died on Feb. 9, 1919. Amanda died March 6, 1933.

Such family names as Ives, Osborne, Rowlee, Distin, Wright, Howard, Hubbard are synonymous with Mt. Pleasant to the natives of this area, as well as the names Bartlett, Rockwood, Lockwood, Cole, Parker, Crouch, Vant, Grant, Sheldon, Beardsley-Graves, Kelsy, Rath, Looker, and Markhams. In helping me unsnarl some of the complicated family relationships among these groups, Mrs. Alan Osborne (Lucy Distin) keen and lively at 85, remarked, "They all came early, had big families, and stayed!" Because of these large families, there were always marriageable lads or lassies, in spite of the relatively few families in the area. Thus a mate seeking young man, hampered by poor transportation facilities, and the farmer's lack of time, usually sought his bride at least within his own township, and often within the confines of his own particular hamlet. So for about a hundred years the family names

of Osborne, Rowlee, and Distin, in particular, have been interwoven by marriage. As a result of this mixture, a present day bearer of one of these names may find himself with very few close relatives, and literally hundreds of cousins in various stages of kinship. It is interesting to note, also, that in spite of the constant intermarriage, very few close relatives married one another. I seem to find no instances of marriage between first cousins, and only a few where the participants were second or third cousins.

Let us consider the sociological aspects of life among these rural folks, say about 80 years ago. Each family was a self contained unit; there was someone, male or female, who had mastered the skills required for all household and farmyard tasks, most emergencies, and daily chores. As each household usually held three generations, general knowledge, arts and crafts were almost unconsciously absorbed by the younger from the older. Family love and pride kept older members diligently cared for, often as invalids for a decade or more, within the family home. True, we can perhaps say that this was due to the fact that no nursing homes and few hospitals existed. But we can also say that people of that sterner generation, cherishing family ties, would snort with disapproval at our present day habit of boarding out aged family members. Not only parents or grandparents, but any stray oldsters of the clan were accepted within the family home. As an example, when the young widow Markham married John H. Distin, they took into their home his aged parents who had come on from Oneida Co. about 1856. Later their son, John W., married Sarah Van Valkenburgh, and joined the household, bringing along also his small, orphaned daughter, Rhoda. As the years went by, John W. and Sarah in their turn cared for the aged John and Harriet, as well as Harriet's brother, Seth. Uncle Seth required much nursing as he suffered with facial cancer which had horribly disfigured him. When Sarah gave birth to her first child, Florence, her first remark after the delivery was, "Does she look like Uncle Seth?" She was quite relieved to hear that her baby was remarkably normal! Her question, of course, was due to the then accepted belief that unpleasant sights viewed by the expectant mother would mark her unborn child.

Today we view with alarm the growing number of homes broken by divorce. Poems have been written about the physchological effect on children left uprooted by these dissolved marriages. Broken homes, however, are not a novelty to history. Today's homes may be split by divorce, but the households of yesterday were broken by death. Because of the lack of modern medical knowledge and facilities, many a young mother died in childbirth, countless young parents—sometimes whole families—succumbed to diseases now forgotten, or to infections today considered trivial after a shot or two of Penicilin. Thus small orphans were frequently a sad, but inevitable, part of any large clan. I wonder, did anyone ever worry about the ids, egos, and libidos of these bewildered tots raised by grannies, aunts, step-parents, sometimes a series of the latter?

Family reunions, which are still prevalent, were great summertime institutions before, during and after the Victorian era. In the 1890's the Rowlee and Distin families decided to combine the annual picnics of the two clans, as at the time five Distin women were married to Rowlee men.

Commodious farmhouses were literally filled to the rafters in those bygone summertimes. Long visits were the accepted custom, and big city relatives flocked to

the homes of the rural folks when the warm months began. During the 80's and 90's the sisters of John W. Distin, plus their families, came up from New York City annually for their leisurely vacation. They came via canal and railroad, bringing trunks packed with the voluminous clothing of that period, barrels of flour and other supplies to supplement the farm pantry.

Picture a farmhouse containing three generations, now bursting for 12 weeks with ten additional members. And visualize the endless means prepared for this small army over red hot wood ranges, and the miles of ruffles pressed with irons heated on these same stoves. Realize, too, that the mistress of the house at the same time was preserving and canning huge quantities of food for winter consumption, and in her spare moments was preparing mountains of food to be taken on all day trips to excursion points such as Ft. Ontario, or Beach Oswego. One may suspect that the hostess in such a situation looked upon the good old summertime as something less than a vacation period!

Of all the old families in the Town of Volney, I have discussed these few, because their histories have special meaning for me. However, we can no doubt say that they were typical—they possessed traits of perseverance, courage, and stubbornness. In their lives they revealed an uncomplicated love of God, patriotic fervor, family pride, and a deep love of the soil for which they toiled so earnestly. These families, linked by many ties, had their share of the rich and the poor, the successful and the unsuccessful, those of whom they were proud, and those who had noisy skeletons rattling in their closets. Many doctors, lawyers, and teachers have sprung from these blood lines, but for the most part these families have remained farmers and tradespeople, a sturdy section of the middle class which is the core of American society.

Many persons supplied me with the information contained in this paper. My thanks for long chats goes to Lucy Osborne, Margaret Lockwood, Gertrude Colosimo, Florence Distin, Evelyn Sheldon, Esther Denniston and my father, Elon K. Rowlee. Information was also obtained from the History of Oswego County by Chrisfield Johnson, 1950 Yearbook of the Historical Society, and Will Rowlee's book "Lieut. Heman Rowlee." This book was published and written in 1907 by Willard W. Rowlee. He was born in 1861, the son of Sarah C. Distin and Geo. Washington Rowlee, Jr. His father died at the age of 26 and his mother married her brother-in-law, Jasper Rowlee. Willard married Libbie Howard of Mt. Pleasant in 1887 and lived in Ithaca where he was a professor at Cornell University. He patented a device widely used by submarines during World War One.

William Shirley - William Johnson Conflict in the Niagara and Crown Point Campaigns of 1755-1756

PART II

(The Recall of General Shirley)

(Presented by Johnson G. Cooper, April 15, 1958)

Chapter I of this paper dealt with the events leading up to the conflict between General William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts, and General William Johnson, New York trader and Mohawk Chieftain. (See Yearbook, 1957). It closed with the Alexandria Conference at which General Braddock, the new Commander-in-Chief, met with the American leaders to plan the campaign to be waged against the French in North America. A Three-pronged attack was agreed upon: General Braddock would lead an attack upon Fort Duquesne on the Ohio, General Shirley against the French fort at Niagara in conjunction with General Johnson, who would simultaneously attack Crown Point, and General Lawrence would attack Nova Scotia. It was also agreed that Johnson would be granted a commission from Braddock, as principal agent of Indian affairs.

By October of 1755, Braddock had been defeated and killed at the Monongahela; Shirley had assumed the command of the English forces in North America; bad weather and the dilapidated condition of the post at Oswego had forced postponement of the Niagara campaign; Johnson's forces, under General Lyman, had defeated the French at Lake George, but had failed to profit by the victory in an operation against either Ticonderoga or Crown Point. Lawrence had successfully begun his campaign in Nova Scotia. This paper concerns itself only with the Niagara and Crown Point campaigns, for it was within these operations that the conflict between Shirley and Johnson developed.

The controversy resulted in Shirley's recall to England and was in part responsible for the loss of Oswego to the French in August of 1756. Its roots lay in a disagreement between Johnson and Shirley over the assignment of Indians to Shirley for the trip to Oswego; Shirley's difficulties en route to and at Oswego in the summer of 1755; Johnson's failure to pursue the defeated French following their defeat in the Battle of Lake George, on September 8, 1755; and the failure of adequate supplies to reach Oswego during the winter of 1755-1756.

An important long-range cause was a continuing political feud in the Province of New York. The contestants in this struggle were James deLancey and his political supporters, arrayed against Governor George Clinton and his supporters. Johnson had originally been a colleague of Clinton, but for reasons to be developed, transferred his loyalties to the deLancey "faction". Governor Shirley was the principal witness for Clinton and as such was consistently in opposition to the deLancey party. Interwoven in this political struggle was the story of the lucrative, but illegal, trade between Albany and Montreal, carried on by the Dutch Albany traders, with the assistance of the Caghnewaga Indians.

Storm signals predicting the conflict to come were readily apparent, particularly in the problem of quotas, both of men and money. The governors, gathered at Alexandria in April, 1755, warned Braddock that England must establish the General Fund, which all agreed was necessary to success ,it being impossible for the colonies to agree on fair allotments. Both deLancey and Shirley wrote letters to the Board of Trade, pleading that London assign quotas of forces to each colony because the colonies could not agree among themselves. The failure of the Albany Congress in the summer of 1754 was itself an indication of lack of such agreement. All these warnings were ignored or pushed aside by the English leaders.

The single most important cause of the controversy can be traced to the political conflict which had raged in New York for decades. The principal ingredient in this struggle was the deLancey family.

The deLanceys had long played an important role in the affairs of the province, having been among those responsible for successfully negotiating the neutrality of New York, between the English and French in both Queen Anne's and King George's War. They were among the most prominent merchant-traders in the colony and during much of James deLancey's adult life, he controlled the actions of the New York Council and Assembly. Not until he became himself acting governor, following the suicide of Sir Danvers Osborn in 1753, were he and the Assembly ever found on opposite sides of an issue.

Several of the New York governors during the first quarter of the eighteenth centry had tried to interest the home government to build up Oswego as a fortified position in the "West." This trading post was the only one on the Great Lakes in English hands and the loyalty of the Indians rested to a large degree upon its remaining in control of the English. Governor Burnet was determined to build a fort at Oswego, but was strongly opposed by the deLanceys, who profited from the Albany-Canada trade. In 1727 Governor Burnet finally succeeded in convincing the Assembly to appropriate money for such a fort, despite the deLancey opposition.

The controversy continued throughout the administrations of William Cosby and George Clarke. Clarke wished to build a fort at Irondequoit in the Seneca country and furthed strengthen Oswego, as a major outpost against the French and their Indian allies. This political quarrel reached its most vitrolic point during the administration of Governor George Clinton, who succeeded Clarke in 1743. Clinton failed to heed the warning of Cadwallader Colden, one of the most highly respected leaders of New York Province, turned to James deLancey for advice and gave deLancey a lifetime appointment as Chief Justice in New York. This was a move which Clinton was to regret during the ensuing ten years of his term as governor and he soon turned to Colden, who became the governor's principal supporter as he had been of Clinton's predecessor.

Within a year after Clinton's appointment he was in the midst of a struggle with deLancey and the Assembly, one which continued throughout his administration.[1] During the early stages of this struggle, both Johnson and Shirley were among Clinton's staunchest supporters, Shirley because he was the principal advocate of strong action to evict the French from North America, and Johnson because he was the principal trader at Oswego and the most ardent supporter of friendship between the English and Six Nations Indians. Johnson saw this friendship threatened by the activities of the Indian commis-

sioners who were under the control of the Assembly and Shirley saw his dreams of a campaign against the French, by means of the Champlain valley and Montreal, threatened by the Albany Traders. These traders had great influence within the Assembly where they successfully exerted strong pressure to keep New York neutral in the English-French conflict.[2]

Governor Clinton and the Assembly fought continuously over appropriations for the prosecution of King George's War beginning in 1745, the strengthening of Oswego and the proposed campaign against Canada. He and Governor Shirley were in constant communication in relation to this expedition and Clinton used these letters in his arguments to the New York Council and Assembly.[3] Shirley was bitterly aware that in the past the neutrality of New York had resulted in the turning of the French Indians against New Hampshire and Massachusetts and he did not withhold these thoughts in his letters to Clinton. Shirley's support of Clinton brought him into direct conflict with the deLanceys several years prior to the Seven Years' War.[4]

The political conflict was stimulated by the flood of letters Clinton wrote to the Lords of Trade in London. In one such letter, written on September 27, 1747, he complained of the opposition of the deLancey faction. He noted specifically that the Assembly had refused to appropriate money towards the expedition against Canada and an alliance with the Indians. In addition he reported to the Lords his request that the Assembly appoint Johnson to be Chief Commissioner of Indian Affairs in an effort to regain the loyalties of the Six Nations in the struggle against the French.[5]

Clinton met the Indians at Albany in 1746, 1747 and 1748, the last in the company of Governor Shirley.[6] These Conferences were basically attempts to cement the Indian loyalty and assure them that England's promises would be carried out against their enemies. James deLancey was present at two of the meetings, as well as other members of the New York Council. The Six Nations Indians were disappointed when the expedition against Canada was cancelled in 1748 and were on the verge of going themselves to Canada to confer with the French in order to seek the release of Indians held prisoner in Montreal. Clinton, Shirley and Johnson wished to prevent this at all costs. Their view was that as wards of the English, the Six Nations should permit the English to negotiate for the release of their brothers. In a report on this Conference to Under-Secretary of State Stone, Shirley and Clinton wrote in part.[7]

> Something of this kind has been committed to the care of a number of Men at Albany . . . Commissioners of Indian Affairs, but as they are all Traders with the Indians, they seem to have... had more regard to their Private Profit than to the Publick good, Chief aim . . . to continue a Clandestine Trade which the Principal Men among them have in Canada and which would be most advantageous to them in time of war, as it formerly was in Queen Annes, while Albany served as a convenient Place for Stores to the Enemies parties that made incursions upon New England.
>
> Indeed the Traders with the Indians on many Accounts are the least proper to be intrusted with the Conduct of Publick Affairs among them; and we would further observe to Your Lordships that the Indians, but more expecially the Mohawks, who are now intermixed with the English or rather Dutch Settlements, did not long since Entertain such Jealousy of the Commissioners suspecting they were desireous to

have their Nations destroy'd in order to Possess their Lands, and this Jealousy broke out in a remarkable manner about the time of the Commencement of the War with France, & we are Affraid may be again renewed on the news of Peace.

Also that since these Commissioners discovered that Govr. Clinton was resolved to Discharge by all Means any Commerce or Intercourse with Canada, which was carried on by the Assistance of the Indians, they have refused to Act any longer as Commissioners & still continue to do so.
18 August 1748

(s) W. Shirley
G. Clinton

Clinton expounded on the theme of the "faction's" opposition in a series of letters to London. Johnson and Shirley from 1746 to 1749. He made numerous accusations against both James and Oliver deLancey, and at one point accused Oliver of sedition. As early as April 1748, Clinton wrote to Lord Newcastle, Secretary of the Lords of Trade, complaining of Sir Peter Warren's interference in the affairs of the colony:[8]

I find Sir Peter Warren's letter to me that he was concerned himself much in the recommendation of Mr deLancey to your Grace's favor, notwithstanding he knows him to be a man of Leveller in principles with such other qualities as I have the honor to represent to your Grace. I think Sir Peter is highly partial, because he is his brother in law . . .

As Mr. Shirley and Mr. Knowles have taken some pains to represent to your Grace the ill-treatment I have received from Mr. deLancey and his party and the shameful cause thereof, I perswade myself when their letters and mine come to hand your Grace will think I have the greatest reason to hope for his removal again. . . .

deLancey was not removed from his position. Shirley had already written Clinton that the New York Governor should make the protest to London, but that Shirley's letters could be included among the evidence presented. The Massachusetts Governor had made a thorough survey of the Clinton-Assembly struggle and supported Clinton fully. This survey, like so many made by the Massachusetts Governor, were carefully documented and covered a point by point account of the controversy in New York. Governor Shirley was recalled to England in 1749, remaining there and in Paris as one of the English negotiators of peace with the French. There can be little doubt that Shirley cemented the opposition to him of the deLancey party during these years, for he represented the Clinton position to his most influential friends in London.

The most comprehensive summary of the Shirley part in the dispute between Clinton and the Assembly, supported by James deLancey, is given in a long letter from Cadwallader Colden to Shirley written on July 25, 1749.[9] Colden in this letter replied to an earlier one from Shirley in which Shirley thanked Colden for his support of Clinton in the New York struggle. Colden assured Shirley that the darts fired at him by the deLancey group had done more to establish Colden's character than anything else. This letter bears out the conclusion that it was particularly the Dutch members of the New York Assembly who had caused the trouble. In this same letter Colden noted it was this faction which had become the principal support of the illicit trade with the French, via Montreal.[10]

You know too well Sr how much his Majesty's Service . . . suffer'd during the last War by Factions & Licentiousness & that the Factions in this Government prevented the putting into practice measures which must have effectually destroy'd the French

Interest & Commerce among the Indians so that they could not have recover'd it in many years, if ever. And you can better judge than I what Consequences may be apprehended after this if this factious spirit in the Colonies be not suppress'd.

I have been near 30 years in the Council of this Province & longer conversant in the Publick affairs of it & in all that time I do not remember that any Publick money was drawn by any Govr. from the Treasury & applied to any other use than was design'd for by the Assembly. . . . If Govr. Clinton had made use of his power in drawing the least sum . . . contrary to the intent of the granters . . . this Assembly would have pointed it particularly out but no such thing has so much as been Attempted. On the Contrary I am perswaded that there has been more of the publick money converted to private use since the Assembly assumed the sole power of issuing it . . . than done . . . by all the Governors since I came into this Province. I am so perswaded of the truth of this that I could but the whole controversy upon this single issue

The office of Chief Justice has more influence . . . than can be well imagined. No man . . . independent of the Courts of Justice . . . . There are many Lawyers who's bread & Fortune depend on the Countenance of a Chief Justice . . . When then a Chief Justice puts himself at the head of a Party . . . as formidable as the Popes formerly were . . . . Two noted lawyers begging to be excused from appearing for the King agt O. D. is a strong evidence of this. The usage which I met with from Chief Justice deLancey in a Committee on the Council of the Particulars which Govr Clinton has informed you & the treatment that Govr. Clinton's friends meet with on all occasions from him & his brother shews how he makes use of the power of his office to intimidate. He told me . . . I would find that a Chief Justice has more power than a Governor.

It was in this letter that Colden stated that Johnson's management of Indian affairs in King George's War saved them for the English. He warned, however, that Johnson was in danger of being drawn into the "faction" by the influence of his uncle, Sir Peter Warren. [11]

I am told that Sr Peter Warren has advis'd the Coll Johnson who is his nephew no longer to assist Govr. Clinton in the Indian Affairs and to decline all publick business & to attend only his own private affairs. It is so much Coll John's interest to please his Uncle that it is expected he will submit . . . which the ingratitude of the Assembly might make him likewise incline to do. . . . The faction hereby hopes that the Indian Affairs will return to the old channel of Commissioners at Albany. What is like to be the consequences of this your Excell'y from past experiences can Judge as well as any man. I've heard that Coll Johnson has recommended Mr Lydeus to be Secretary for Indian Affairs, but I doubt of his being equal to this task. In my opinion some person of known prudence should be employ'd. . . .

As Colden warned, Johnson did resign. He went to see James deLancey in New York, hoping that deLancey would be able to convince the Assembly to repay Johnson his debts accumulated in the period of King George's War and its immediate aftermath. DeLancey either refused, or was unable, to grant Johnson's request, but Johnson later became an eager supporter of this "faction" in the political dispute.

The last paragraph of Colden's long letter to Shirley indicated that at that date Johnson and Lydius were on good terms. Lydius was later to play a major role in the conflict between Johnson and Shirley.

A letter Colden wrote to his friend John Catherwood in England in November of 1749 indicated his conclusion that the deLancey political faction had prevented the capture of both Niagara and Crown Point from the French during King George's War. [12]

Evident proof can be made that the King's Service suffer'd exceedingly from the Faction. . . . You can give many instances of it. The Factions in this Govt prevented the taking of the French forts at Crown point and Oniagara. The attempt concerted against them otherwise could not have fail'd of succes as now we are all convinced. If these two forts had been taken . . . we had obtain'd an influence over all the Indian Nations in North America . . .

Colden prepared a long report for Governor Clinton in 1751 on the state of Indian affairs in New York Province and this report contains considerable evidence relating to the continuing political dispute in New York and Johnson's part in it. [13] At more than one point in this report, Colden emphasizes the importance of retaining the loyalty of the Six Nations, and the vital importance of Oswego as a key to the retention of this loyalty.

Inextricably entwined with the political quarrel in New York, in which both Shirley and Johnson played key roles ,is the factor of the illegal trade between Albany and Montreal already alluded to. The trade can be traced to the period when the Dutch were in control of New York, during which time they established a lucrative trade with Canada. This trade was carried on by the Dutch traders, still living in Albany, during both Queen Anne's and King George's War at which time New York remained neutral. The neutrality included the Caghnewaga Indians, relatives of the Mohawks, and led to a tacit understanding in which the French Indians attacked New Hampshire and Massachusetts, leaving New York at peace. The governments of the New England provinces had protested to New York and Clinton had brought the complaint before the Assembly. [14] The tenor of their complaint was that the "richest men and principal traders in Albany" were the backers of both the trade and neutrality and opposed any expedition against Canada. It was further charged that in agreement with the Albany traders, the French Indians raided New England and brought their loot to Albany where they sold it to the traders and were in return armed for further raids on New England.

Clinton pointed out to the Assembly in 1748 that at the Conference held with the Indians at Albany in July of that year, Governor Shirley had openly accused the Albany traders of inducing the Indians to refuse to assist the English in the war against the French, and had done so in the presence of the New York Council including James deLancey. [15] Clinton also pointed out that he held affadavits from the Pennsylvania troops, who were in New York to take part in the expedition against Canada, and who reported they would be required to take Albany before they could proceed to Canada.

A series of letters written in the spring and summer of 1755 revealed the trade still flourished at the late date and was of some concern to the military commanders, who feared it led to the

wholesale passage of information from Albany to the French commanders in Montreal and Crown Point. Shirley noted this in a letter he wrote to deLancey on May 25, 1755.[16]

I flatter my self that upon the perusal of the two enclosed paragraphs of General Johnson's and Mr. Alexander's letters, Your Honour will think that it is absolutely necessary for your Government to take immediate action for preventing the mischievous effects of the pernicious intercourse between the French Indians and Albany at this juncture; from whence it cant be doubted but that the French in Canada have consistent intelligence given them by the latter of every motion of the English than which nothing can have a greater tendency to disappoint his Majesty's Service in every part of the present Expedition, particularly in the designed attempt for the Reduction of the French Forts at Niagara . . . and which likewise hath a strong tendency even to endanger the important Fort at Oswego, within your own Government.

It seems to me clear that these Indians being permitted to come from Canada to Albany or return from thence to Canada, at this Juncture must be at least as dangerous, if not more so, than to suffer the French Subjects belonging to Cape Breton to come into or depart out of our Colonies now, all whom it has been thought necessary to put under a Restraint for some time, I am perswaded your Honour upon this occasion will have no dependence on the late Treaty of Neutrality between the Caghnewaga Indians and Commissioners for Indian Affairs at Albany, even with respect to the Government of New York; As to the King's Subjects of his other Colonies which your Honour seems to think, in one of your letters to me, are included in this Treaty: upon the perusal of the Copy of it which you sent me, I am far from thinking it probable, that those Indians understand it to extend to any other Colony than that of New York: Which I know are the Sentiments likewise of others who have seen it: and even if those Indians did understand it otherwise, I cant think any Reliance is to be had upon it now.

Wm. SHIRLEY.

Shirley was obviously angered at the failure of New York to take positive action in this matter, and particularly at deLancey for saying that the neutrality treaty went beyond the boundaries of New York Province. DeLancey having been present at the 1748 Conference with the Indians knew as well as did Shirley that neutrality was limited to New York.

DeLancey wrote to Johnson on June 7, 1755, referred to the Shirley letter and asked his opinion as to the ending of this trade. He hinted that if too rapid action was taken it might bring repercussions from the Indians. This seemed a most unusual position to take since the demand to end the trade was anything but new. Johnson replied to the deLancey letter on June 15th and indicated agreement with Shirley that some action should be taken, but advised caution in view of the fact that the Mohawks considered he Caghnewagas as distant members of the family. That Johnson himself must have realized the Indians were also opposed to this trade seems inescapble in view of his close associations with the Six Nations for years, and in view of his long experience in the Oswego trade.

The position of the Six Nations was made unmistakably clear at the June-July 1755 Conference between the Six Nations and Johnson at Mount Johnson. Kaghswughtioni, Chief of the Onondagas, was chosen by King

Hendricks to make a reply to the introductory speeches of Johnson and Braddock—the latter in absentia—and in the course of his remarks took note of this trade: [17]

Brother, you exhorted us by this bundle of Sticks to Union, friendship and Brotherly love. We shall strictly observe your admonition and adhere together like true Brethren. It seems as if your advice has already taken effect, for the Senecas are gathering together, and the Onondagas are retrieving their people from Sweegachie; but Brother we must tell you, Your people are very faulty, they are too thirsty of money, and carry on a Trade with the French which is not only a real prejudice to us but to yourselves also.

Kaghswughtioni's speech was seconded by Conochquiesie, and Oneida Chief. Johnson then brought to the attention of the Conference the problem of the Caghnewagas who, considered by the Six Nations as brothers, were the carriers of this illicit trade. He indicated the Caghnewagas had free access to Albany for trade and were not enemies of the English, but "if the Caghnewagas refused to stop trading with the French and act as Enemies of the English the Indians cannot expect the English not to treat the Coghnewagas as Enemies also." [18] Information which reached Johnson during the battle of Lake George in September 1755 led him to take a much stronger stand against the Albany trade and the Caghnewagas.

Colonel John Bradstreet, who had been appointed by Shirley to protect the supplies from Albany to Oswego, wrote to Shirley on May 29, 1755 and expressed his concern about the trade. [19]

. . . nothing said or done of any consequences in any part of the governments, but soon finds its way to Crown point and Montreal.

Bradstreet sent a copy of this letter to Johnson which the General must have received by the time he wrote to deLancey agreeing on caution in moving against the Albany traders. On June 6, 1755, Goldsbrow Banyar, Secreto Johnson and expressed his fears tary to the New York Executive Council, wrote to Johnson referring to the Shirley letter to deLancey and the Lt. Governor's anger at the strong language Shirley employed. However, on May 16, 1755, Banyar had himself written that the Indians of the French in Albany were carrying away information to Montreal and Crown Point.

Both Johnson and deLancey in letters written to the Board of Trade in London, about the same time, indicated the dangers of the illegal trade and the necessity of prohibiting it. Johnson's concern about the Albany people is indicated in a letter to the new governor, Sir Charles Hardy, on September 16, 1755. The Battle of Lake George had been fought and Johnson was making excuses for his failure to followup the defeated French. He complained to Hardy, who was enroute to Albany, of the difficulty of securing supplies, particularly because of the opposition of the Albany traders. He noted they were hiding horses and wagons in order to prevent their use against the French and told Hardy the Commissioners in Albany were deliberately withholding supplies. Johnson requested the Governor to arrest anyone involved in this action and reinforced his feelings in a letter to the Board of Trade, written after the Battle of Lake George: [20].

Sir Charles Hardy is come up up to Albany . . . I hope to see him there, when I propose to lay this matter before him, but I

forsee that if Sir Charles embraces my sentiments and tries to push them into effect he will meet with great opposition from the Dutch Traders at Albany who by their cabals and weight in the Assembly may perhaps distress or at least vex him, those people are so devoted to their private profit that every other publick principle has ever been sacrificed to it . . . .

This was a reversal from the position taken both by Johnson and James deLancey in their correspondence to each other, and their opposition to Shirley's incessant demands to stop the trade. Johnson here has reverted to the position he took during his term of office under Governor Clinton! When Shirley requested immediate action, they delayed; when Johnson or deLancey corresponded with the Board of Trade, they recommended positive action! In the letter quoted above, Johnson wrote forcefully in a demand for action against the Cagnewagas, despite his earlier suggestion of caution. Both he and Shirley now demanded that these Indians never again be permitted to trade at Albany or Oswego, a demand which Shirley had been making for years, against the firm opposition of the entire deLancey party. Johnson's letter to the Board of Trade noted clearly the good effect strong action would have on the task before them: [21]

This action will highly distress the French, who by the great trade between Canada and Albany are enabled to supply the Indians with Goods which otherwise they could not but under the great disadvantages, and hereby they make us the tools to the increase and stability of their Indian interest. We might then push a stronger & more successful Interest amongst them . . . .

Until this moment the only action taken as a result of the Shirley warning had been a statute passed by the New York Assembly on February 19, 1775 for four months and continued twice thereafter, each time for a four months period. This was titled "An Act to restrain sending of provisions to Cape Breton, or any other French Port or Settlement on the Continent of North America or Island nigh or adjacent there-to. [22] Johnson had become ardently concerned when this trade, and the information reaching the French in consequence, affected his own campaign.

Another point of controversy between Shirley and Johnson was the assignment of Indians to the Niagara Campaign. General Shirley had asked that several hundred Indians be recruited by Johnson before Shirley left the Schenectady area. Johnson had decided it was unnecessary for Shirley to have an escort of Indians between Schenectady and Oswego because the route lay through friendly territory. He further claimed to have had the backing of the Indians in this conclusion. Shirley, on the other hand, thinking about the infiltration of French Indians during King George's War, particularly the massacres at Saratoga in 1746, and Schenectady in 1748, did not want to be without Indians en route to Oswego. When Johnson failed to provide them for him, Shirley appointed Colonel John Lydius to go to Mount Johnson, treat there with Johnson, and recruit enough Indians to act as guides and guards on the trip to Oswego.

Lydius was a poor choice for this task. He had earlier been involved in the Wyoming Valley purchase in Pennsylvania, was not trusted by the leaders of the Six Nations, and was thoroughly disliked by Johnson. It will be recalled that Cadwallader Colden had earlier written Shirley as to his own qualifications about Ly-

dius. Lydius had at one time been Johnson's principal trader in the Oswego business. He had learned the Indian languages, belonged to the "turtle" tribe of the Mohawks and had built a mansion near Mount Johnson. This appointment on the part of Shirley opened the way for the charge that he was directly interfering in Indian affairs. Shirley, for his part, noted that Johnson refused to hire Indians for the trip to Oswego, and the Niagara Campaign, which necessitated his taking direct action to fill the void.

Johnson's complaint against interference by Shirley was sent to every influential friend he had in New York, and to the Board of Trade in an important letter written from Lake George a week prior to the Battle there. This dispute led to the complete break in the friendly relationship which had been in effect since the days of their association with Governor Clinton.

Johnson had written Shirley indicating the difficulty he anticipated in securing the loyalties and cooperation of the Six Nations Indians. He indicated that these difficulties would stem from past failures on the part of the English in carrying out promises made to the Six Nations, and in the lack of vigor in past campaigns against the French. Presumably he referred to the sudden cancellation of the expedition against Canada in King George's War; the holding of Indian prisoners in Canada; and the recent defeat of Washington at Will's Creek. It will be recalled that political considerations had prevented Shirley, Johnson and Clinton from consumating an alliance during the earlier war; had prevented the strengthening of Oswego and had led to the sack of Saratoga. The Indians were constantly reminding Johnson of these weaknesses and Johnson was worried that he would lack sufficient funds to guarantee their cooperation in the coming struggle. Johnson still remained unpaid by the Assembly for the debts accumulated during King George's War, a fact he noted in almost every letter he wrote.

These complaints of Johnson failed to impress Shirley. He was accustomed to John's pessimism and caution and no doubt recalled the letters written by Johnson in 1754 indicating his lack of capabilities to be commander of the Crown Point campaign. Whatever the reason, Shirley assured Johnson he could see no difficulties in this direction and assumed Johnson, with his past experiences in Indian affairs, would be successful in his mission. At the close of a letter Shirley wrote Johnson on May 24, 1755, he again requested Johnson to secure Indians for the Niagara Campaign, and wrote that he desired the Indians to accompany him, his troops, and the battoemen on the journey from Schenectady to Oswego.

That Johnson himself knew of the dangers to those unfamiliar with the route to Oswego was indicated in his own correspondence in King George's War. On March 16, 1747, he wrote to Governor Clinton on this subject. In this letter Johnson wrote that if he was to travel among the Indians, "even among the friendly Five Nations", Clinton must realize the dangers of such a mission and furnish a guard: [23]

> I must tell Your Excellency that it will be very dangerous without a guard, for if the French at Cadaraghqua hear of it, which doubtless they will, they then will use all their endeavors to take or intercept me . . .

Johnson wrote to Clinton in July of the same year, and noted the dangers of sending supplies by way of the Mohawk and Oneida River to Oswego due to the

danger of interference by the Indians, who had been "scalping in that region", and in August he wrote Clinton it was necessary to pay double money to secure men to go to Oswego with supplies, "so great is the danger from unfriendly Indians. [24] He later wrote that the French and Indians could do the English no end of mischief by sending daily raiding parties against them. There can be little doubt that the danger had not receded by 1755, and 1756.

Fort Bull, at one end of the Oneida Carrying Place, was attacked in the Spring of 1756, with the loss of more than 20 battoes of supplies destined for Oswego, and in July of the same year, Bradstreet fought a brilliant engagement against the French and Indians at Battle Island, 9 miles South of Oswego. At Oswego itself, Colonel Mercer, the commanding officer, wrote that his men dared not venture more than fifty yards from the forts for fear of attack by scalping parties, and Mr. McKellar, the English Engineer sent to Oswego by Shirley to study the needs of that post, wrote to his superior, Montresor, of the dangers of Indians attacks a short distance outside Oswego's forts.

Johnson made a report to the Board of Trade in London in May 1756 relating the conditions of Indian Affairs that juncture in the campaign. In this report he wrote that he and Shirley had consulted on a number of points—Shirley had been replaced officially, but his replacements were not yet in America—and Shirley had given Johnson his support in actions he felt necessary. Johnson wrote that the Six Nations were much concerned that the Great Carrying Place at Oneida Lake—near the present site of Rome, New York—was guarded by so few troops, and there was imminent danger of attack by the French and their Indians. The Indians also had warned Johnson of the danger of attack on Oswego, which they felt could come momentarily. Colonel Bradstreet wrote a series of letters to Johnson during the early months of 1756 urgently requesting Indians to accompany his men to Oswego, due to the danger of attack by French Indians. [25] No person was better qualified to judge the dangers of this trip than Bradstreet who had travelled it so often. The evidence seems overwhelming that Johnson was wrong in his conclusions that there was no need for Indians enroute to Oswego. If none of the above evidence were available, the mere fact that so many of the battoemen deserted Shirley during the trip to Oswego, apparantly out of fear of Indian or French attack, would crown the case.

Mention has already been made of the fact that Colonel John Lydius played a significant role in the disputes between Shirley and Johnson. Lydius was appointed by Shirley and proceeded to Mount Johnson after Johnson had stated there was no need for Indian guides to accompany Shirley to Oswego. As Shirley should have realized, Lydius was anathema to Johnson. Shirley himself noted in a letter to Clinton at the time he planned to use Lydius as the "go-between" to the Six Nations and New France. [26].

I am very sorry that Coll: Johnson should take umbrage at Lydius's being concerned with him in what has been done by this govern't towards the cementing the Indians of the Six Nations in our interest; I would not have him imagine that myself or any part of the Govern't put Lydius's services in competition with his own, or that these Indians have been engaged in acts of hostility against the French by any person's influence but his own under Your Excellency's directions, and his Uncle Sir Peter Warren to

whom my letters upon that head to the Duke of Newcastle have, I believe, been shown, can inform him that I have done his merit all the justice in my power — But Lydius has been a person long known to Coll; Stoddard and this Govern't, and has occasionally had the management of small sums among the Indians for them and for my own part I thought he stood extreamly well with Coll: Johnson.

That Johnson was on good terms with Lydius in 1749 has already been noted in the letter from Colden to Shirley written on July 25, 1749. A letter from Johnson to Lydius written on June 1, 1747 further indicates their close relationship at that time. [27].

Sr.

I send you, hereinclosed a letter for His Excellc'y, & another for Mr. Duane, wh. I would beg the favour of You to forward immediately by the first Safe Hnd, and that Prissoner, along with them.

He is a verry bold fellow in his Speech & I find will stretch a great deal in some things. I would have sent him to Coll'o Roberts, but heard he was gone to New York Express, However y'u. may give my Service to Coll'o Marshall. if Coll'o Roberts is away, & tell him I would write to him but have my Houses all full, so do You do it for me present him Before him as Commanding Officer, by then please to desire him to Send me up directly having a great Call for them.—

No more at present but return You and Major Rutherford hearty thanks for the Limes with wh. I have drunk Y'r healths Several times.

I remain S'r. as Ever w'th all regard.—

Y'rs. Sincerely

My Compliments to Mrs. Lydius etc . . . & tell Josett my Houses are all full of French.

Wm. JOHNSON

However, between 1750 and 1755 Lydius had become personally involved in the Pennsylvania Wyoming Valley affair. A man from Connecticut by the name of Fitch, headed a group which wished to purchase land in this valley. James Hamilton of Philadelphia wrote to Johnson warning him that Fitch was about to approach Johnson for assistance in dealing with the Indians in this matter. Hamilton asked Johnson to have nothing to do with the venture and Johnson agreed. Johnson refused the subsequent Fitch request and Lydius took on that assignment. He received the purchase from the Iroquois delegates to the Albany Congress during the summer of 1754. Johnson, interested always in maintaining the friendship of the Six Nations, was furious, particularly since Lydius was accused of securing the signatures after plying the Indians with drinks.

Johnson did not immediately object to Lydius's presence at Mount Johnson during the long June-July Conference with the Six Nations Indians, for he wrote Shirley on June 18, 1755, noted Lydius presence, and made no objection to it. It was apparently the speeches of the Indian leaders which roused him to action.

This Conference with the Indians was the result of the earlier meeting with Braddock at Alexandria, Virginia and had as its purpose the securing of a firm alliance in the coming campaign against the French in North America. At this series of Conferences, the matter of the assignment of Indians to General Shirley and Lydius's interference in the negotiations came to the fore. Johnson, in his preliminary greetings to the Indian sachems, read them a letter from Braddock

which informed them of the plans to attack the French, and requested them to "take up the hatchets" as allies of the English.

The Indians at the Conference were informed that General Shirley was on his way to Oswego to lead the attack against Fort Niagara, but would not need Indians until he arrived at Oswego — this despite Shirley's continued requests for Indians at Schenectady — and at no point in the meeting did Johnson specifically request any Indians for Shirley en route!! The Indians in their replies, stated that they were under "Johnson's tree" and would follow whatever recommendations he made. The notes of the conference were in the handwriting of Peter Wraxall, Johnson's Secretary, and this in itself led to the first dispute.

Several times during the course of the June-July 1755 Conference, Hendrick, the Mohawk chief later killed in the Battle of Lake George, and Kagswutioni, the Onondaga Chief, spoke of the danger of French and French Indian interference on their lands, indicating they knew the dangers en route to Oswego. They insisted that Johnson must build forts at their castles to protect them from their enemies, and Johnson promised to oblige them. Yet Johnson informed Shirley that there was no need for Indian guides as the route lay through friendly territory, while insisting to the Indians that he would need many Indians to accompany him on the expedition against Crown point. In a private conversation on July 4, 1755, between Johnson and Kaghswutioni, that chief speaking for his fellow leaders, noted the danger of French attack. [28]

But as the French are a revenfegul people and have a great number of Indians in their interest, we must keep some of our people at home to secure our own dwellings from the Attack which we must now have reason to fear from the French, and we hope you will take care that we are supplied with Arms and Ammunition to defend ourselves.

Johnson replied that he did not think they would be in any danger, but agreed to supply them with the arms and ammunition they desired. James Pitcher, in a letter to Henry Fox, a London official then in New York, written on April 29, 1755 noted that stores and goods had been destroyed and troops ambushed at the Great Carrying Place east of Oneida Lake.[29]

The matter of Lydius's presence at the meetings was not first broached by Johnson, but by the leaders of the Six Nations. The following conversation is translated by Peter Wraxall and appears in his handwriting of the notes of the Council of June-July, 1755: [30] Kaghswutioni speaking:

'Brother, You promised us that you would keep this fire place clean from all filth and that no snake should come into this Council Room. That man sitting there (pointing to Coll: Lyddius) is a Devil and has stole our Lands, he takes the Indians slyly by the Blanket one at a time, and when they are drunk, puts some money in their Bosoms and perswades them to sign deeds for our lands upon the Susquehana which we will not ratify . . . The Governor of Pensylvania bought a whole tract and only paid for the half . . . . . These things make us constantly uneasy'

Conochquiesie speaking:

'Are you not our Tree of Shelter, and why will you desire us to take shelter under any other Tree (meaning Shirley), Where you go we are ready to follow. However, there will be many of our people around about Oswego and near to Niagara, who will join and be

ready to assist Governor Shirley.'

Following this conversation, Johnson instructed Lydius not to deal with any Indians at his residence, except through him. He further assured the Indian leaders that he would secure justice for the Indians on the land deal, and that Lydius had come on his own and not at Johnson's invitation.

An irreconcilable break between Shirley and Johnson followed this meeting and the complaints made both by Shirley and Johnson as a result. Until the June-July Conferenec, it is possible they might have remained cooperative and been able to work successfully together. That Peter Wraxall, James deLancey, and Thomas Pownall aggravated the misunderstanding seems beyond a reasonable doubt. It was further unfortunate that the announcement of Braddock's defeat and death should have come at that time. All available correspondence until the middle of July, 1755, indicated Shirley's full support of every Johnson request for money, men, method of payment to Indian Officers, and the danger of the Albany traders and the illicit Montreal traffic.

(To be continued)

Footnotes

1. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., **Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York** (Albany: Weed-Parsons & Co., 1855), VI, 639-703 Abstract of the Evidence in the Books of the Lords of Trade relating to New York.

2. **Ibid.**

3. **Ibid.**

4. William Shirley and George Clinton to the Lords of Trade, August 18, 1748, in **The Correspondence of William Shirley,** ed. by Charles Lincoln (New York, Macmillan 1912, I, 449455.

5. O'Callaghan, **Documents relating to,** VI, 378-380.

6. August 1746, July 1747 and July 1748.

7. William Shirley and George Clinton to Lords of Trade, August 18, 1748, in **The Correspondence of William Shirley,** I, 449-455.

8. Clinton to Newcastle, April 28, 1748, **Documents relating to,** ed by O'Callaghan, VI, 417.

9. Cadwallader Colden to William Shirley, July 25, 1749, in **The Colden Papers 1748-1754,** Vol. IV of New York Historical Society Collections 1920, (New York 1921), pp 119-129.

10. **Ibid.**

11. **Ibid.**

12. Cadwallader Colden to John Catherwood, **Ibid.,** p. 164.

13. **Memorial to Governor Clinton on the State of Indian Affairs in the British Provinces,** written on August 8, 1751 and found in O'Callaghan, **Documents relating to . . .,** VI, 738-747. The major points brought out in this memorial are: (1) Colden reminds Clinton of the bad state of affairs in 1746, when they tried to secure help for the proposed expedition against Canada, (2) he notes that the Indian Commissioners had lost all their influence with the Six Nations, because of their manner of dealing with them, (3) that Johnson was placed in charge of Indian affairs with some money from the crown for presents to the Indians, (4) that after the War, Johnson was given the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs by Clinton and the old Albany Commissioners relieved, (5) that in 1749, after the Peace of Aix la Chapelle, the crown stopped the Indian payments and the Assembly refused to allot any money, hoping to force Indian Affairs back into the hands of the former commissioners who were controlled by them, (6) that Johnson, heavily in debt and refused payment by the Assembly was forced to resign, (7) that Johnson had advanced considerable funds to secure Oswego, provide escorts for traders and provide presents for the Indians during the War, and (8) that the Trading Act at Oswego favored the fraudulent conduct of trade, and further favored the collectors who were controlled by the "faction." Colden noted that the Indians constantly made bitter complaints about this matter to both Johnson and Clinton.

14. O'Callaghan, VI, 365-374.

15. "Remarks on the Representation of the Assembly of New York of 26 May, 1747," found in O'Callaghan, VI, 365-374.

16. Shirley to deLancey, May 25, 1755, in **The Sir William Johnson Papers,** ed. by James Sullivan, (Albany, University of the State of New York, 1921), I, 543-544.

17. O'Callaghan, VI, 979-980.

18. **Ibid,** p. 980.

19. **The Sir William Johnson Papers,** Vol. I, 549-550.

20. **O'Callaghan, VI, 1014.**

21. **Ibid.**

22. Chapter XVI, #960, **Statutes of New York Province,** found in Charles Evans, **American Bibliography,** Microprint 7509-7510, American Antiquarian Society, (Worcester 1956).

23. O'Callaghan, VI, 423.

24. **Ibid.,** pp 386-387.

25. **The Sir William Johnhson Papers,** Vol. IX, 423, 430, 431 & 433.

26. Shirley to Clinton, 15 August 1747, O'Callaghan, VI, 385.

27. Johnson to Lydius, June 1, 1747, **The Sir William Johnson Papers, I,** 898.

28. O'Callaghan, VI, 988.

29. Colonial Office Documents 5:46.

30. O'Callaghan, VI, 984.

Oswego — 1796-1828
Fragments of Local History

PART I

(Presented by Anthony M. Slosek, May 20, 1958)

"and thus it is that the pioneers of Oswego, those who deserve a bright page in history, are being lost sight of."

Oswego At the End of the Eighteenth Century

From the first discovery of the place by the French, Oswego has a history running back more than three hundred years, which has became a subject of inquiry, investigation and of increased interest in a ratio corresponding with the growth of membership in local historical societies. From its favorable and important position as a trading and military post, it was an object of contest, a battlefield and a victim of the wars raged by the nations of Europe who discovered and colonized the North American Continent, through a period of a hundred years. Modern Oswego may be said to date from the surrender of the place by the British, under the provisions of the Jay Treaty, in the summer of 1796 by which Fort Ontario was then received and taken possession of by men of the United States Army. It may be noted here that in the Treaty of Peace, September 3, 1783, Article VII provided that . . ." His Britannic Majesty shall, with all convenient speed, and without causing any destruction . . . withdraw all his armies, garrisons and fleets from the said United States, and from every post, place and harbour within the same; leaving in all fortifications the American artillery that may be therein . . ." Under the pretense and excuse that the individual debts owed to individual British merchants incurred before the American Revolution were not paid, the British continued to occupy American soil. The real reason was the lucrative fur trade of the northern outposts.

When the British force bade farewell to Fort Ontario, on hand to witness the formalities of its transfer to the American command was Congressman Henry Glen (1739-1834). He was a Schenectady trader and member of the first Committee of Safety of that town. He was deputy quartermaster during the Revolution in charge of all supplies at Schenectady, Representative in the first three Provincial Congresses, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and member of the Third through the Sixth United States Congresses, 1793-1801. Among Glen's papers now preserved in Fenimore House at Cooperstown in a little hand-stitched note-book of fifteen pages in which Congressman Glen recorded his experiences on his visit to Oswego and the events of July 15, 1796.

It is impossible to say whether the spelling in his diary reflects the result of foreign parentage, lack of education or prevalent provincial speech; or to say the least was individualistic. The record reads: "A Captain Bruff Esq. from the State of Marland was appinted by the President of the United States to the Command of 100 men chawsed for the Porpose at west pint to take Command of the Garrisons of oswe-

go and niagara. The other officers of this detachment ware Lieut't John McClellan, Lieut's Rowan and Elmer. Captain Bruff lift Schonectady on the 23d June 96 of a thursday about 4 o'Clock in the afternoon with about 15 boats and two large scows with the Cannon etc. On my 2 days Journey I laid 2d night the Very pit of Anthoneys noes so Called. The 3d night a mile from the Little falls. - - At the Oswago falls I was obliged to have Every thing Rid to the Indian field as it was Cannon & Ordinance Stores of expenible nature Should their been any accident happened Goeing down the falls — our collars for the Garrisons had been neglected to be sent on time The commanding Officer had a pair made at F Schuyler Reader then been without any which I was Glad on. But on our arivel at the Indian fields a mile below the falls and 11 miles from oswago — were we all Incamped consisting of soldiers Battosmen etc of about 150 men. I received the coulors from west pint sent on by my son John who is in Schonectady. They came in time thaugh we ware procid'd with others."

Glen reached Oswego at seven o'clock in the morning of July 11th. He resumes his narrative: "Emmediately whent up to the garrison took my son Jacob with me and on approaching near I was mead by a Serjant who Conducted me as far as the draw Bright ware an other Serjant stayed with me till the one that brought from outside the fort whent & told the Commanding officer that I was their with my son. The Serjant Returned and had order to conduct me and my son to the Officers Room come up the step he lived in the second story he stood at the upper part of the steps and Received me and my Son in a Very polite Manner. He had sett down to Brackfast and then ware Requeted to sett down to Brackfast which we did. After Brackfast on Going my boat I told him I had Inden to Pickt my Tent on the other side of the River on the Side called old oswago. he told ware Ever I plesed I could pitch. In going of he told me that he was Sorrow he would not have it in his power to have me and my Son at dinner as all his things were Packed up. he wish me Excuse him which I did."

Most of the British troops and all equipment and stores had, in the meantime, been withdrawn. Before ten o'clock the morning of July 15th, Col. Fethergill and Captain Clark, representatives of his Majesty, with a detachment of only thirty men surrendered the Fort to the American officers. The diary continues: "Fix'd two field Pieces and the men Drew the Cannon up to the fort. the party for the Cannon was Command'd by Lieut. McClellain. Capt. Bruff came in the Rear with Lieut. Elmer and the Rest of the men. The Whole Whent inside of the fort ware their is a Large Prade. Lieut. McClellan was then order'd to have the Cannon brought up to the Northwest Corner of the fort on the Ramparts and the Collars of the United States were Hoisted on the flaag staff which is towards Southeast Corner The wind being High made the coullers show well. Then the men ware all in order The Captain ordered Mr. McClellan to begin fireing whilst Captain Bruff Lieut Elmer myself Son Jacob and Mr.. Clench stood on the Parade. their was 15 guns fired and then three chers Given by All in the Garrison. the number in side I Compute officers, Soldiers Battosmen Spectators in the whole about 130 persons. After the Cheers ware Given I step'd up with my Son, Mr. Clench followed and Give Capt Bruff and other officers Joy the occasion."

In a letter to George Scriba dated July 15, 1796, Lieutenant F. Elmer described the same joy-

ous event more briefly: "I have the pleasure of informing you that the American flag, under a Federal Salute, was for the first time displayed from the citadel of this fort at the hour of 10 this morning. A Captain Clark and Colonel Fothergill were his Majesty's officers left with a detachment of thirty men for the protection of the works. From these gentlemen the greatest politeness and civility was displayed to us in adjusting the transfer. The buildings and gardens were left in the neatest order; and the latter being considerably extensive and in high culture, will be no small addition to the comfort of the American officers who succeed this summer."

First Settlers

At this epoch, forming a link in the chain that connects the present and the past, Oswego had no vessels, no commerce, no resident population. The withdrawal of the British Garrison took away nearly if not all that had been established here of civilized society. Oswego was then, in all that regarded population and business, like an entire new settlement. In that year that part of the present city east of Oswego River was in the town of Mexico, Herkimer County, while the portion west of the river was in the town of Lysander, Onondaga County.

In 1796 Neil McMullen landed here with the frame of a house, which had been made at Kingston, and which he immediately caused to be put up and covered. At Kingston he had been established for many years in the mercantile business and for some time furnished stores for the garrison at Oswego. Let us digress a bit from the main thread of the story. This was the first frame house built in Oswego of which we have any knowledge. An addition of logs and the whole constituted the first tavern. It stood not long alone in its glory nor was it long **permitted** to monopolize the traveling customers. In these days almost every man kept tavern who had two rooms in his house, and some landlords got along with one. For men who traveled a tavern was a needful thing, even in Oswego. A competitor for public favor in this line appeared. A Mr. Logan came and erected another tavern, a large building wholly of logs. It stood directly on the bank of the river a few feet south of McMullen's tavern on the south side of Seneca Street. He remained here but a short time. Unfortunate was the fate of McMullen's imported house. It remained on its original site for more than 20 years and was occupied most of the time by the family of Captain Morris Tyler. When the streets began to be improved, it was removed and stood on the west side of first street. About the year 1827 or 1828 the old structure was obligated again to try the strength of its sills in order to make room for improvements, no regard was paid to its former respectability and no veneration for its honorable origin, move it must, and move it did to a respectable distance and was again fitted up for a comfortable dwelling. Later it became the rear part of a residence on West Second (No. 182) near Mohawk.

The family of Neil McMullen may be regarded as the inaugurators of established society here. Three of the members, Mrs. Hunter Crane, who came here as an infant and Rankin McMullen, born here in 1800, and Mrs. William Vaughan have furnished important material to the early history of Oswego. It is from them that we learn that there were in 1796 two white residents in Oswego; namely, John Love and Ziba Phillips, who were traders and might have resided here prior to the surrender of the place in that year. They left soon after McMullen moved in but their subsequent residence was unknown.

Captain Edward O'Connor came to Oswego in 1796. The captain, an Irishman of good education and pleasing manners, was in charge of a company in Colonel Marinus Willet's unsuccessful attempt to seize Fort Ontario in February of 1783. He and his family occupied a log house here but being fearful of the terrible winters which prevailed here, removed them to the little settlement at Salt Point, now Syracuse, to remain during the cold winter. His daughter Mary, afterwards Mrs. Alvin Bronson, was born there in the early part of 1797. His daughter Catherine married John H. Lord, the founder of the newspaper, Palladium.

Captain Augustus Ford speaks for himself: "I arrived at Oswego on July 7th, 1797, one year after the British had evacuated Fort Ontario at that place. I took charge of the first vessel on the American side of the lake. I was entirely ignorant of the lake, having no chart, or the distance from one point to another. No pilot was to be found and I began navigation on the lake with barred harbors and many dangerous shoals. (Ford shoals, a short distance west of the city, are named after him). I began keeping a journal. I made soundings and kept the hand lead in constant use, and examined the shoals, taking bearings and the distance from the main land. I not only sounded both sides of the lake but through the middle, the whole work occupying twelve years."

When Asa Rice and his family passed through Oswego in October 1797 to settle at the mouth of Three Mile Creek, mention was made by him that there were three families and a few soldiers residing here.

Oswego Surveyed

While Oswego was still under British control, the State by law reserved for itself one mile square on both sides of the river. At the session of the legislative in 1797 an act was passed directing the surveyor-general to lay out a hundred acres on the west side beginning at its mouth and "shall be known and called forever thereafter by the name of Oswego." It was done by Benjamin Wright, the surveyor of Scriba's Patent. A letter written by Steuben to Simon DeWitt dated February 23, 1793 attests he tcompetency of the surveyor: "Having been solicited by Mr. Benjamin Wright for a recommendation to you I take the liberty of addressing you on his behalf—As Mr. Wright has for some time past been engaged by me in the business of surveying I have had an opportunity of knowing the extent of his abilities as a surveyor, and I have every reason to be convinced of his capacity in that line — In addition to my recommendation of him as a person who understands his profession, I have always found him attentive assiduous and exact." A map was made according to an act passed by the legislature on the 9tht day of March 1798 and approved by the governor on the 6th of April 1798. From this map it can be seen that the future community of Oswego was to extend from the lake as far south as Utica Street and from the river west up to Sixth Street. The blocks were 200 by 396 feet and the lots 66 by 200; the streets being 100 feet wide. Those running parallel with the river were denominated first, second, third, etc., and those running east and west were designated after the signs of the Zodiac. In 1837 the village trustees saw fit to change these celestial names to those more closely related with people and places of this planet.

The State reserved three blocks for a public square but in 1829 the park was reduced in size by one third. The east block was divided into twelve lots 66 by 100 feet and leased by village authorities.

Bordering this park on the

north side of Seneca Street were three other blocks reserved for public purposes. The block between fourth and fifth streets was set aside for an academy; the one just east was for a prison; and the one further east was for a court house. In 1817 these three blocks (8, 9, 10) were sold and the proceeds were used toward the erection of a new court house in East Oswego. The block (No. 2) between Fifth and Sixth from Schuyler to Van Buren was reserved for parsonages.

That part of the village which lies between Second and Fifth Streets and north of Schuyler to the lake was reserved and laid out for a cemetery, except the south 100 feet adjacent to Schuyler Street was designated as a site for four churches. The State Legislature, 1827, upon the petition of the inhabitants, passed an act to abondon the cemetery and sell the same and from the proceeds to purchase a more suitable site. The cemetery was converted into 6 blocks and 35 lots and sold at auction.

It appeared that the surveyor did not overlook the commercial aspect of the community; for, he planned a fish market on First and Schuyler Streets. Ground was reserved for a common market from First Street to the river between Bridge and Cayuga Streets. These lots were eventually leased (1829).

Landscape

The physical features of the land at that time were somewhat different from todays appearance. As at present there was a very steep rise between the river and West Sixth Street and a very gradual slope to the northeast from about Bridge Street. In earlier days this slope to the northeast more marked than at present for quite a ridge of land extended from Bridge Street as far as Seneca Street where it was separated by a ravine. From the eastern slope of the ridge issued several fine springs which supplied soft, pure water to all the families in that vicinity. There was a pond immediately in the rear of what is now known as the Harsha block (between 106-108 West Second Street) and another one on the northwest corner of West Second and Cayuga Streets. From this pond ran a swale or outlet in a northeasterly direction into the river between Cayuga and Seneca Streets. Several early residents reminisced about the good times they enjoyed skating on these ponds.

On an early drawing or map of Oswego in 1757 can be seen old Fort Oswego. It was situated on a high ridge or bluff. All that section of the city north of Seneca and east of Third Streets was a stretch of rock covered in spots only by a thin layer of soil. This land which once formed this ridge has been removed and now covers the rocks making the locality habitable. Another feature on this map is the little peninsula running south into the river. By connecting a channel through this little neck of land an island was formed known as the upper island. Another small island also existed in the river which was not a natural formation but the work of man. This last island was formed by depositing earth and rock blasted out in the construction of Fort Ontario. Both of these islands were removed in 1932 by the Federal Government.

Across the river was a steep majestic rock standing out in the lake. As was mentioned this rock was later reduced by blasting and covered by dirt and seeded.

The river was twelve chains (12x66) feet wide. The bar in the river was eight and a half feet deep, the channel about two rods wide, and the mouth of the bar was about 150 feet. An early resident described the mouth of the river by saying that "the points of Gravelly Beach, forming a curve on either side of the river at the mouth, served to make the

outlet quite narrow with a rapid current, which was felt as far out as Garrison Point. Between the point last mentioned and the entrance to the harbor, the channel was narrow and rather crooked; in order to enter the harbor it was necessary to get bearings and land marks exactly."

Like all frontier communities the ground was covered with woods. It was mostly second growth as the original forest on both sides of the river had been cleared off by the garrisons. On the east side a large tract in the vicinity of the fort had been entirely cleared and had been used as a garden. There were numerous oaks, maples, chestnut and other trees.

More Settlers Come

In 1798 Oneida County was formed from Herkimer, and the east part became a portion of the former county. The next year the collection district of Oswego was formed and the president was authorized to establish a custom house and appoint a collector (Sect. 5, Chap. 22, Acts of Congress 1799). However, it was not supposed that the duties would repay the expense of collecting them so that goods came in and out of the port freely. Commercial activities became the chief interest of the inhabitants of this community. Salt was a chief item of export and it was shipped from Salt Point (Syracuse) down Oswego River. The boats used above Oswego Falls (Fulton) were known as Durham boats, decked over fore and aft, with running boards on each side to which were attached cleets to secure sure footing. A considerable opening was left in the center. They were propelled against adverse winds and currents by poles, and had a crew of from five to six men. Sometimes, after discharging their cargo, they were run over the falls. Below the Falls a lighter class of boats were used if easy draft of water. Three men composed the crew of the Oswego River boats. They were clinker built, open through their entire length, and when under sail carried a square main and topsail and one in the bow. During the settled weather of the summer the breeze from the lake usually enabled them to ascend the river by sail. Their load was from 20 to 40 barrels of salt according to the depth of the river.

Peter Sharpe and William Vaughan came here about 1798 or 1799. Sharpe kept a small tavern on the south side of West Schuyler Street at Water Street. Here he accommodated travelers and boatmen and stored goods detained on their passage. Sharpe and Vaughan soon became owners of a little schooner, probably bought from a Canadian. Captain Vaughan performed an active and honorable part in the stirring scenes of the war with Great Britain on Lake Ontario. He received a commission in the navy of the United States in 1812 which he held down to the time of his death (age 82) December, 1856. His widow resided at Sackets Harbor as it is presumed that the Vaughans resided at that place after they left Oswego.

In the spring of 1800 Archibald Fairfield transferred his family from Vera Cruz (Mexico Point), built a house on the northeast corner of Water and Seneca Streets, thus the new building became another tavern. The year 1800 saw another arrival; that was Rankin McMullen, the first white child born in modern Oswego.

J. Bradner Burt's account of his first visit to Oswego and the appearance of the place at that period is presented in his own words "In the winter of 1799 and 1800, my father, Daniel Burt, of Warwick, Orange County, New York, having business of importance to transact with a man in Canada, with a horse and sleigh took the route via Lake Champlain, crossing the St. Lawrence River at Shadaqui; and having

completed his business, and not wishing to return by the same tecious route, proceeded to Kingston, where, in May, 1800, he bought a bark of an Indian, and made the passage of the Lake to Oswego, then a trading post. While there, he "put up" at a tavern kept by Archibald Fairfield. This tavern was a large frame building and stood on the corner of Water and Seneca Streets. During the stay here he prospected up the river nearly two miles, liking the country and concluding to buy Military Lots numbers 1 and 7, When leaving Oswego he took passage for Oswego Falls in a bateau and run by Major Van Valkenburg, taking with him, and returning to Newburg, North River via Three River Point, Oneida Lake, Mohawk River and North River. While in Albany, he purchased of Lieutenant-Governor Van Renssalaer, Lots number 1 and 7, and rented for ten years, at $10 per year, 100 acres of State land in what is now the Second Ward, including land in what is now the Fort Ground. In the summer of 1801 I was living in New York, and father sent for me to come to him at Warwick, and gave me glowing accounts of the country, saying that some day Oswego would be a great place, and wished that my brother William and I would go there and build a forge. His glorious descriptions induced me to come. I would at least try it. I was hale and hearty in my 21st year; so in November, 1801, I started. Upon my arrival in Schenectady I bought a boat, and while putting my goods, which were few, aboard. I was accosted by an old gentleman by the name of Watton, (father of Mr. Watton, of the firm of Willett & Watton, at one time forwarders in this city), in this manner, "Where are you going, young man?" I replied that I was going to Oswego. "Going to Oswego?" said he in surprise. "Why, that is the very jumping off place, the worst place in this State. If you want to hear anything about Oswego, just go up to that house, (pointing to a house in sight) and you will find a man just from there." Going as he directed, I made the acquaintance of Mr. McMullin, who gave me what I should call a not very flattering account of the place. He said I would starve, that he had to leave, that it was next to impossible to support life, & c., I c. Notwithstanding these glowing accounts, we concluded to come, but changed our intereder course, going to Utica, selling the boat and coming through Cayuga county to Ovid, where we wintered. In the following May, 1802, I, being joined by my brother Joel and a lawyer by the name of Baird, set out for Oswego, in a skiff. We put up in a tavern kept by Peter Sharp, which stood on the south side of Schuyler Street near the bank. Next morning at breakfast ,I was accosted by a man who had arrived the night before in a vessel from Canada, who asked me if he had not seen me before, and I soon recognized him as an old acquaintance in New York as early as 1800, Mr. Matthew McNair by name—well known and honored by our citizens. I was pleased to meet him, and this meeting was a basis of a close and intimate friendship that lasted till his death.

"All the residents of the place then were Captain Augustus Ford, Peter Sharp, Archibald Fairfield, John Love, Rasmuscen, and Captain Connor, with their families. The place contained no stores, all merchandise being brought from the East by trading boats. The Oswego fleet represented by one small schooner, owned by Archy Fairfield. It would carry about 100 barrels, and was called Flat Bottom, by the residents. There were two forts on the west side of the river; one the old French Fort, is known to all, and another near

the foot of First Street. A Fort on the East Side was built of earth, and stood where Fort Ontario now stands. About two and a half miles west of here, and what is now Union Village (Fruit Valley), lived a man by the name of Rice, father of Arvin Rice, and grandfather of Dr. Rice, Surgeon of the late 110th N. Y. V. Arvin Rice was then about 16 years old, I should judge. After a few day's stay, I returned to Cayuga County, where I stayed till September, 1802, when I again came to Oswego, and erected a saw mill on the east bank of the river about 100 feet north of Cayuga Street. In raising my mill I had the help of nearly every man in the county, some ten and twelve, and then had to use a tackle. In the Fall of 1802 I went to Warwick.

"March 5th, I again started for Oswego, via Rome, on horseback. I blazed my way, through the woods and trees ,stopping the first night at the house of a Mr. Curtiss, of Camden, a miller; next night at Colonel Parkhurst's and another night at the home of Solomon Smith, of New Haven, who I knew in 1802. When near the home of Smith, where I arrived at 12 p. m., I heard the sound of a fiddle and knew the tune right well. He had a dance ,and I stayed and shook the "light fantastic toe all the afternoon and part of the night." Among the dancers were a Mr. McHannon and wife, Smith and wife, and Smiths' two sons and a daughter. It was a log house, which had settled so much that we had to "duck" when we "promenaded" so as not to bump our heads on the beams, in fact, one beam had to be tanen out. I left this gay and festive scene next day, and approached the "city" by way of the fort, where I met the garrison, consisting of a Sergeant and two privates, and while talking to them, I was seen by the people across the river, and the whole town turned out "en masse," crossed the river in canoes, and I, for a reason, was to them the ninth wonder of the world, being the first arrival that year, causing as much excitement as the great stone that fell in Boylston. I took residence in Oswego from that day, and turned my horse out to pasture, in what is now the Second Ward. During the year I erected what was in those days known as the "Burt House," and subsequently as the "Washington Hotel," corner of Water and Schuyler Streets. Oswego slowly increased in size and population."

Captain Edward O'Connor returned to Oswego in 1802 and taught school in a log house, built as a workshop by Captain Augutus Ford and situated near the bank of the river between West Cayuga and Bridge Streets. The schoolmaster is often mentioned as the first one to teach here but there is some evidence that Artemesia Waterhouse of Fulton taught prior to that date. He held a position in the custom house under the first collector of the port, Joel Burt. His residence was located on the west side of West First Street between Cayuga and Bridge Streets.

One of the most prominent of the residents here was Matthew McNair (1773-1862). He was a native of Paisley, Scotland; he came to America, resided for a short time in New York. He started out with a peddler's pack to seek his fortune; arrived at Oswego in 1802 and for more than fifty years thereafter was in active business—a merchant, shipbuilder and owner, forwarder, contractor, etc., always enjoying the utmost confidence of the entire community. A warehouse, on the river bank, between West Seneca and Schuyler Streets (in the center of lot 3 and 4) was built by Benajah Byington of Salt Point. McNair purchased this property; and in 1803 the schooner "Jane" from Sharpe and Vaughan. The name of "Jane" was changed to "Peg-

gy." There were two other vessels at this time owned by Archibald Fairfield.

Oswego lost its "free trade" status when President Jefferson appointed Joel Burt inspector and collector of this district in 1803. The commission read "collector of customs for the district of Oswego, dated at the city of Washington the 3d of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and three"; another as "inspector of the revenue for the port of Oswego" bearing the same date as the first named. The collectors for the next succeeding years were in this order: Joel Burt, March 3, 1803 to June 11, 1811; Nathan Sage, June 12, 1811 to May 31, 1826; John Grant, Jr., June 1, 1826 to April 30, 1834. The collections for the year 1803 amounted to $350.

During the summer of 1804, two fine schooners were built; one the "Fair American" of 90 tons by a Mr. Wilson, a government contractor, and the other the "Linda" of 50 tons by McNair. The latter gentleman added to his fleet several Canadian vessels. This same year C. B. Burt stated that he was chosen pathmaster and under his direction a road was cut through as far as Fulton. Another man by the name of King and three helpers, cut a road through from Cato to Oswego for $40. It must be remembered that "opening a road" meant cutting the underbrush sufficiently to allow an ox-cart to get by.

Shifting attention to the East Side, two events are noted. C. B. Burt build the first dwelling (of logs) in 1804 in the center of what is now Seneca Street. It was still standing as late as 1818. In October of 1804 Fort Ontario's garrison was withdrawn and the delapidated bastion was not again used until 1808.

In the Autumn of 1804, Alexander Wilson, the celebrated ornithologist, undertook a journey on foot with two companions, from Philadelphia, by way of the Susquehanna, Seneca Lake and Oswego to Niagara. He described his journey in a poem entitled, "The Foresters." The following is his account of Oswego:

Mark you bleak hill, where rolling billows break
Just where the river joints the spacious lake,
High on its brow, deserted and forlorn,
Stands Fort Oswego, where the winds that blow
Howl to the restless surge that groans below;
There the lone sentry walked his round, or stood
To view the sea fowl coursing o'er the flood;
Midnight deep glooms shrank to the panthers howl,
And hear a foe in every whooping owl.
Blest times for soldiers, times, alas, not near,
When foes like these are all they have to fear;
When man to man will mutual justice yield,
And wolves and panthers only stain the field.

Those straggling huts that on the left appear,
Where boats and ships their crowded masts uprear,
Where fence, or field, or cultured gardens green,
Or blessed plow, or spade, were never seen,
Is old Oswego, once renownd in trade,
Where numerous tribes their annual visits paid,
From distant wilds, the beavers rich retreat
For one whole moon they trudged with weary feet;
Piled their rich furs within the crowded store
Replaced their packs and plodded back for more.

But time and war have banished all their trains,
The boisterous boatman, drunk but twice a day,

Begs of the landlord, but forgets to pay;
Pledges his salt, a cash for every quart,
Pleased thus for poison with his pay to part.
From morn to night here noise and riot reign;
From night to morn tis noise and roar again.

The next, in point of time and important, to settle here was Daniel Hugunin, who came here in 1805, though Edwin K. Clarke and C. B. Burt stated that it was a year earlier. Hugunin's daughter claimed it was the latter date. He had twelve children and his family was remarkable for longevity, individuality, strength and ruggedness of character which exercised a desided influence upon the young town. His wharf was on the river bank about half way between Cayuga and Seneca Streets (lot 8). It was here that "Travelers Home" was located. It was a two story building and built by one of the Hugunins. As early as 1812 it was the most conspicuous private building in the town. It was later used as a general gathering place for the fashionables of the day and it was here that "fire-water" was dispensed to the Indians. Edward M. Tyler came here about the year 1805.

It was in 1805 or 1806 that the first school house was erected, by Bradner Burt with funds provided by public subscription. It was a 35 feet square structure; its four sided roof was surmounted with an open, empty belfry, and a coat of yellow paint completed the outward adornment. The inside finishing and furnishing were useful rather than ornamental.

A Dr. Caldwell not only took care of the physical needs of the townspeople but also the mental growth of the youth, all at the same time. This structure was fitted up with a pulpit to serve the itinerant preachers in religious meetings. It was used for other types of gatherings. When the block upon which it was located was sold, the school house was moved from West Third and Seneca to West Second and Seneca Streets. Later it was moved across the street and stood there until it was burned in 1865.

A change in political jurisdiction on both sides of the river occurred in 1806. The town of Fredericksburg was formed from Mexico, including the present towns of Scriba, Volney, Schroeppel and Palermo. The town of Hannibal was formed from Lysander, comprising the present towns of Granby, Minetto, Hannibal, Oswego and the west part of Oswego city. The first town meeting was held at the home of Matthew McNair in the village of Oswego on the first Tuesday of April, 1806, and the following officers were elected: Town clerk, Edward O'Connor; supervisor, William Vaughan; assessors, Asa Rice, Barnet Mooney, Reuben Sprague; collector, Ezekiel Brown; overseers of the poor, Daniel Hugunin, Peter Hugunin; commissioners of highways, Peter D. Hugunin, Barnet Mooney, Thomas Spague, Jr.; constables, Ezekiel Brown, James Brown, James Hugunin; fence-viewers, Daniel Hugunin, Peter Hugunin; pound-master, William Eadus; path-masters, John Masters, District No. 1; James Hugunin, District No. 2; Parmenus Sprague, District No. 3; commissioners of Gospel lots, Joel Burt and Asa Rice.

The following resolutions were passed at that first town meeting:

"That rams shall not be free commoners from the 1st of September till the 15th of November, with forfeiture of $2.00 for every offense."

"That fences shall not be less than five feet high, and not exceed the space of five inches between rails, from the ground to the height of two feet."

Despite the regulations regard-

ing fences there were many stray animals. Each person who owned cattle or sheep had to have them branded with certain marks of identification.

No post office was established at Oswego until 1806. Joel Burt, already the collector of the port was appointed postmaster. He served from October 7, 1806; William Dolloway from January 24, 1815; Nathan Sage from January 17, 1816; John Grant, Jr., from June 22, 1825; Samuel Hawley from January 10, 1931. An Onondaga chief carried the mail on the new route from Onondaga Hollow to Oswego. The post office was at first located on Water Street; then it was moved to the Northwest corner of West First and Seneca Streets; then to Water Street in the Market Building (Old City Hall); from there to its present location.

Thomas H. Wentworth was born in Norwalk, Connecticut March 5, 1781. He was brought up and educated to business in a commercial house in St. John, N. B., and came from thence to this country in the early part of 1800. In the spring of 1806, on his way to Canada, he stopped at Oswego and remained a few days awaiting a schooner that would take him across to Canada. On viewing the location of the place, its river, with its spring flow of water, its harbor with the broad Ontario before it and the green grass growing on its banks, its commerce passing through from Albany to Canada and the West, presented, in a bright spring morning a panorama of beauty which met his romantic ideas of a business life. Pleased with the prospect it gave for a young man to enter upon a commercial business and "grow up with the place" he, before leaving for Canada entered into an agreement with Archibald Fairfield who owned lots number 5 and 6 and wharf property thereon, for the leasing or purchasing of the same (the terms being stipulated) on his return from Canada under forfeiture on either part of $100. He decided to purchase and did so, and came in that or next year and commenced the commercial business of "transportation and forwarding" and continued it for a number of years. He was known for his acquired knowledge of commercial transactions, his fine penmanship and his accuracy as an accountant. His early associations with business men and gentlemen in other localities made his house a reception for such, passing through on their way to Canada and the west, and thus many pleasant interviews were had and enjoyed, which seemed like an "oasis in the desert," he being unused to the customs and habits of those who had taken up the "pioneer life."

After purchasing of Fairfield, he found the property much encumbered, which involved him in many difficulties, and embarrassed him in his business enterprise which after passing through the "embargo" times, was obliged to abandon. He was by nature a man of genius and had a fine taste for drawings, which made him a skillful artist, well-known for his penciling and miniature, portrait and landscape painting. He brought the first camera and made the first daguerrotype in this part of the state. He built a house in 1808 or 1809 on West First Street near Murray. It was bought by the starch company in 1907 and razed. A part of it was moved across Murray Street and was added to the rear or set behind Sayer's grocery store.

Milton Harmon was a settler in 1806 and the same year a tannery was set up near Bridge Street.

Another physician, Dr. Deodatus Clarke ,came to Oswego in 1807. Edwin Clarke related how his father moved from Pompey in June 1807. His father had bought 77 acres of land being the eastern part of Lot number 11 of

Hamilton Gore, Township number 17 of Scriba's Patent lying one and three-fourths miles from the river and now being in the city of Oswego. Upon the arrival of the family at Oswego, they having come down in a batteau or salt boat from Salt Point. They occupied an old building built by Peter Sharpe for a tavern situated on the side of the cove near the present junction of Schuyler and Water Streets. There the family resided for six months while his father was erecting his habitation upon the land he purchased. There was no road laid out but a serpentine path had been cut and made barely passable for an ox-sled across the land what is now Scriba Corners. On this path there were three openings; east of his father's lot including the Major Hill Stone's at Scriba Corners and one Paul Sheldon west of his father. In June 1808 Dr. Clarke brought the rest of his family to Oswego.

Besides the families already mentioned, there were in 1807 John Masters, Nathan Nelson, William Powell, Samuel Jacks, Captain Montgomery, Captain James Goodwin, Mr. Kelley, Robert Young, Captain Rasmussen and Captain Sodus. In James F. Cooper's novel, "Pathfinder," Jasper Eau-douce, the young captain of the "Scud", was William Sodus. He was employed to transport from Oswego to Niagara, a company of United States troops, one hundred and twenty in number, who were going to garrison that fort upon its surrender by the British under the Jay Treaty. He chartered a Canadian vessel for that purpose, there being no American vessels on the lake. On the east side of the river lived Daniel Burt, Sr., Theophilus Baldwin (Baldwin's Bay), Paul Sheldon, about one mile east in the present State Road, a mile further east was the Clarke family and at Scriba Corners Major Hiel Stone. At the foot of Seneca Hill lived Mr. Bush, Mr. Tiffany, Mr. Sverts. On the West side beyond the present city limits lived the families of Asa Rice and Elizur Brace. Population and trade was steadily increasing.

(To be continued)

The American Woolen Mills at Fulton, New York

1859 - 1956

(Presented by Mrs. Gladys E. Morley, November 18, 1958)

The Fulton Mill, later known as the American Woolen Mill, was one of the earliest landmarks on the banks of the Oswego River.

In 1859 J. G. Kellogg of San Francisco and Bradford Kennedy of Syracuse owned large landed interests in the corporate limits of Oswego Falls. In that year Erastus Kellogg came here and with funds furnished by J. A. Kellogg commenced the erection of Mill No. 1, which formed a part of the future great Fulton Worsted Mills on the west side of the Oswego River near the upper bridge. He was also assisted in the enterprise by Mr. Kennedy.

After a dam at the upper falls promised water power or proper water level for the canal, the mill started operating. The first raceway for the mill was built by Thomas Keeler and F. D. Van Wagener. Lord Ramsden headed the project with imported Cockney labor. Early settlers could recall a horde of the workers clattering down South First Street, their hob nail shoes on the cobblestones giving indications that things were moving.

In 1860 Abram Howe bought out J. G. Kellogg and with Erastus Kellogg the mill was finished. Potter and Holroyd took the upper part for a knitting factory and Kennedy and Kellogg occupied the lower part for the manufacturing of woolen goods.

A second mill was built in 1862. The same year Willard Johnson became a partner. The site of this structure was quitclaimed by Mr. Howe to the other proprietors early in 1863. The mills were managed by Erastus Kellogg and cloth was made for federal uniforms during the Civil War.

A third mill was built in 1867 and one year later in 1868, Hoyt, Sprague and company acquired the mills by foreclosure. Nathan Hodgson came here from England and leased Mill No. 1 and part of No. 2 for the purpose of manufacturing waterproof cloth. In 1869 David Ramsden began the manufacture of worsted goods in Mill No. 2. The weave "sheds" were built that year, extending the plant a considerable distance. About 500 looms were running and an extensive machine-shop was connected with the factory.

In 1873 Hoyt, Sprague, and Company failed and A. D. Juilliard was appointed receiver. In his interest the establishment, including 500 acres of land, The Broadway House and other property was sold for $105,000. In 1876 a stock company was formed and conducted the mills until they were amalgamated with the Riverside Mills of Providence, Rhode Island, under the firm name of The Riverside and Oswego Mills. Mr. Juilliard was still in charge. The floor space at that time was 170,000 square feet. The company expended $750,000 on buildings and machinery.

Between 1879 and 1884 fifty-four homes which were referred to in a newspaper of that day as

tenement houses, were built by the company. They were located on West First Street north of Broadway and on West Second and West Third Streets, south of Cedar Street. The buildings on West Second and West Third Streets were duplex houses. These homes were rented to employees of the plant for $2.50 a month. Some of the tenants were not required to pay rent as their wages were not sufficient to meet their needs. All improvements had to be made by the tenants, although the mill supplied the necessary materials for this work. As wages increased in the ensuing years, rent adjustments were also made.

The Riverside and Oswego Mills Company failed in 1889, the property having been attached for $412,000 and later Chester A. Braman was appointed receiver.

In June 1890 it was sold to George S. Bullens and Warren Sawyer of Massachusetts for $800,000.

After eighteen months of idleness Charles Fletcher of Providence, Rhode Island, bought the property and immediately came into possession of the mill. He rebuilt and enlarged it and introduced new and improved machinery for the manufacture of worsted goods. He also changed its name to the Fulton Worsted Mills. The process used in the production of their wool was changed from the English to the French method.

Fletcher was a powerful, fine appearing man with mutton chop whiskers. Accounts have it that he challenged a professional wrestler with success! From time to time, he was seen on the terrace of a South First Street hotel conversing with associates. Fletcher had come from England as a butcher to Providence, Rhode Island, only to become a multi-millionaire manufacturer.

Between 1892 and 1899 an interesting event in the history of the mill occurred and was related to me by Mr. Koeher. During the above period of time rumors began to circulate that Mr. Fletcher was considering an offer for his seven mills by a syndicate in Bradford, England. Four or five men did arrive in Fulton to inspect Mr. Fletcher's property and to prepare a report for the English syndicate, that they represented. No final decision regarding the disposal of the mill was reached but terms and plans were discussed for a period of two days.

J. W. Neary, Arthur Schwartz and Luther Peckham, who were employed by Mr. Fletcher, learned that negotiations were drawing to a conclusion and that the British representatives needed only the final sanction of the syndicate to complete the sale. Neary, Schwartz and Peckham discussed with Mr. Fletcher the terms offered to him by the British firm. They agreed that they would like the opportunity of buying the mill under these same terms. Mr. Fletcher agreed and was retained as manager with a $15,000 a year salary. He also offered to loan money at 6 per cent interest to the three new owners so they could buy raw materials for the mill. All profits were to be paid to him each year until the sum of $1,200,000 or the price of the mill had been received by him. This plan was followed for the next four years until another important figure, William Wood, entered the picture.

The main buildings of the plant had been built in 1891 by Mr. Fletcher. Others were added in 1892, 1893, 1896 and 1898. The new machinery and additional buildings necessitated the employment of 750 people. The business aggregated about $1,500,000 annually. Worsted cloth for men's wear and yarn for knitters were manufactured. The mills were heated by hot air, lighted by electricity generated in the establishment and operated wholly by water power. The raceway for this purpose cost $10,000. At

the turn of the century, the mills had 309,000 square feet of floor space and nearly 1,000 workers were employed at that time. This concern was the leading indusstry of Oswego Falls. To it more than any other industry, the village owed its growth and prosperity. Around it numerous business interests had been successfully established.

With the return of prosperity after the depression of the middle nineties financial arrangements were less difficult to make and it introduced an attempt at the combination of companies within the woolen industry.

In February, 1899 rumors of a possible combination in the wool manufacture in the eastern part of the United States began to circulate, and in March of that year it was definitely announced than an organization had been effected. The leading spirit was Mr. William M. Wood, the son of a Portuguese immigrant. At this time he was treasurer of the Washington Hills of Lawrence, a concern which was just getting back on its feet after a decade of severe trial. Curiously enough, Mr. Wood had received his earlier experience in the cotton manufacturing business. Mr. Wood wanted to buy Mr. Fletcher's mills and approached him with an offer. Mr. Fletcher's son Fred, Mr. Babcock, the selling agent, Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Peckham, and Mr. Neary sold their interest in the Fulton Worsted Mills and the American Woolen Company came into existence.

The combination of many woolen mills at this period of time is described in Volume II of the American Wool Manufacture by Arthur Cole. The author states that associated with Mr. Wood in this task of floating the new enterprise were Mr. James Phillip, Jr., and Mr. Charles Fletcher, each owner of a small group of mills. These mills, seven in number, formed the nucleus of the whole combination. Subsequently nineteen other establishments were acquired and assimilated. Among these 26 mills were included some of the important plants of the country such as the Washington Mills.

Besides the above mentioned Washington Mills, there were in Fulton and the National and Providence Mills, both known for their serges and men's wear worsteds, and the Assabet Mills located at Maynard, Massachusetts, one of the largest mills of the American Woolen Industry.

Most of the mills were located in Providence or Lowell-Lawrence areas; but isolated concerns from Moonsup, Connecticut to Skowhegan, Maine ,were taken into the company. From a union of 26 mills, the company expanded to 59 establishments. New plants were constructed in Massachusetts and machinery was transferred from certain mills to others. One mill was closed entirely and the production of some of the mills was changed.

In discussing wages in the American Woolen Mills in Fulton, Mr. Koeher informed me that during the early nineteen hundreds employees received 6¼c per hour for a sixty hour week. The usual work day consisted of eleven hours. Children 12 or 14 years of age were hired and it was not unusual for them to remain in the employ of the mill for fifty years or more. When the mill closed in 1952, the average wage received was about $40 per week although the spinners received as high as $100 per week.

The past years saw the mill take an active part in the world's struggles. The making of cloth for Civil War federal troops was repeated in the Spanish American War, World War I and II. During World War II the men and women of Fulton made over eight and a half million yards of uniform cloth with a value of more than twenty million dollars. Thus, Fulton fabrics brought protection and comfort to our sol-

diers on every continent of the world. Fifty acres of company land were planted as victory gardens.

Domestic wools from the west and foreign wools from Australia, South Africa and South America were scientifically blended, scoured and combed by other mills of the company and sent to Fulton in the form of gleaming white "top." The mill drew and spun this wool on the famous French system into fine yarns from which quality worsted fabrics were made. At times the entire process of changing the raw wool into fine serge cloth was carried on and the quality of the finished product became well-known.

Recreation Park has an interesting history, which is closely connected with that of the American Woolen Company. Mayor Stevenson, who was a civic minded person, and also agent for the mill, succeeded in interesting the company in the purchasing of the old fair ground property of 28 acres of land, which was located on the east shores of Lake Neahtawanta. In 1868 the Oswego Falls Agricultural Society had started to hold fairs on this land. In 1901 the real estate and buildings at that time were valued at $20,000. The last fair was held in 1918 and the American Woolen Company purchased the property which they made into an attractive spot for the people of Fulton. In 1922 a dance pavilion, auditorium, and greenhouse were built. Ball fields and tennis courts were laid out. A beautiful merry-go-round was added for the children. Fine movies were held free of charge, also for the children each Saturday afternoon. After four years the mill decided to lease or sell the park and in 1933 they sold this property to the Board of Education for $25,000. They in turn gave it to the city but retained the right to use the park for school recreational purposes. In 1942 the buildings burned and the spot is now marked by a new War Memorial building.

Another change in mill property came in the ownership of the tenement houses which had been erected in 1879 and 1884. These were offered for sale at public auction in 1934. The single family houses sold for $90 to $500 while the duplex houses brought from $550 to $1100. The company allowed the purchaser to deduct from the sale price, the cost of any improvements that he had made while living in the house and this lowered the original bid quoted above.

In May 1952 the average wage was $1.52 an hour for the nearly 1,000 people employed then. The union had several times asked for improved conditions. During the last strike when questions pertaining to worker's loads were being discussed, the mill closed its doors and unceremoniously dumped the workers on the small city's labor market. The woolen market lacked government support and interest and the owners felt it would be more profitable to turn the business from Fulton to its mill in Lawrence.

At the end of four years the mill was offered for sale at public auction. The property as advertised by the auctioneer contained 500,000 square feet of brick buildings located on 3 large plots totaling 6.6 acres. There is a 12 inch pipe line from Lake Neahtawanta with city franchise until 1985 for the line in West Broadway and into First and Second Streets. The owners used about 15,000,000 gallons per week or about 2,000,000 gallons per day with the only cost being the pumping. The property was sold March 7, 1956 for $35,000 to the Independent Rehabilitation Corporation. They succeeded in having the assessment of $510,000 dollars, lowered to $410,000. At the present time, portions of the mill are rented to the Easy Bargain Center, Montgomery Ward, The Sealright, Iroquois Transport

Corp. and General Electric.

The loss of this industry has removed a place of employment for older people whose only requirement was their ability to answer the question: "Can you do the work?"

Some of the machinery from the American Woolen Mills was sent to other plants owned by the corporation but much of it was sold to a firm in Mexico.

Very soon after the mill in Fulton was closed between 400 and 500 mills in New England were also closed. Some of the plants were moved to Virginia or North Carolina where they considered it to be more to their advantage and where they would be able to meet competition on the open market.

Many housewives and older men speak happily of the days spent in the American Woolen Mills and regret that Fulton lost one of its great industries.

John W. Stevenson, Mayor of the City of Fulton (1920-1928)

(By John P. Zizzi, Local and Regional History)

As a young boy I had listened to my father speak of Mr. John Stevenson, who was then his boss at the American Woolen Company. I had listened to others speak of municipal administrations and inevitably they would compare them with the administration of John Stevenson.

I became curious and when I was confronted with selecting a topic to report on as a requirement in my course in Local and Regional History I decided to try and find what I could about John W. Stevenson.

What follows is a report of my findings. There is much more to be done as this represents a meager record of the man. I intend to pursue the subject further when sources can be thoroughly checked and findings proved.

It has been enjoyable for me to talk with many people who knew John Stevenson and worked with him at the Woolen Mill or in City Government. The Directories, newspapers and yearbooks I have studied have given me a new interest in Local History.

World War I was over and the Allied powers had been victorious. The soldiers had returned to their homes. This was the time to return to normalcy. This was to have been the war to end all wars, and the United States had adopted a policy of non-involvement in foreign affairs. This was the time to sow a few wild seeds, have fun, act gay, and chase all your cares away.

Fulton it seems did not escape this prevailing attitude. Little did the 13,043 inhabitants suspect what awaited them. Perhaps it would be more correct to say, all but one person; John W. Stevenson knew!

John Stevenson was a native son of Fulton. He was born in 1866 in a house which stood on West First Street, near the bank of the Oswego River near Phillips Street, in what was then called the village of Oswego Falls. He was one of ten children born to the late John and Jeanette Stevenson, former well-known residents of this community.

John was educated in the public schools of the city, but because of family needs, he worked from the time he was a youngster, being a newsboy while attending school. As a boy of 16 he left school to enter the employ of his Uncle (maternal), C. E. Sackett, who conducted a dry goods store in Fulton, and later went with his Uncle to Tacoma, Washington, when the Fulton store was sold.

On returning to Fulton he entered the employ of the Fulton Woolen Mills, then owned by Schwarz and Nary and started as a millhand. In the 1906 Fulton City Directory, John W. Stevenson, Jr., was listed as a boss finisher, and then lived at 364 West Fourth Street, South, with his Father and sister, Frances. He worked in every department of the mill and as the plant was expanded, he proved himself responsible and capable, and was gradually given positions of greater authority. Before World War I he succeeded J. E. Weeden as agent

for the American Woolen Company, after the Fulton Mill had become a part of the national combine, headed by Mr. William A. Wood.

Mr. Stevenson modernized the Fulton plant and made its expansion part of his objective. While he was agent for the American Woolen Company a power plant costing over $1,000,000 was constructed, and an elaborate dye house and the six-story building housing the yarn department was constructed.

At an early age John Stevenson took an active interest in politics, and as an active Republican he served as trustee of the Oswego Falls village before Fulton became a city.

John Stevenson had all the natural attributes of a successful seeker of political office. He was an apparently confirmed bachelor and could devote the time necessary to the job. He was an outgoing man, short in stature, rather stout with a noticeable bay window, usually natilly dressed with derby, straw hat, and cigar, reputed to be lighted on very few occasions. He was a man whom the employees of his plant looked up to for guidance and care. He befriended hundreds of newly arrived immigrants to this country by providing them with work. He spoke to many people each day addressing them by their first names. This to many new arrivals was similar to a religious blessing. He seemed to love Fulton, its people and he sincerely desired to do everything in his power to make his city a place where people wanted to stay and work for the rest of their lives. In this he succeeded. Many of those who first come here during the large European immigration movement of the period between 1900 and 1914, went to work in the Woolen Mills in Fulton, stayed, raised their families, and are still here today. The mill is no more, but all remember John Stevenson.

In 1919 at the solicitation of many of his friends John Stevenson decided to do something about his political ambitions. Needless to say his chances were excellent from the beginning. Wasn't he the head of the largest mill in the community? Wasn't he financially secure? The $1,000 that the Mayor received then certainly could have been no inducement to a man who certainly was making many times that amount. Did he not have a captive electorate of approximately 2,000 employees who would vote for him? Even if they could not vote because of laws pertaining to voting qualifications of literacy and sex, they would induce their friends to do so. And, he was a member of the Republican party, and Fulton was a Republican community, politically.

On November 4, 1919, John W. Stevenson was elected Mayor of the City of Fulton by an overwhelming vote of 1,545 votes over his Democratic opponent, former mayor John E. Boland.

His political success followed in three future elections. In 1921 he defeated George A. Palmer by 860 votes. In 1923 he defeated the Democratic candidate Flanders by 1165 votes. In 1925, in the closest election in the history of the city he defeated the Democratic candidate Scudder by only 49 votes.

In all of these elections his own ward, the second, and the West side of the city in general, provided him with large majorities which more than offset the larger voting populace from the East side. He served eight years as Mayor of the City of Fulton. What did he do?

During his eight years as Mayor, John Stevenson carried on the largest and most extensive internal improvement program that the city of Fulton has experienced.

Over 26 miles of the cities streets were paved, and sidewalks

were constructed in many areas of the city. This is more remarkable when one considers that in 1927 Fulton papers boasted of having 40 miles of paved streets. All but 16 miles were constructed during his administration. The capacity of the Fulton Hospital was favored by Mayor Stevenson and it has been affirmed by some and refuted by others that John Stevenson donated his allowance as Mayor to the City Hospital. In 1922 he inaugurated a new garbage and ash collection system for the city. Previously a private concern had charged 10 cents for garbage collection and 10 cents for ash collection per week. The Mayor's plan would cost the residents $1.25 per year to each family. Collection were to be made once a week for residences and once every two weeks for hotels. The present High School was constructed during his administration at a cost of $415,000, and Walradt Street School was built at a cost of $20,000, and the Phillip Street School was enlarged at a cost of $50,000. In 1921 Mr. Stevenson shocked many of the city residents by advocating and carrying out a new program for tax assessment to raise more money for city improvements. He called for assessments on property to be based upon 100 per cent valuation rather than 50 per cent valuation which had been previously been in force. The result of this was that instead of having $7,803,729 valuation the city assessors could now assess taxes on $14,417,968 worth of real estate value.

This last move led to serious repercussions when during the depression of the late twenties several factories were forced to close their doors because of large taxes and the city became the victim of many law suits for tax relief. (I learned from Mr. Charles R. Baldwin, Mayor successor to Mr. Stevenson, that this was the greatest and most immediate problem that his first administration faced, and it resulted in the city, in many cases, granting this needed tax relief).

Fulton was reputed to have been the best lighted small city in New York State. Its street lighting system, its water system and sewarage systems were spoken of highly in professional engineering circles as comparable to larger cities in the state.

During the Twenties Fulton was a proud community. Its industry, its parks, its homes, its streets were envied throughout the state, according to local newspaper writers and to the majority of people in Fulton, and John Stevenson had contributed his share to Fulton's success story. Was there anything left for Mr. Stevenson to do? I have saved the best until the last.

While agent of the American Woolen Company in Fulton, and before becoming Mayor of the City, John Stevenson had convinced the members of the Board of the Company to purchase from the County 28 acres of ground owned by the Oswego County Agricultural Society and used as the annual site of their fair.

On Monday, Septembsr 12th, 1921, John Stevenson, with his force of workers, under the management of Fred B. Barlow, broke ground for the construction of the mammoth auditorium at Recreation, on West Broadway the plans having received the approval of William Wood, President of the American Woolen Company. On January 14, 1922 work was completed and the formal opening was to be on that date. The size of the apditorium was 190 feet in length, and 140 feet in width. It was three full stories in height. It was constructed of the finest lumber and had a frame of supporting steel. At the main entry, which faced North, on West Broadway a French porch was constructed which was similar to the one in front of the Keith Theatre in Syracuse, N. Y. The lobby was

16x34 and the interior contained a double Japanese Tea Room that occupied 1200 square feet of space and a main floor was 60x100 feet and whose height was 40 feet to the roof. The auditorium had a seating capacity of 3200 persons. A dance pavilion was also constructed approximately 50 yards west of the auditorium which was made of wood and had an approximate size of 60x100 feet. Here could be found an excellent dance floor, again reputed by many to be the best of its type in upstate New York. This outdoor pavilion was a constant summer attraction to many thousands of visitors to Fulton. Between the two structures could be found a carousel, surrounded by tables, protected from the sun's rays by brightly colored umbrellas.

This was John Stevenson's dream and he had lived to see it fulfilled. He employed semi-pro baseball players at the factory who would entertain the local population each week in keen baseball competition. He extended the use of the Park and its facilities to many local organizations for dances and picnics.

One thousand nine hundred and sixty persons attended the formal opening of the auditorium. It was the largest dancing party given in Fulton. Mr. Stevenson promoted free motion picture entertainment for the children of the community. On July 4th, 1922 Mayor Stevenson promoted the most elaborate holiday in Fulton's history. Over 18,000 attended the two baseball games, dancing, carousel rides, open air concerts, and display of fireworks. It was a new record for the Fourth of July in the city of Fulton, and John Stevenson was thoroughly pleased.

The park provided similar experiences of pleasure for many years to follow, but John Stevenson would not be there to be thoroughly pleased as he had been on July 4th, 1922. The park had become a financial burden to the American Woolen Company. The majority of the residents of the community did not make a sufficient amount of money to spend lavishly for continued entertainment, and still provide themselves and their families with the basic necessities of life.

In March, 1926, John Stevenson resigned his position as Agent of the Mill in Fulton. He gave as his reason, ill health. Others contend that this condition was brought about by continued pressure from his superiors who objected to his extravagant spending of the company's money on community and personal projects. Some contend his position as Agent in Fulton changed drastically following the death of President William A. Wood. The new officers of the company made many policy changes, and the acceptance of John Stevenson's resignation was merely one of the many changes.

One month later the American Woolen Company issued a statement declaring their intention to lease or sell Recreation Park. There was much speculation in the community that it would be sold to an outsider or closed entirely. Neither materialized, for in 1930 the Common Council, during the administration of Dr. Charles Baldwin, voted to purchase the property, valued at approximately $300,000, for $25,000. It was to be used for local athletic events and the community's recreational program.

John Stevenson did not live to see the transfer of Recreation Park to the City of Fulton. He died on December 7, 1929.

During his last years he was engaged in the bus transportation business in the City of Fulton and in various other promotions, none of which achieved lasting financial success.

John Stevenson's political career ended Tuesday, September 20, 1927, when he was defeated in the primary election by Dr.

Charles Baldwin. The vote was 1,332 for Mr. Baldwin and 649 for Mr. Stevenson. When interviewed on the results, Mayor Stevenson said, "I am all through and glad of it." When asked regarding the possibility of his running as an independent candidate, he said, "I know when I have got enough."

Perhaps, what he was referring to was the criticism he had received from those who opposed his administrations. To his critics, his internal improvements were overshadowed by the large debt that was incurred and the burden it would place upon present and future taxpayers of Fulton. Many of the debts incurred during these years were not completely retired until a few short years ago.

During his last years in office his improvement program was greatly curtailed by members of his Common Council and by the residents of the community whose tax increases had created serious financial burdens.

Perhaps it was the natural reaction of the members of a small community who pride themselves in displaying internal improvements but show great indignation when presented with the bill.

John Stevenson did leave many Fultonians with something tangible. He left a legacy of pride. This has led many residents of the community today to feel dissatisfied with their community. The memory of Recreation Park is still present.

The home John Stevenson built and lived in with his sister is located at 557 West First Street. It is now owned by Mr. D. K. Kesterke.

To see the evidence of John Stevenson's work one has only to talk to the people who knew him. Visit Recreation Park and look at the ticket booth. Travel over the roads of Fulton. Stop at the former Woolen Company and view the buildings. He spent 37 years working for the Woolen Mills. Talk to former members of his baseball teams. John Stevenson is in Fulton, just as there are other civic leaders in other communities, in the dissatisfactions of community members who feel that certain things in their city could be better, if.

In future years someone should write a complete history of the city of Fulton. In it he will find it necessary to find a place for John Stevenson. Perhaps here his work will be more accurately appraised.

Necrology

1958

SAMUEL PETERS

Orlando, Florida, November 11, 1957

HARRY C. MIZEN

214 West First Street, Oswego, New York, February 27, 1958

MISS DOROTHY GAGE

193 South First Street, Fulton, New York, June 17, 1958

HON. D. P. MOREHOUSE

124 West Bridge Street, Oswego, New York, September 19, 1958

JOHN E. MAYNE

R. D. 4, Fulton, New York, September 30, 1958

JACOB SHAPIRO

36 East Seventh Street, Oswego, New York, October 16, 1958

ARTHUR W. GRAVES

169 West Third Street, Oswego, New York, November 6, 1958