1967-1968

TWENTY-NINTH PUBLICATION

OF THE

OSWEGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1967 - 1968

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DEDICATION

Dr. and Mrs. Charles F. Wells

The contributions of Dr. and Mrs. Charles F. Wells to the Oswego County Historical Society extend over a period of a quarter-century. They affiliated with the society shortly after their arrival in the community in 1940, and through the years they have made many contributions as officers and historians.

Renée Tétart Wells, a native of France, came to the United States as a student-teacher of French at Friends' Seminary in New York. Charles left his home in North Dakota to attend the Graduate School of Columbia University, where he received a doctorate and served as an instructor. After their marriage in New York they came to Oswego, where Charles was Chairman of the Department of English and Speech at the State College. He was also active in administrative and alumni affairs. He chaired committees for the inauguration of three presidents of the college and was the first Director of the Division of Arts and Sciences.

Charles was Secretary of the Historical Society for seven years and Renée was the Chairman of the Ways and Means and Headquarters House committees. She is currently a vice president. Charles presented a three-part paper on Drama in Oswego ("A Century of Public Entertainment in Oswego," Yearbook, 1945, 1946, 1947) and another on the Kingsford Starch Company ("T. Kingsford and Son and the Oswego Starch Factory," Yearbook, 1951). Renee read a paper on the history of the Oswego Hospital ("The Oswego Hospital," Yearbook, 1966-67). Charles also published articles in New York State Education, New York Folklore Quarterly, Recreation magazine, Torch magazine and many other journals. He is listed in Who's Who in Education and American Scholars. Both Charles and Renee have been active in civic and cultural movements in the community.

For their many contributions to Oswego and to this society the Board of Directors is pleased to add the names of Charles and Renée Wells to the list of local historians meriting special recognition.

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MORALITY AND THE DRAMA

by

Alfred E. Rickert

The following story reported in an early issue of the Oswego Palladium illustrates the feelings held by many people about the theatre and those who were associated with it. Thomas A. Cooper, a well-known actor in his day, was walking down Broadway one morning when he overheard two young men. One man said in a contemptuous tone, "There goes Cooper the play-actor." His companion replied in mock heroic style, "Hold your tongue, you don't know what you may come to yet."[1] That the theatre was frivolous, evil, and immoral was generally accepted as fact by many people during the early years of our nation.

Although the attitude toward the evils of the theatre changed somewhat during the early part of the nineteenth century, there remained much opposition. Many communities passed ordinances which required performers to secure licenses, and in some communities ordinances were passed to prohibit theatrical presentation entirely. Although Oswego passed an ordinance requiring all public amusements to be licensed, the law was often ignored. Some troupes applied for a license; others did not. No evidence was uncovered to indicate that any fines were levied against those entertainers who performed without the sanction of a license, and there was no evidence that a license to perform was denied to anyone during the period Oswego was a village, 1828 to 1848. Evidently Oswego was considerably more liberal about public amusements than many other places in the country. The village, however, was not without some opposition to dramatic presentations. Two petitions were submitted to the Board of

Trustees, one in 1836 and the other a year later, objecting to theatrical performances and requesting that licenses to perform be denied.[2] The Board took no action in either case, and licenses were granted to all who applied.

Perhaps the most outspoken critic of the drama during this early period was Richard Oliphant, a respected citizen in the village. Oliphant in 1830, while editor of the Oswego Free Press, had supported the drama. A few years later, however, he cautioned his readers about the immorality of the theatres and tried to discourage them from attending. In 1838, in a lengthy editorial Oliphant, then editor of the Oswego County Whig, wrote in part that a taste for theatrical entertainments was "most insidious and contaminating."[3]

The church, long opposed to public amusements, continued its efforts to suppress the drama because it was regarded as frivolous and an evil force in society that contributed to immoral behavior. Ministers spoke out against the theatre, and the corrupting influences of seeing a play were examined in detail from the pulpit. Actors were condemned as sinners, and the audience, by association, were also sinners. But efforts to suppress the drama failed to consider the durability of the theatre, and the theatre continued to grow. The point is well made in Literary History of the United States.

> Moralists might indict the theatre as the 'House of the Devill,' and law makers might legislate against it as contrary to public good; but no amount of opposition could effectively stamp out a form of entertainment based on the virtually instinctive will to 'make-believe.'[4]

Although discussion about the impropriety of the theatre continued in the churches and debates were held by the literary societies, the theatre prospered during the 1850's. During the decade before the Civil War, over 300 different play titles were staged in Oswego, and over 1,000 performances of plays were

presented. Eight managers conducted twenty-one generally successful seasons which received the support of the people of Oswego. If some people were concerned with the propriety of attending the theatre, the majority of the population were unconcerned.

Because the theatres were so well supported by the people in the 1850's, the time was ripe for a re-examination of the concept of the theatre as an evil force in society. People were not less concerned with morality during this period, but rather there was a growing understanding on the part of the people that attending a playhouse to see a play enacted was not per se an evil. Certainly undesirable actions and occasionally vulgarities were presented on the stage, but supporters of the drama contended they were not inherent to the theatre. Theatre goers and critics began to point out that the stage could be used to demonstrate the consequences of a dissipated life, and thereby the theatre could become an instrument to teach morality. The melodramas so popular in the nineteenth century, with their clear cut distinction of black and white, of good and bad, and of vice and virtue, were perfect vehicles for this kind of sermonizing. The temperance movement, so popular then, was quick to see that the evils of drink could be shown more effectively and more vividly on a stage than in a lecture hall. The movement made use of the theatre to preach its doctrine, and such temperance plays as Ten Nights in a Bar Room and The Drunkard, which are still performed in our time although perhaps for different reasons, became popular. Adopting the same kind of reasoning, the critic for the Oswego Daily Times supported the drama because it could teach people a moral lesson and so serve the public good. In a review of Madalaine, staged in Oswego on November 18, 1856, the Times' critic clearly indicated his support for this kind of "moral drama."

> We wish all those ministers of the gospel and moralists, who contend that there is immorality in dramatic persentations, had been present last evening to witness the play of Madalaine. We think they would have conceded that such a play is calculated to impress a high moral in the mind, better than fifty lectures. [5]

The play, a temperance drama, has now been forgotten along with so many of the dramas that stirred the souls and imagination of nineteenth century audiences. The plot had all the contrivances, stereotype, and lack of characterization that identified so much of nineteenth century drama but delighted the audiences. Madalaine is a young and happy bride at the beginning of the play. Her joy is shortlived, however, because her husband, befriended by the villain, is led to drink. Misery and poverty follow. Madalaine appeals to her husband, and so eloquent is her appeal, he reforms. The villain, however, returns and again leads the husband astray. Money needed to sustain wife and child is taken by the husband to buy drink, and the wife in desperation leaves the child in a home. The pattern is set; situation after situation, each fraught with despair and horror, follows until, just when everything is blackest, reform and redemption take place. Good triumphs over evil, and joy and happiness reign once more. The critic wrote, "We have never seen a more touching piece or one calculated to do more good."[6]

The theatres were crowded but not because the drama could teach a moral lesson. Across the nation people were becoming theatre conscious. Despite denunciations of the theatre, of the actors, and of the plays declaimed from the pulpit and despite debates in the lecture halls about the morality or immorality of the drama, the theatres were crowded. During the 1850's people sought a variety of public amusements, and so dramas, minstrels, vaudevilles, exhibitions

and shows of all kinds played in the cities and the hamlets. And in Oswego the theatre prospered in a manner unlike any time before or since. The people went to the theatre. The prosperity of the times, no doubt, was a contributing factor since almost everyone had the price of a gallery ticket. People were willing to risk eternal damnation if the show was good enough, and in Oswego the excellence of most of the theatre companies kept the auditoriums crowded. Doolittle Hall with approximately 1,000 seats and Littlefield Hall with over 600 seats were often at capacity. In the struggle between the pulpit and the stage, the pulpit seemed to be losing.

The controversy of the morality of attending a play reached a climax and a turning point in November, 1856, when Dr. Henry W. Bellows, a Unitarian minister, and pastor of All Soul's Church in New York City, spoke out, unexpectedly, in favor of the stage. His Thanksgiving sermon, based on the text, "For every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God," was delivered two days after the performance of Madalaine and after the Times' critic publicly supported the stage as a potential force for the public good. The minister contended that while that which was "coarse, demoraling and impious" was often presented on the stage, the theatre itself was not sinful. The theatre was not inherently evil because some of its actions were evil. He further suggested that the theatre would continue to be open to the charge of immorality unless the refined, the educated, and the good people patronized it.[7] Dr. Bellows' remarks created quite a stir.

The minister's Thanksgiving sermon prompted the editor of the Oswego Daily Times to express again his views about the stage and morality. In every way the editor's ideas coincided with and reflected the sentiments Bellows was to consider in a later address.

The progressive ideas expressed in the Oswego Daily Times and Bellows' address delivered at the New York Academy of Music, which received much publicity, became the basis for heated discussion in Oswego as well as elsewhere.

On the basis of his Thanksgiving sermon, Bellows was invited to address the American Dramatic Fund Society at a benefit. He delivered a lengthy speech at the Academy of Music and developed five points: (1) that diversion from care and duty was necessary, (2) that laughter and fun were not unchristian, (3) that laughter and fun, indeed, were necessary to the health of the body and of the mind, (4) that there was nothing essentially wrong with theatrical presentation or with acting as a profession, and (5) that nothing was inherent in the theatre which required the church to ban it or to label it unchristian.[8] Bellows met the charges of the critics of the theatre. He admitted that there were elements of truth in their charges but accused them of extravagance in elaborating upon the charges as well as confusion and illogical reasoning in the conclusion they reached. The opponents of the theatre omitted entirely the good of the theatre in their search for evil.

> I complain that this verdict leaves entirely out of view the uses of the theatre, considering only its abuses, that it takes no pains to recognize what is good, in its eagerness to point out what is evil--or to discriminate between what is essential and what is accidental in this institution; that it confounds the evils around, with the evils within the theatre, and, to come directly to the point, fails to enquire and explain why, and by whose fault, and in accordance with what law, it is, that the immorality and recklessness of society, its folly and vice, have clustered about the theatre. I do not deny the fact; but I deny the totally condemnatory inferences drawn from the fact.
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> . . . . . .

> The attractiveness of the theatre, even to vice and folly, is nothing against it, until it can be proved that they are attracted there by what is bad and depraving.
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> But I am yet to see, how, because the wicked and the careless like what the good and careful also like--namely pleasure--it makes pleasure wrong; and how, because the theatre, in its character of an amusement, attracts the vicious and the depraved, it proves to be a vicious and depraved amusement.
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> For my own part, I believe the theatre has, in every age, exhibited the vices and follies of society rather than created them, and that it has owed its reputation for evil, mainly to the fact, that it has been the only place in which the decency, or virtue, or propriety of society has met the indecency, the vice, and disreputableness. Now if the theatre had produced this indecency, vice, or disreputableness, or encouraged it, we should utterly condemn it; but I believe, on the contrary, notwithstanding its imperfect administration, it has done something to correct it.
>
> But, whatever the effect of the theatre is, or has been, having nothing essentially wrong in its principle, and having proved itself to be, the most attractive and permanent of amusement, a fixed and indestructible fact, it seems to me, that avowed moralists and Christian leaders and guides have committed a grave and hurtful error in their mode of dealing with it.[9]

The necessity and durability of the theatre was established by Bellows. He contended that the theatre may be conceived as necessary, because in spite of opposition and denunciation from the church and from moralists, it has

survived in every age and over every obstacle. General censure and even formal prohibition have failed to have any permanent effect on the theatre. It has remained a durable force which exhibits its own vitality.[10] Bellows concluded his discussion stating that the theatre was not only a force in society but also a mirror of that society. The theatre as an institution was not an evil, and those who sought to join the theatrical profession were not evil. He stated the major point of his discussion as follows:

> The vices of the theatre have uniformly been those of the time--no more, no worse. The theatre has had no serious vices of its own, like trade, with its fraud and perjury; like the church, with hypocrisy and arrogance. The mirror of bad times, it has reflected the vices that passed before it, not those it originated. Drunkenness has carried its victims, and licentiousness its votaries, into its precincts. Profanity and coarseness from the pit and boxes, have required profanity and coarseness from the stage, while vulgarity and ignorance have demanded rant and fustian. What is the theatre, that we should expect it to be wise and moral, and pure, and reverential, to an audience that...cares little for these qualities, and when it (the theatre) has no character to lose by any pandering it may practice to the degraded tastes of the rabble or the reckless.[11]

Because the view Bellows presented was at that time so radical for a clergyman, few men of the cloth supported him. Among theatre professionals and theatre goers, needless to say, Bellows found many supporters. The sense of his thesis was not accepted by all. Many raised their voices loud and strong to condemn not only the theatre but also the man who professed such heresy. The Reverend Mr. Gallagher

of the Church of the Evangelist, the spokesman in Oswego for those who opposed the theatre, on Sunday, June 21, 1857, delivered his sermon: "The Moral Influence of the Theatre." The church was crowded, and there was much interest in what the minister would say. Gallagher based his sermon on the text, "Be not conformed to this world." The sermon, a lengthy discourse, developed five main contentions. (1) Since Christians were not to follow the ways of the world, they should not find enjoyment in the amusements which the world has adopted. (2) Plays were a corrupting influence except for Shakespeare which contained only few objectionable features. (3) The theatre was not proper because the general character of the audience was lewd and licentious and abandoned women frequented it. (4) Performers must be immoral and depraved because they could not associate in the wickedness and corruption of the theatre without contamination. (5) In a similar manner any Christian attending such a place would also become corrupt.[12]

The editor of the Oswego Daily Times reacted to the sermon and the next day in a lengthy lead editorial discussed the weakness of the arguments presented.

> We listened with interest and with an anxious desire for light upon the point which the Church is summoned by public opinion to meet--whether theatrical representations are sinful, per se--whether the picture of real life in miniature upon the stage is contrary to the highest Christian culture and the possession of the purest Christian graces.[13]

The editore felt that the preacher was not enlightened, and he objected becuase the sermon was a harangue of the corrupt and immoral theatres which have "disgraced England in times past." The issue under discussion, whether the theatre as an institution is an evil, immoral, and corrupt force, was not considered, the editor con-

tended, but was, rather, circumvented. The editor made the following observations.

> But if Shakespeare may be read without injury to the morals, as the Reverend gentleman seems to think, then Shakespeare may be acted upon the stage, and his beauties brought out in all their vividness by the scene passing before the eye of the spectator. Such a representation is worth a dozen readings....
>
> Altogether, the Drama has done wonders considering the hostilities which it has encountered from the church. It has succeeded in producing plays which have made their mark upon the morals and sentiments of the world. The play of Uncle Tom's Cabin has perhaps done more to enfuse an Anti-Slavery feeling in the minds of the people than any other agency. We have seen the play The Drunkard move even to tears the most hardened and dissipated men in the 'pit,' who would have withstood any number of temperance lectures. We believe the play of the Stranger has accomplished as much in pointing out the fearful consequences of a deviation from the path of virtue, as all the tracts issued by the American Tract Society, put together. We might mention any number of plays that teach the most impressive moral lessons had we time or space.
>
> True, there are immoral plays--but we say let them be discountenanced. Let the Christian church remember that good can 'come out of Nazareth;' let its teachers instead of rejecting utterly an institution which is capable of doing so much good, endeavor to give it a higher and nobler tone by their presence and counsel. The idea that this will be ruin to the theatre, is absurd. The clergyman who is most fearless and eloquent in denouncing all forms of iniquity, always draws together the largest congregation, and thus will it be with the Theatre when it is brought over to the side of virtue and morality.

As to the character of the actors, the same remark applies. At present there are dissipated men and women among them, but so far as we know this is their only fault. Who ever heard of an actor going to State prison. Looking through the iron bars at Sing Sing and Auburn are lawyers, doctors, editors and even clergymen, but we do not believe an actor will be found upon the list. Let Christians remember that actors are human beings with souls to be saved; instead of having the doors of the church closed against them, let them be treated with as much respect as is now accorded to the haughty nabob who pays large sums for the support of the church, which he had extorted from his victims by fraud and usury. Depend upon it, when the Christian Church shall learn to treat actors as Men and Women, the reform will be commenced in earnest. At present, not a grain of sympathy or charity is extended to them by the orthodox Churches in the land, and they look alone to the Press for commendation when they do well, and censure when do evil. Under all circumstances, however well they may act their part before or behind the scenes, the Pulpit has been their inveterate and oncompromising foe. Is it a wonder that some bright lights in the histrionic profession have fled to dissipation?--is it not far more wonderful that so many have retained their virtue and reputation under the hostility they have encountered from those who should have been the first to do them justice?[14]

The Oswego Daily Palladium reported the announcement of the anti-theatre sermon. The newspaper maintained a pragmatic stand, however, and the editor did not enter the controversy except to make the following observation.

The fact is the drama is as old as religion, and unless men's tastes are modified and changed, it

> will continue to exist in some form. It is not a practical possibility to annihilate the drama; therefore, the only question remaining is, can it be reformed, improved and elevated: If we answer in the negative, do we not concede the impotency of morality and religion?[15]

Two days after Gallagher delivered his sermon affirming the evils and corruption of the theatre, the Oswego Daily Palladium reported that the anti-theatre sermon had been given but regretted that it "escaped our memory, and we did not attend."[16] The matter evidently was not important enough for the Palladium editor to bother with.

The controversy between the pulpit and the stage continued for many years after Henry W. Bellows' Thanksgiving sermon and his later speech before the American Dramatic Fund Society. A turning point had been reached, however, and the controversy, although it continued through the latter part of the nineteenth century, was never again a serious threat to theatrical activity.

The Oswego community generally supported the views expressed by Dr. Bellows. From the very earliest years the city supported the theatre and all forms of public amusement. Oswego was one of the first communities to accept the thesis that the theatre was neither inherently evil nor immoral. Indeed, many of the ideas so eloquently presented by Dr. Bellows had been expressed by the editor of the Oswego Daily Times earlier. Oswego certainly was not without some opposition to the theatre, but that opposition always represented a minority point of view.

FOOTNOTES

1. Oswego Palladium, July 10, 1824.

2. Records of the Village of Oswego from 1828 to 1848. (Oswego, New York: Daily and Weekly Times Print, 1874), pp. 204-205; 231.

3. Oswego County Whig, May 9, 1838.

4. Robert E. Spiller et al., (ed) "The Beginnings of Fiction and Drama," in Literary History of the United States. 3d ed. rev. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 184.

5. Oswego Daily Times, November 19, 1856.

6. Ibid.

7. New York Daily Times, November 21, 1856.

8. Henry W. Bellows, The Relationship of Public Amusements to Public Morality Especially to the Highest Interests of Humanity. (New York: C. S. Francis and Company, 1857), pp. 4-10.

9. Ibid., pp. 24-27.

10. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

11. Ibid., p. 36.

12. Oswego Daily Times, June 22, 1857

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Oswego Daily Palladium, June 11, 1857.

16. Ibid., June 23, 1958.

MUSIC IN THE FULTON AREA SINCE 1900

by

Harold R. Palmer

While I was a small child I used to hear my father play the violin (fiddle was what he called it). He played by ear and my mother played the chords on the piano. His favorite tunes were "Money Musk", "Haste to the Wedding", "Pop Goes the Weasel" and "Turkey in the Straw." He told me how he used to play at dances during the Gay Nineties. Playing with him were William C. Hubbard on the string bass and his wife, Jessie Hubbard, on the piano. In those days dances were few and far between, being held only on holidays and special occasions. The farmers were too busy to have much fun. When they did play, usually they were at house parties and they played all night ending up with a big breakfast. Then they all went home and did the morning milking. I was thrilled to hear about music so I teased my father to let me play. I didn't want the fiddle so I asked if I could have a cornet. My father knew Ed (Dutch) Pooler who was the leader of the Fulton Citizens Band. He talked with him and got me the cornet. After agreeing on 50 cents a lesson, everything was set. So, on August 8, 1908, at the age of eight, I was on my way. The song we heard repeatedly that year was "Take me out to the Ball Game."

My first playing in public was at the First Methodist Church on Oneida and Third Streets. We had an orchestra that played for the Men's Sunday School Class which was held in the basement. The members were my sister Wava Palmer, piano; Frank Petrie, violin; Harold Palmer and Leigh Simpson (later the

Medical Doctor), cornets; Foster Simpson, clarinet; Dr. Haviland, drums; Fred Smith, banjo, and my teacher, Dutch Pooler, string bass. After the opening singing and playing, I went upstairs to my Sunday School Class. My teacher was Mrs. George Carner whose husband ran a harness store and repair on Cayuga Street in the Stevens Opera House Building.

In 1910 I remember one Sunday especially. After playing at the church, it was suggested that we go that afternoon to the new Lee Memorial Hospital and entertain a friend in the Men's Ward. The Quartet consisting of William C. Hubbard, H.L. Paddock, George Palmer and William Furness sang, and I played the only instrument to accompany them. I don't know why, but our friend the patient got well.

In the fall of 1910 I played my first dance at the Lower Oswego Falls Grange in the new Kennedy Building on South First Street. The Grange still holds its meetings there. The other members of the orchestra were Mabel Hubbard (now Mrs. Roy Ensworth) piano; William Collins, clarinet; and Ralph Briggs, drums. Favorite tunes were "Red Wing" and a two step, "High Pride."

As we entered into the second decade of the 20th century, the years 1911-12-13 saw a great deal of construction in Fulton. The new upper bridge was being built along with the barge canal and locks. The Universalist Church, corner of South First and Rochester Streets, was town down and the gorgeous new Quirk Theater was being built by Mr. Edward Quirk, President of the First National Bank in Fulton. He had seen many good shows on his visits to New York City and he wished the people of Fulton and surrounding area could see them also. The theater was designed like the Empire theater in Syracuse and seated nearly 1200 persons. On February 17, 1913 he opened the theater with Mae Irwin in the play "A Widow by Proxy."

Everyone was thrilled because in those days not many people could go to New York to see a show. Later came "A Girl of my Dreams", "The Chocolate Soldier", "The Merry Widow" and many more great musical comedies. Mr. Irving Galusha was the manager of the theater and Parker VanBuren was one of the ushers. A leader always came with the show to carry the local musicians through the music. The orchestra was Dutch Pooler's. Playing with him were George Wilson, violin, William Parker, viola; William Collins, clarinet; Frank Barnes, flute; Edward Croake, cornet; Hal McFarland, trombone and Jimmy Rebeor, drums. Mr. Pooler himself played string bass.

After about a year, because the silent movies were beginning to make feature pictures, Mr. Quirk removed about 50 seats in the rear center of the balcony and built a modern movie booth from which to project these new exciting pictures. Until then there were five small theaters showing one reelers, mostly comedies and news pictures. There were the Dreamland and the Novelty on South First Street, The Hippodrome on Oneida Street, The Theatorium on Cayuga Street across from the Stevens Opera House (now called the Foster Theater) and The Star on West Broadway where Litwak and Baker's store is today. It was in this theater that I played in 1914-15 with Mabel Hubbard, piano, and William Collins, clarinet.

I have been referring to these groups as orchestras because they used stringed instruments and should have been called such. When we referred to bands we meant a group of 20, 25 or more men who played brass instruments, reeds and percussion, but no strings. These bands played summer concerts in the park and for ice cream festivals and fairs. They also marched in parades and such as Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day.

Our local band here during this period was the Fulton Citizens Band. We rehearsed in Church's Hall on South First Street and we played indoor concerts there during the winter months. We also played band dances there (not orchestra dances). I started rehearsing occasionally with this band in 1911 but didn't play concerts until 1916. We played every summer for the Oswego County Fair where Recreation Park is today. The members of the 1911 band were Dutch Pooler, leader, who also played cornet. Other cornets were: Bern Wilcox, Tip Tilden and Arthur Guernsey. Clarinets were: Henry Bogue, Irvin Allen, Harold Reed, Frank Wadsworth and Jimmy Brooker. Flutes were: Homer Smith and Frank Barnes. Altos were: Ed Pooler, Jr., Frank Dolbear, Freeman Johnson and Claude Guile. Trombones were: Tom Earnshaw, Tom Fitten and Russell Rogers. Baritone: Allie Buell; basses: Ned Evans and Lynn Richardson; snare drum, William Furness and Bass drum, Bert Pare.

There were many small country bands near Fulton around 1910. To mention a few, there were Mt. Pleasant, Volney, Hannibal Center, Ira and Lysander. Mr. Pooler also rehearsed most of these and helped them musically. I used to go with him because he used our horse and buggy to get there.

Places where dances were common during the teens and twenties were as follows: Church's Hall, South First St.; Ruben Parks, Cayuga and First Streets, upstairs; Odd Fellows, Oneida Street; Masons; K. of C.; Recreation Park Open Air Pavilion - also later in the Auditorium; Red Men's, Hargraves Bldg., Upstairs, West Broadway; Quirk Ball Room over the Quirk Theater; Moose, Oneida Street; Elks, South First Street; Fulton High School, Library - downstairs; All Saints Church Parish House and the Citizens Club.

In the country we played at the nearby towns of Martville, Cato, Bowens Corners, Palermo, Hannibal, Granby Center, Dexterville and Fair Haven.

For many years Church's Hall was the scene for dances and band concerts. To mention one year, 1916, there were Saturday night dances played by Mert Reynolds' orchestra. He played violin; Bina Reed, piano; Sylvio Menneguzzo, alto sax; Harold Palmer, Cornet; and Len Youmans, drums. The most popular tune that year was "Dardanella." I shall not take the time to tell about the other halls but each one was well patronized by its own special groups.

Probably the best known group of musicians during the period from 1900 - 1915 was Theodore Webb's orchestra. They played for all the smart occasions at the time and for the Fulton High School Commencement Exercises which were held then at the Foster Theater on Cayuga Street. Mrs. Clay Beckwith has the Commencement program dated May 21, 1909, when her brother, Russell Guile, graduated. This program names several pieces played by Mr. Webb's orchestra. The members, with a few exceptions, were basically the same as in Dutch Pooler's orchestra.

Another well known group was Allie Buell's orchestra. They also played for many dances and special occasions, including many minstrel shows. Allie Buell was a very fine violinist (not fiddle player this time.) He also played the baritone horn in the Citizens Band and was just as good a player in that capacity. Other members of his orchestra were: Jenny Fones, piano; Frank Barnes, flute; William Collins, clarinet; Ed Croake and Tip Tilden, cornets; Hal McFarland, trombone and Jimmy Rebeor, drums. A few years later Dave Carroll replaced Jenny Fones at the piano and Harold Palmer replaced Ed Croake on the cornet.

In 1916 John W. Stevenson, Superintendent of the American Woolen Mills here, and Exalted Ruler of the Elks Lodge, bought new uniforms for our band. They were cream colored trimmed with purple. We then became known as the Elks Band and we rehearsed in

the Elks Lodge rooms. The Elks Convention was in Fulton that year and the big white elk was brought here and displayed at the plaza. In 1915 we played the Elks Convention in Troy and our band took first prize. The Elks themselves were dressed in white and carried white canes. The Fulton Lodge boasted having the largest and the smallest Elk around this area, Mr. Frank Judd weighing over 500 lbs. and Mr. Millard Beardsley, who peddled ice from door to door for Mr. Sam Sharp, weighing around 100 lbs. The band still used the old uniforms when playing certain jobs under the name of Citizens Band. In 1917 ten of us played for the Arrowhead Mills Flag Raising Ceremony, where Armstrong Cork Co. is today.

Another outstanding and different group was the Fulton Symphony Orchestra conducted by F. Jess Newton. We played three annual concerts in 1916-17-18 in the Quirk Theater and a final concert on Monday evening, January 26, 1920. There were 32 musicians, too many to mention here. There was also a vocal quartet -- Mrs. Ross Wolever, Miss Ethel Rear, Miss Hazel Thomas and Miss Ruth Allen. They sang "Bridal Chorus" by Cowen-Spicker. Harps were played by Miss Osia Rumsey and Herman Randall.

In our schools today we have some very fine bands, 70-100 members, but years ago we had orchestras. The first Fulton High School orchestra was in 1912. Following are the eight original members: Leonard Tice, cornet; Leigh Simpson, cornet; Russell Rogers, trombone; Harold Reed, clarinet; Homer Smith, flute; Fred Patrick, violin; Harold Caffrey, violin and Lee McCaffrey, piano.

November 11, 1918 - a great day in the lives of the people in Fulton. There would never be another war. We celebrated in many ways that night, one of which was a huge parade led by our Citizens Band.

One of our musicians was not there. He was Lieutenant Homer Russell Smith, our flute player who, as you known, was killed in France. Our American Legion Post here was named in his honor. Later, on Dec. 26, 1920, his body having been returned to Fulton, The Citizens Band marched and played in his funeral procession. This was not uncommon in those days but I shall not relate the other occasions at this time.

As mentioned before, our Elks Band went nearly every year to the Elks Convention. I would like to tell you a little about the one in Albany on June 3rd and 4th, 1919. We took the 1:21 trolley to Syracuse; then the train the rest of the way. We stayed at the TenEyck Hotel which was something in those days. John D. McIntyre, one of the Elks, and a few others were the life of the party, just a lot of good fun. That evening, across the street and up a block, we played a concert and pavement dance. We played a beautiful new waltz and when we finished, two girls came up to me and asked the name of the tune. I said, "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles." The next morning we played the big Elks' parade and returned to Fulton that evening.

On June 26th this same year, the band went to Oneida for another two day outing. We left Fulton at 8:35 A.M. on the O. & W. train. Frank Dolbear, our alto player, came a little late and had not shaved. We all told him to go down a block to Zuck's Barber Shop and get fixed up. We finally convinced him he had time, so he went. He got in the chair, got lathered up and the barber had shaved down one side only as the train came rumbling across Oneida St. Frank threw off the apron and came running, lather and all, and made the train.

When we arrived at Oneida we marched out to a large field to a tent where we had our lunch. We all laid our instruments in the tall grass nearby. My cornet was so small, I was afraid it would get stepped

on so I put it inside Lynn Richardson's big bass horn. Bern Wilcox sat with me at the table as we always went around together. I was the last one to finish eating as usual and when I went to get my horn I could not find it. The others had picked up their instruments and the parade was forming. Bern reminded me where I had put the cornet so I ran to where Lynn was standing and asked him if he had seen it. He said, "No," so I told him where I had put it. We looked in his big bass horn and there it was.

As this second decade was coming to an end, we again saw some major changes. On Sept. 2-3-4-5, 1919, was held the last Oswego County Fair. Our Citizens Band played every afternoon in the south end of the Grandstand. I took movies of several things including the balloon going up for the last time. It was sad for many to see the end of this great Fair but new things were to follow.

In 1920 John W. Stevenson came forward again and, with the resources of the American Woolen Co., built for the people of Fulton, Recreation Park. The famous open-air dance pavilion came first, then the large merry-go-round with a huge dome over it supported by big round pillars. There were hundreds of light bulbs on top which made a beautiful sight from the other side of the lake. In 1921 a large auditorium was built to be used in the winter months for many different purposes. Movies were installed shortly and managed by Homer Ives. On February 8, 1922, the first show was run featuring Rudolph Valentino in "The Sheik." Mert Reynolds' orchestra played summers in the Pavilion and winters in the auditorium. Other members were Bina Reed, piano; Ralph Briggs, drums; William Collins, saxophone; Grant Bayerian (Syracuse), trumpet; Fred Adkins, (Oswego), trombone; and Jay Benton (Oswego), banjo.

A little later the orchestra changed. Len Youmans played saxophone and I played trumpet. Still later Harry Nichols played piano; Bud Buell, drums, and Al O'Brien, banjo. Mert's orchestra was very popular and played many dances, mostly as the Elks and the Knights of Columbus besides Recreation Park.

November 12th, 1920, was an exciting day in Fulton F. W. Woolworth opened his new 5 & 10 cent store on Oneida Street. In those days 5 and 10 meant just that. You could buy nothing there except for a nickel or a dime. Of course he had to have the Reynolds orchestra to entertain the public all afternoon. On such occasions Mert always had us play his favorite overture, "The Bridal Rose," which featured a cornet solo.

Another such day was April 19th, 1922, when we played for J. R. Sullivan's Greater Furniture store opening. Again the program included "The Bridal Rose."

I would like to tell you about a New Year's dance held at Bowens Corners in the hall over Lee Beardsley's store on December 31, 1920, and how we got there. About 7:00 P.M. I walked up to VanAmburg's Ice Cream Parlor on West First Street just a few door south of Broadway and waited for my ride. In a few minutes I heard sleigh bells and Tip and Rose Tilden pulled up in a nice cutter pulled by a gray horse. We drove to Curtis Street and then out the Plank road to Bowens. As we left the city line by Elijah Lake's place we came upon several pitchholes over 2 feet deep. This was quite a problem. When the horse was down below we were on top, and when we were on the bottom starting up the next hump, the thills were almost straight up and the horse was going out of sight into the next hole. Believe me, we had to hang on. Soon the going was better and we arrived at the party on time.

On June 27, 1922, Fulton paid honor to one of its famous sons. Ed Frawley had returned home from the Naval Academy. He was one of the crew that won the Olympics in Europe that year, so Mr. John Stevenson arranged a large reception for him at Recreation Park. West First Street from Curtis to Broadway and then to the Park was well lighted with large red flares all the way. Our Citizens Band led the parade from Ed's home and a huge crowd followed.

Going back now to the Quirk Theater, several orchestras played there. Allie Buell's was one of the first ones but playing for minstrel shows only. Then for the movies later Mrs. Jennie Fones played piano along with Henry Schellenberg, violin; Edward Croake, cornet; and Jimmy Rebeor, drums. One of the greatest silent films shown in 1915 was David W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation." Henry Schellenberg's orchestra played the accompanying music, following a cue sheet which came with the film.

In the years from 1921 to 1929, the theater had vaudeville acts on Fridays and Saturdays along with a cowboy picture. On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday was the so-called big movie. Dave Carroll played piano along with Jimmy Rebeor, drums; Gus Burns (Syracuse), violin; Ed Fox, flute; and Harold Palmer, cornet. In 1923 Sherman Drohan replaced Jimmy Rebeor at the drums. On February 15, 16 and 17, 1929, we played our last shows because talkies were installed. However, on Jan. 2, 1931, we returned to the theater to play vaudeville again along with the talkies. After a few years vaudeville died out, and we were laid off again.

The week of January 31 - February 6, 1926, The Quirk Theater had probably the first radio broadcast in Fulton. WFBL set up its equipment on the stage in the Quirk Theater and, after we had played the regular show, our orchestra played on the stage over WFBL. The audience stayed on and on. We had several phones installed so the people at home could call in and tell us how they were receiving our program. They reported favorably and asked us to play their favorite tunes. About one o'clock the orchestra went home but we were at it again the next night as usual. I remember one night well. After we went home around one or two o'clock, Dave Carroll, our piano player, stayed on and kept playing and broadcasting alone. The next night we asked him how late he had played and he said, "Well, I'll tell you. I played 'Three O'Clock in the Morning' at three o'clock in the morning and then I went home."

There was one more type of show that was put on almost annually for 30 or more years. This was the people's favorite, "The Minstrel Show." Fulton was blessed with some very fine amateur talent; better than some professional. These shows were put on mostly by the Elks and the Knights of Columbus, although the Odd Fellows and some others had a few. They were directed usually by our very capable Milt Crandall. I have a program here of the Elks' Minstrels held December 13 and 14th, 1915, at the Quirk Theater. Music was furnished by Allie Buell's orchestra. Mr. Drandall used fifty people in this production. To mention just a few, the four comedians were George A. Washburn, F. Parker Van Buren, John J. Pomphret and Thomas F. Farrell. There were eight dancers Lewis F. Cornell, W. Lawson Woodbury, Chester R. Kempston, Raymond G. Pollard, Maurice W. Powers, Harry C. Webb, Frederic Radder and Frank D. Hare. The great

vocalists were too numerous to mention here. "Listen to that Dixie Band" was one of the hits sung by Parker VanBuren. "A Little Bit of Heaven" sung by Ed Walsh brought on heavy applause as did "Somewhere a Voice is Calling" sung by Lawrence Ranger.

During the late twenties and early thirties big name bands came to Recreation Park. Among them were Ozzie Nelson, Eddie Duchin and Blanche Calloway, Cab Calloway's sister.

In 1930 Len Youmans had an eleven piece local orchestra that played in the open air pavilion on Memorial Day and at other times during the summer and early fall. Playing with him were Royal Furness, bass; Mel Hargrave, drums; Harry Nichols, piano; Dick Gardner, Stanley Phillips and Homer Jennings, saxophones; Harold Palmer and Bud Parks, trumpets and Art Fox (Oswego), trombone.

Another large local orchestra was Tommy Blanton's. This group toured the eastern states and was very popular in Boston. They played in Fulton in the middle and late thirties.

There were several smaller orchestras playing school and private dances. Mel Hargrave's "High Hatters" was one of the most popular. Mel played drums along with John Jennings, piano; Homer Jennings, clarinet and saxophone; and Art Fox (Oswego), trombone.

My own group was called "The Happy Five", the members being: Harry Nichols, piano; Harold Palmer, trumpet; Len Youmans, saxophone; Al O'Brien, banjo; and Bud Buell, drums.

Playing several years at the Spanish Inn were Al Bedell, piano; Hamilton Kinne, violin; Jimmy DeBottis, trumpet; and Maurice Rebeor, drums.

Other orchestras were Dick Bracy's and Leon Halstead's "Crusaders." Bill Mason played trumpet with Halstead and I played with Bracy.

After the building of the Quirk Theater, the Quirk Ballroom on the third floor was very popular for dances. Several good orchestras played there including the Fred Curtis group from Oswego. In those days an all girl orchestra was unheard of (except Phil Spitalny's). However, this locality boasted an all girl orchestra of its own called "The Modern Maidens" which often performed at the Quirk Ballroom. The members were: Miss Elizabeth Taylor, trumpet; Miss Winifred Drohan, Phoenix, violin; Miss Jenny Drohan, Phoenix, drums; Miss June Rice, Syracuse, piano; and another young lady from Syracuse playing saxophone. April 18, 1931, was a red-letter day in their career. On that night, there was a new member playing the trumpet with the "Modern Maidens", none other than yours truly.

Last April, Mr. Weldon Grose gave a very interesting paper on music in the Nineteenth Century, and his experiences and stories from 1931 to date, that being the year he came to Oswego. There is no need of my repeating those years.

In closing I would like to mention the famous Marathon dances held in the Auditorium at Recreation Park. Couples would dance together 24 hours a day, continuously, to see who could endure the longest. Orchestras played in the evenings and huge crowds attended. Then the crowds and the orchestra went home, but the contestants had to continue dancing.

This being a wonderful subject in itself, I would like to suggest that someone be invited to write a paper on this, and many other interesting occasions held at Recreation Park, with its popular Blue Bird Tea-Room.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY STRUGGLE TO CONTROL OSWEGO'S WATER

by

H. Fred Bartle

In urban American life, water and politics mix to form a somewhat viscous, frequently unclear, inevitably polluted, and rarely satisfactory beverage. In Oswego, a city whose history has essentially been the story of water for transportation and power, its abundance has tended to intensify rather than lessen the hazards of its political journey through the city's mains. In Oswego, when water and politics have mixed, the result has been trouble.

Nineteen Sixty-Three was the centennial anniversary of the passage by the New York State Legislature of an act to Incorporate the Oswego Water Works Company (Chapter 397, May 4, 1863). The original incorporators of this private company were Thomas Kingsford, DeWitt C. Littlejohn, Delos DeWolf, Samuel Johnson, Hamilton Murray, Theodore Irwin, Cheney Ames, John Edwards and Abner Mattoon. Mattoon was at that time representing Oswego County in the New York State Assembly. Murray died before the company began to function; he was replaced as a director by David G. Fort.

The question whether water should be municipally supplied or given over to private distribution was a familiar one to urban Americans in the 19th century. Private water supply had the advantage of involving private capital in urban development, but complicating this were the frequently inhibiting guaranties public governments were obliged to make to private financial interests

and the invitations such arrangements extended to an unsavory use of money and influence. The failure of private enterprise to satisfy New York City's need with resulting public health problems was considered not insufficient testimony in favor of public ownership, at least it took New York thirty years to take over its own supply function. Why should private industry be permitted to profit from the need of people in a city for water? Why not supply water either at cost or even below cost with the deficit being made up from the general tax levy? The counter argument in a place such as Oswego was that the city's government was probably less efficient than private business -- and more tellingly that private capital existed and could be easily persuaded to do the job. Assemblyman Mattoon's attitude in 1863 illustrates this point. As a member of the Legislature he promoted a bill, which among other things, offered him the chance to combine public service with personal profit. These dual motivations were typical for the American businessman of the 19th century. It is less common to find the practice defended in the 20th century now that conflict-of-interest has a stronger political meaning.

The company's intention was to supply Oswego with "pure and wholesome" water. It was authorized to withdraw water, free of charge, from the Oswego River at any point beyond one and one-half miles south of the Bridge Street bridge, the quantity to be limited only if canal navigation or milling should be joepardized. The company was authorized to take water "from The Oswego River, or any lake, springs, ponds or streams as may be determined."

The act specifically authorized the city of Oswego to contract with the company for its water needs, including fire control and authorized the company to sell water to private citizens or corporations. The company was delegated emient domain rights, subject to "such reasonable regulation as the common council...shall prescribe."

A seventy-five thousand dollar capital stock issue was provided for, with the company being given permission to capitalize another $75,000 if it saw fit. And the company was given additional authorization to borrow $150,000.

Actually, public water in Oswego dates at least from 1830 when the village board appropriated $60 for the purpose of sinking a well at the corner of West First and Gemini and place a "pump therein." In fact, the President of the village was directed to superintend the work. The well actually cost %79.61, setting a precident maintained with unenviable consistency to the present time that water facilities end up costing more than people expect them to.

The Village government subsidized privately dug wells from time to time until the expansion of the 1860's necessitated a more coordinated system of water delivery from an out-of-city source.

The Water Works Company existed only on paper until after the Civil War. In January 1867, the legislature amended the company's charter to permit $400,000 worth of capital stock and a $400,000 debt limit. It appears that eight hundred thousand dollars was substantially more money than was needed to construct the contemplated physical facilities. The Company actually built the water works mostly with borrowed money. The actual cash invested by the company original incorporators was probably a very small amount.

On March 8, 1867, the Company signed a contract with the city that was to become operational when 100 fire hydrants should be functional and to last for twenty years. Outgoing Mayor Maxwell B. Richardson (Oswego's municipal elections were held the first Tuesday in March with the newly elected officials taking office a week later) signed for the city. By the time the contract became operational, on November 1, 1867, Simeon Bates was mayor. During the spring and summer of 1867, a water powered pumping station was built at high dam, two miles south of city hall. It was fireproof, frostproof and very modern.

Two suction pumps, driven by turbine waterwheels combined to lift two million gallons per day to the two city reservoirs. The two reservoirs had a combined capacity of 17,500,00 gallons, or enough to last the city for sixty days. Incidnetally, the water was "filtered" at the reservoirs before being permitted to enter the city's mains. During 1867, approximately sixteen miles of mains were laid. The water, according to the Oswego Times was "clear like spring water, and fit for drinking and ordinary purposes."

The city had contracted to pay the Water Works Company a sum of $20,000 per year for water delivery to city-owned buildings and for fire protection. By 1884, the city was also paying $150 annually for "extra pressure," plus $3,807.07 interest on the expenses of laying water mains after 1867, plus $2,000 for new hydrants, pipes and fountains. The extra-pressure fee was for fire fighting. The Company did not maintain enough pressure in the lines to operate the city's fire fighting apparatus; when there was a fire the pumping station had to be signalled whereupon an additional pump was activated which, at least theoretically, shoved enough additional pressure into the mains to fight the fire. For this the city paid extra. The interest charges had been fixed in the 1867 contract. Also, pursuant to the original contract, the city was required to pay an annual fee of $50 per year for each new fire hydrant installed. The total 1884 cost to the city government was $25,957, which was 16.2% of the city's total budget for that year.

At the Common Council meeting on Tuesday evening, November 18, 1884, as the last item of business at the meeting, the clerk read the following letter from the Oswego Water Works Company:

> The Oswego Water Works Company is ready to negotiate with the City of Oswego for a new contract to supply it with water upon reasonable terms, for an extended period.
>
> This communication is made at this time

so that neither the company nor the city may be embarrassed by the lack of time to make other arrangements before the expiration of the present contract, should there be a failure to consummate an agreement upon such fair and reasonable terms as will commend itself to your Honorable body and meet with the favor of the taxpayers.

s/H. M. Harmon, Secretary

It was to be almost four years before terms had been arrived at and even then it is difficult to suggest that they truly commended themselves to either the common council or the taxpayers. The political explosiveness of the issue is perhaps better indicated by the haste with which the common council sought to insulate itself. As soon as Mr. Harmon's letter was read, Alderman McGowan moved that the Mayor appoint a citizen's committee to confer "with the Common Council and Water Works Company in regard to the matter." The motion passed unanimously.

A week after being so instructed, Mayor Dowdle reported back to the Council that he had assembled a committee of twenty-two members, five ex-mayors among them, including Mr. Richardson.

The citizens' committee itself moved rapidly. Within another week it had met, elected ex-Mayor Edwin Allen as chairman, and had invited the Oswego Water Works to direct a proposal to it. The citizens' committee also had addressed series of questions both to the Oswego City Clerk and to the Company. It had also selected a three member subcommittee to correspond with other cities of comparable size in an effort to assemble comparative data about water costs.

Within two weeks the Company responded with a proposal and answers to the committee's queries, answers which fell somewhat short of the committee's expectations. The speed of this initial action did not create a momentum capable of continuing through to a decision; all of this prompt action was soon benumbed by a year of words.

The cititzens' committee had wanted from the Company:

1. A map of the water supply system
2. A statement of the cost of the company's works
3. A statement of annual operating expenses
4. A statement of the company's revenues.

The Company's proposal was embidied in a letter dated December 16, 1884, to the committee from Thomas S. Mott, President. After noting that the Company could pump some three million gallons of water per day through approximately thirty miles of mains, President Mott offered:

> to furnish a supply, during 25 years from expiration of present contract of good water taken from Oswego River at its pump houses for fire engines, fire purposes, and for engine houses, for the city hall and all public buildings, for 20 public and drinking fountains, for public schools and school houses, for churches or parochial schools, for the Oswego City Hospital, the Home for the Homeless, the Orphan Asylum and to pump into the mains for fire purposes upon signal, for a consideration to be paid by the city per year of $15,000 and taxes for the first 15 years, and $12,000 and taxes per year for the next ten years, to be paid quarterly; the Common Council to have the right to order hydrants and for the first 20 years extensions as in the present contract, paying for the hydrants as now and 6 per cent interest on the cost of mains ordered by the Council...When receipts from private consumers reached $20,000 per year, $3,000 to be deducted from gross sum paid by the city.

This proposal was essentially a renewal of the existing contract. The Water Works Company paid the city approximately $5,000 per year in property taxes so the rate of fifteen thousand per year plus taxes was about the same as twenty thousand per year without taxes. Since neither the amount nor value of property of the Company would be likely to decrease, the new terms actually represented a slight increase in the city's payment taken over a twenty-five year period.

The company's reply to the committee's four questions was to become a matter of lively controversy.

1. "It is not convenient to make...maps for the use of the committee." Presumably "the committee... (could) have access to those in possession of city authorities."

2. The Company said it had paid a contractor named James McDonald $457,000 for the original works but that its contract with McDonald had not specified "the price of the several parts." "(A)bout $100,000" had been spent by Company since 1868 to make capital improvements.

3. The Company reported operating expenses for 1884 of $14,173.22 plus interest payments of $16,150.00 for a total of $30,323.22. This figure corroborates the fact that the works had been built with borrowed rather than subscribed money.

4. The Company listed its 1884 non-city income at $13,133.84. These Company supplied figures indicated an apparent profit for the Company of approximately ten thousand dollars for 1884.

At about the same time this information was being publicized, the citizens' committee published comparative figures which tended to prove that Oswego's water was extremely costly. Here is the data:

City	Population	1884 Cost To City	Water Supply Public or Private
Oswego	22,000	$25,957.07	Private
Ogdensburg	10,340	2,050	Public
Binghamton	17,315	None	Public
Lockport	13,522	3,000	Priv. owned rented by city
Auburn	21,934	20,000	Private
Utica	33,913	17,000	Private
Kingston	18,342	None	Private
Poughkeepsie	20,207	2,000	Public
Yonkers	18,892	10,050	Public
Lancaster, Pa.	23,980	None	Public
Paterson, N.J.	36,210	21,867	Private
Trenton, N.J.	24,260	None	Public
Rome	12,045	None	Public
Newburgh	18,050	None	Public
Elmira	20,541	10,700	Private

(The data shown above was obtained, according to the citizens' committee, by questionnaire. Its reliability depends not only upon how carefully the cities queried filled out the questionnaire, but also upon their methods of determining cost figures. There is also some question as to the selection of cities. However, despite any possible margin of error, the unenviable position of Oswego was made quite clear.)

One of the most outspoken anti-Company Oswegonians was Dewitt Clinton Littlejohn, who had been one of the incorporators of the company in 1863 and who had served on its first board of directors. In 1884, Littlejohn, nearing the end of his long public career, was serving what was to be a brief comeback in the New York State Assembly. He introduced a bill that would have created a three member, unpaid, popularly elected board of water commissioners who would "examine and consider all matters relative to supplying the city... with a sufficient quantity of pure and wholesome water." The commission was to be instructed to "employ chemists, engineers, surveyors and other such persons" to help it prepare a report due on or before Sept. 1, 1885. The plan could include, Littlejohn had inserted in his bill, "the purchase of any water works with the pipes, machinery, ... (etc.)." The bill also would have permitted the commission to recommend construction of new works with the water taken from Lake Ontario.

The commission's plan was then to be submitted to a public referendum. Anticipating a proposal for a municipally owned waterworks and public approval for this proposal, the bill then went on to parallel roughly the 21-year old private bill, simple substituting "public commission" for Oswego Water Works Company. The bill passed the 1884 session of the New York State Legislature only to be vetoed by Governor David B. Hill. In 1885, Littlejohn was no longer in the Legislature, but he was still interested in promoting his bill.

Both the Palladium and the Times and Express took the editorial position that the Company's proposal was unacceptable. The Palladium accused the company of padding its cost figures, estimating that the works had cost more nearly two hundred than six hundred thousand dollars.

It bemoaned the fact that no one seemed able to defend the city's taxpayers while the Water Works Company was "composed of men abundantly able to take care of their own interests." The Times and Express in a long editorial on December 17, 1884, noted that the "claim that the Oswego Water Works had actually cost $563,466.55 ...is difficult to look upon with seriousness." "We have some recollection that Mr. McDonald, the ostensible contractor, in giving evidence in a suit at law, placed their cost several hundred thousand dollars less than that sum." (My own research indicates the cost of the original works was approximately $250,000.) The Times and Express went on to advocate Oswego's ownership of its own water works. "It would be the cheapest and best in the end." As if to underscore its dissatisfaction with the company, the paper reported in the same issue that the elegant resident of C. W. Platt on the corner of East Sixth and Utica Streets had completely burned. "There was considerable difficulty in obtaining water and when a stream was at last got upon the flames it was impossible to check them." The company has persistently asserted that it put special pumps into operation when a fire alarm sounded to build up the water pressure beyond its normal 22 pounds. The report of the fire caustically continued, "The stream from the hydrant was useless and even when the steamer got to work it was impossible to reach the second story with a stream strong enough to be of any use." "Prominent members of the fire department say if there had been water enough to get a good stream at the beginning of the fire, the building might have been saved." The Company's defense against this accusation will be noted later.

A second controversy was superimposed over the public vs. private ownership issue: whether Oswego should continue drawing water from the Oswego River or tap Lake Ontario instead. B. B. Burt, a lawyer, an ex-Alderman, and a member of the Board of Fire Commissioners, painted a somewhat horrifying picture of Oswego River water in a long letter to the Morning Express. Mr. Burt catalogued the raw sewage, waste products of tanneries, woolen mills, paper mills and other "filthy and decayed" wastes that polluted the Oswego River. Then he pointed out the inadequacies of the water works filtration system by reporting an anecdote about a half-pound fish being found in a sprinkler head. Rising to his subject, Mr. Burt noted that of an "analysis of 93 waters used for city purposes in this and foreign counties, no one showed so great a quantity of organic matter as the Oswego River after filtration." Growing still warmer, Mr. Burt admonished, "Impure water weakens the body and mind, injures the tissues and blood, permits destruction of their vigor and shortens average life and degenerates the entire existence of the rising generation." Then Burt struck at the water works as "too small." He suggested the building of an entirely new water supply system, city owned, using Lake Ontario as the source of supply. At various stages of the controversy, the Water Works Company expressed a willingness to be bought out, but Burt's suggestion that the company should be abandoned must have caused considerable concern at the Company's front office. President Mott and his associates found themselves doing battle on two fronts--one to preserve private ownership of the city water system and on the other to continue to use the Oswego River as their intake source.

At least one member of the citizens' committee was outspokenly pro-Water Works Company. Dr. C.C.P. Clark publicized in the city's papers his view that Oswego River water was not only fit to drink, but better than Lake Ontario water. His suggestion that no flowing stream east of the Mississippi was unfit for drinking would seem somewhat to undermine his argument. It is interesting that in a long letter to the Times and Express, Dr. Clark, after an initial reference to his competencies as a physician, devoted far more space to cost analysis than to water purity. Dr. Clark provoked a remonstratory editorial in the Times and Express for revealing publicly the divisions within the citizens committee.

Early in 1885, the controversy moved into a more conspicuous area. With a revised version of Littlejohn's bill pending in the state legislature and a vigorous letter writing campaign taking place in the city's newpapers (one pro-Company letter pointed out that most of the Oswego Water Works Company's bonds were held in "trust funds for widows and orphans."), a public meeting was announced by the company's enemies. Handbills headed "Rally for your rights!" asked "All in favor of pure and cheap water" to rally at Columbia Hall on the evening of February 9 to hear Hon. D. C. Littlejohn, M. B. Richardson (who was also to preside), C. N. Bulger, A.S. Page, B.B. Burt, and others.

While the pro-public supply people were assembling their strength, the Company was far from idle. It requested a meeting with the citizens committee for the purposes of seeking what it called non-obstructive amendments to the very bill designed to abolish it. And the company's superintendent, N. M. Rowe, returned to Oswego just before the public meeting from a hasty trip to some of the cities discussed in the citizens' committee's comparative report prepared to fight data with

data. The citizens' committee agreed to meet representatives of the company to discuss the bill; however, the company "stood up" the committee, pleading a sudden outbreak of illness among the company's officials. As events transpired, it became evident that the Company had made plans to infiltrate Littlejohn's Columbia Hall meeting.

The night of February 9 was cold and icy. Columbia Hall was not filled to capacity. The meeting there was long and at times quite warm.

While Littlejohn's speech was the oration of the evening, George B. Sloan's was the most provocative, all the more so because it was unanticipated. The prepared addresses had been pre-coordinated to avoid overlapping of subject matter. Mr. Richardson confined himself to presiding; Mr. Bulger talked about water costs--they were too high; Mr. Burt talked about fire protection--it was inadequate. Then Mr. Littlejohn began in a style certainly more congenial to his own times than ours.

"I am told," he commended, "that in yonder bank parlor Mr. T.S.Mott has stated that D.C. Littlejohn entertains personal animosity and hatred toward him; that I am actuated by malice. In my heart, I entertain no malice toward man, woman or child. If it were in my power, I would do Thomas S. Mott a favor tonight. I propose to speak plainly." Then, as the Times and Express reported, Littlejohn delivered his "well known elogy (sic) on Oswego's former business prosperity." He moved next into a strong denunciation of the inadequate Water Works Company followed by a stern attack on Mr. Mott's unreasonable and irresponsible influence in both Oswego and Albany. He stated that the stockholders of the Water Works Company had never actually paid any money for their stock, and that the entire works had been constructed with borrowed money. The financial statement given to the citizens' committee tends to bear this out. Its interest payments for 1884 indicate a debt

of approximately $350,000, that is, the costs of the original works plus improvements. Littlejohn went on to accuse Mott of reaping a twenty-five percent profit on a purely paper investment. This was followed by a somewhat detailed and somewhat irrelevant defence of his own Midland Railroad affairs against previous attacks by Mott from "yon bank parlor." Warming, Littlejohn proceeded to discuss how cheaply Oswego could run its own works. From that topic, Littlejohn turned his attention to the need to switch from the impure sewage-ridden waters of the river to the pure waters of the lake. Finally, ready to conclude, he solemnly warned Mr. Mott not to stand in the way of public water. Solidifying his metaphor, Littlejohn asserted that Mott could no more stop public water than he could an avalanche.

At this point in the meeting, the chairman unexpectedly called upon George B. Sloan. He had not been scheduled to speak but the fact that he came with a prepared address indicates that he either outsmarted Richardson or that Richardson outsmarted Littlejohn. Sloan was, of course, one of the most distinguished men in the city. Like Littlejohn, he was an ex-speaker of the New York State Assembly and, unlike Littlejohn, he had several terms in the New York State Senate still before him. He was also a member of the board of directors of the Oswego Water Works Company. In a skillful forensic effort, Mr. Sloan proceeded ingeniously to cast doubts and aspersions. To be sure, said Mr. Sloan, he was in favor of a public water commission. But shouldn't the commission's duty be first to ascertain what the Water Works Company could do for Oswego? Shouldn't the commission itself be impowered to deal with the Company if that should be the best thing for the city? Sloan warned the citizens not to be carried away by a "rose colored view" of the city owning its own water works. The cost might be appressive. "Mr. Littlejohn

is one of the best citizens we ever had, but I tell you he is very hopeful. He never sees a cloud, but I am a little safer man on this point than Mr. Littlejohn. I am against tying ourselves up..." Littlejohn was one his feet at this point seeking to interrupt; Sloan continued: "I do not want the people, under his (Littlejohn's) seductive oratory, to lose sight of the question they came here to consider."

Littlejohn: "May I ask the gentleman a question?"

Sloan: "In a moment I am done."

Mr. Sloan then went on to ask for a delay so that the Water Works Company might be consulted on the text of the bill. The bill was the same one that had passed the legislature in 1884, and the Company had just two days before the meeting failed to keep an appointment with the citizens' committee to discuss the bill. Mr. Littlejohn was again on his feet with a protest against delay. Sloan countered by saying that Assemblyman Howe could easily get the bill through the legislature. Littlejohn and Sloan then proceeded to have what the newspapers called an'animated tilt." But before adjournment, Sloan carried his point. Sloan moved that the citizens assembled resubmit the bills' test to the citizens' committee appointed by Mayor Dowdle and that the committee consult with the Water Works Company. Motion carried; meeting adjourned.

The Columbia Hall meeting was held on a Monday evening. The following night was regular Common Council night and the Water Works Company was present in some force--its officers had all apparently recovered from their collective indispositions of the previous few days. President Mott was recognized and read into the city's journal "corrected" figures which countered the citizens' committee's earlier report. According to Mott, the total annual per capita cost of water for "each of the cities referred to in the (citizens') committee's report" proved that Oswego had the cheapest water of any.

Actually the company report covered only five of the fourteen cities discussed in the ctitzens' report. It did introduce evidence from twenty-two other cities. In terms of total costs, the Water Works Company's evidence showed considerable variations in cost, but certainly indicated that the cost of water in Oswego was below the average cost for water in cities of approximately Oswego's size throughout the nation. The citizens' committee had reports on cities in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; the company report on sities from Rhode Island to Utah.

To further strengthen its data, the company compared the water rates of Binghamton and Oswego by estimating the annual water bills of several prominent Oswego citizens would pay if they lived in Binghamton. D. C. Littlejohn, said Mott, paid, in 1884, $38. His Binghamton rate would have been $43. (It should be pointed out that in Binghamton the municipally owned and operated water works were self-sustaining. So Littlejohn's real Oswego water bill was actually his $38 fee plus whatever share of the city's $27,000 costs came from his personal property taxes. It is quite possible that Littlejohn's actual Oswego water bill was higher than $43, a fact which Mr. Mott failed to make clear.)

The company's report defended its earlier estimates of the money it had spent to construct its works, claimed the capacity of its pipes were more than adequate, that it did maintain pressure capable of fighting fires (and that there were very few buildings on hill tops where pressure had to be kept low to avoid too great pressure on outlets at lower altitudes), and lastly maintained that river water was pure. A certificate signed by thirteen physicians was appended assuring that under no circumstances would Oswego's water "beget...or favor...any kind of sickness." The

lengthy report of President Mott concluded with statements renewing the Company's offer to negotiate and estimated a cost of one million dollars to the city should it decide to construct its own works.

The February 1885 newspapers are crowded with related arguments. Ex-mayor Alanson S. Page, a member of the citizens' committee, and Mr. Sloan traded insults and exchanged accusations of personal cupidity. The Company's report had noted that Oswego's water supply was as good as Philadelphia's. Someone who signed his letter "Sufficient supply" noted that this was an unenviable comparison because the Philadelphia alms house had just been destroyed by fire because of the lack of available hydrants. Another correspondent chided Oswego's physicians for including in their statement (the one incorporated in the Company's report to the Common Council) the observation that they would not change their opinions even if chemical analysis showed them mistaken. The concluding statement of the affidavit read: "By the side of this verdict of our experience any chemical analysis (of the water) would be worthless."

These attacks notwithstanding, Messrs. Sloan and Mott, representing the company, met with the citizens' subcommittee, to propose that the bill be so worded as to empower the proposed water commissioners to deal with the existing company--either to buy it out or to renew its contract.

On Sunday, February 15, 1885, Mr. Littlejohn found himself highly rediculed in a long article in the Syracuse Herald. His own relationship with the Water Works Company was traced in fine detail. According to the Herald, Littlejohn had originally subscribed for $5,000 worth of Oswego Water Works Company stock in 1867. As if to prove Littlejohn's point in his Columbia Hall speech that no money was paid for this stock, the Herald reported that a check for $500 had been returned

to Littlejohn in 1867 and his shares forfeited. However, the company's books showed that the fifty shares of stock originally subscribed to Delos DeWolfe (another of the original incorporators) had been transferred in 1867 to Mrs. Littlejohn and that they had been held in her name until in 1881 when they had been sold for $850 to none other than Thomas S. Mott, shortly before Mott became President of the Company. Littlejohn was also berated for his assumption that the Oswego River's water could have changed in character between 1867 and 1885. The article took a more modest swipe at ex-Mayor Richardson's turnabout. The quick appearance of so detailed an attack upon Littlejohn certainly suggests some of the Water Company's resources in this political struggle.

The Company's superintendent, N. M. Rowe, carried on a considerable portion of the company's public relations. He produced yet another set of figures to prove the inexpensiveness of the Company's services and began to stress the additional benefit the city derived from the fact that the Company paid to the city approximately $5,000 annually in taxes. Mr. Rowe's enemies publicly recommended that he be more specific, noting that he had been since 1873 the city's chief assessor. One somewhat sanguine critic, calling himself "Inquirer" wrote in the Palladium that as a result of Mr. Rowe's fortuitous double career "this virtuous company have by sharp practice paid no taxes (for) some years."

During the two weeks which followed the Columbia Hall meeting, the Company negotiated quite sucessfully with both the Common Council and the citizens' committee about the substance of the bill to go before the legislature. The Company effected significant changes concerning the authority of the proposed water commissioner. The company next sought to influence the composition of the commission. The original Littlejohn Bill had called for the election of commissioners at a special election held for that purpose only and that all

male citizens be eligible to vote. The Company suggested most other alternatives--election at a regular election, election by taxpayers only, appointment by the Common Council, appointment by the Mayor. On this issue, the citizens' committee held firm and the draft bill submitted to a second citizens' meeting at the Academy of Music on Saturday evening, February 28, called for a special election for commissioners. At this meeting, ex-Mayor Thomas Pearson, a member of one citizens' committee, delivered the principal address; Mr. Littlejohn did not speak at all. Before this meeting was conducted, the Company produced yet another set of self-laudatory statistics which proved, among other things, that Oswego furnished more water annually per capita than Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia and Washington.

The second mass meeting recommended the public water commission bill again to the legislature, although it was certainly not the same public commission bill that had been introduced by Littlejohn in 1884. The bill again passed only to suffer the same fate as Littlejohn's effort of the previous year.

On March 10, 1885, Clark Morrison took the Mayor's oath from the city recorder. Morrison was yet another ex-Mayor who had been serving on Mayor Dowdle's citizens' committee.

In his inaugural address, Mayor Morrison endorsed the bill, while noting that the most important responsibility of the proposed water commission would be to distribute data rather than water. He suggested the possibility that the Oswego Water Works Company might be capable of maintaining the city's water supply system. If the Mayor's address suggested his pro-Company attitude, the following week's council meeting proved it. Dennis Donovan, a Seventh Ward alderman, introduced a resulution supporting the bill

and urging Oswego County's assemblymen (the County had two of them at that time) to support it in Albany. Eighth Ward Alderman Michael O'Gorman moved that the resolution be referred to the as-yet unappointed Water Works Committee of the Common Council. (The Mayor appointed the Council's committees.) This delaying tactic was defeated by a vote of 11 to 5. (There were sixteen votes case because each Ward was represented by two aldermen.) The eleven who voted against postponement then voted for Donovan's motion. The five who voted for delay voted against recommending the bill. Later the same evening Mayor Morrison announced the appointment of Council Committees. Three of the five members of his water works committee had voted against recommending the bill; O'Gorman was made chairman. The Water Works Company had a new, if yet tenuous, lease on life. Its contract would not expire for two years; negotiations were fluid at best. Alderman O'Gorman should have been in a position to know something of the working of the Water Works Company; he was one of its attorneys. The Common Council went about the business of authorizing main extensions and new fire hydrants--four hundred feet of the former and four of the latter on April 28, 1885.

As previously indicated, the bill for an Oswego Water Commission did pass the legislature. Early in June it rested on Governor Hill's desk. The Council met on June 2 to discuss an appeal to the Governor--first to veto the bill and second, to sign the bill. There were fifteen Aldermen present. The Aldermen voted eight to seven in favor of the bill, but Mayor Morrison voted against it, which represents a complete turnabout since his inaugural remarks. Missing Alderman McCaffrey was known to be in favor of the bill, but he was in Maine. The meeting adjourned after motions to appeal to the governor, first to veto, then to sign, were successively lost by eight to eight ties.

During the summer of 1885, the Water Works Company extended a four inch main along West Van Buren Street and permitted the water pressure along East First Street from Utica to Bridge to weaken in the public drinking fountains so much that they could not be used.

Mayor Morrison had no use for Mayor Dowdle's citizens committee to deal with the Water Works Company and it ceased to function. On September 15, 1885, he addressed the council on the subject of water. He noted that the Governor's two vetoes had negated any action taken by the city: "(we are in) ... precisely the same condition in which we were two years ago, with the disadvantage to the city of being two years nearer the time when we must act." The Mayor went on to identify a "strong sentiment in favor of negotiating with the Oswego Water Works Company as the first step toward an intelligent and satisfactory arrangement for our future water supply." Ignoring the Company's previous terms offer, he suggested that the Common Council should ask the Company for a proposition "to furnish the city with a full and adequate supply of water for fire extinguishment and other public purposes;" the mayor asked for terms both for ten and twenty years. The company's response, a month in coming, represented a scaling down of the then existing contractual price. Water would be delivered for fire purposes (extra pressure on call), for city hall, for school houses, for engine houses, for four fountains and eighteen drinking fountains, for sixteen thousand dollars per year; new drinking fountains were to cost the city one hundred dollars per year. No reference was made to the city's being required to pay interest charges on new improvement expenses or on any city suspension of the Company's taxes. The terms of this new offer represented (in comparison with the

existing 1885 rates under the old contract) a reduction in cost to the city of approximately two-fifths of its observable costs. At a September 27, 1885, meeting of the Common Council, the offer was referred to the Committee on Water Works. And it was still under consideration by the Water Works Committee when the city administration changed hands in March 1886.

Incoming Mayor Charles North had been mayor twenty years earlier. His inaugural comment on water was terse indeed: "I believe it to be the duty of this body (the Common Council) to carefully and thoroughly examine the question and, if possible, to settle the same at an early day in such manner as shall be for the best interests of the city." Mayor North retained two members of his predecessor's water works committee, including Chairman O'Gorman. One of the 1885 committee was no longer on the council, so the Mayor chose to select three different aldermen to the committee. The North administration had some trouble getting organized. It took five ballots to select a City Attorney; the candidate supported by the Mayor won on the final ballot only after he cast the deciding vote to break an eight to eight tie. There was also a lively contest for city Treasurer. When the Mayor read his committee list, a rival list was introduced from the floor of the council by Fifth Ward Alderman John Quinlan. Significantly the committee that would have been most changed was the water works committee. There were four proposed substitutions, including one for O'Gorman. However, the rival slate lost and the administration was at least organized.

Throughout 1886, the Council's water works committee failed to make a single report to the Council. The only time water was a subject of discussion was when the quarterly payments to the Company were authorized, each time by unanimous council votes.

A resolution authorizing the placement of a drinking fountain on the corner of West Fifth and Ellen was turned over to the Committee for its own peculiar type of disposition. In January 1887, the first quarterly payment for that year was authorized without objection.

Eighteen-eighty six was a year for charter revision, and the Common Council was halved. Concern with charter revision pushed the water controversy completely out of the limelight for a time. Yet another bill empowering the city to establish a public water commission was introduced in Albany only to be withdrawn at the city's request because it wanted priority given to the charter revision bill also before the legislature. In the charter revision, water went unmentioned.

In March 1887, Mayor North was re-elected, charter revision was endorsed, and in retrospect it is to be noted that no action of any kind had been taken by the city government during Mayor North's first term. There was no water commission; there had been no negotiations, and as of November 1, there would be no contract. Mayor North's 1887 inaugural was exceedingly brief and contained no reference to water. In May, the company's payment was again promptly and unanimously authorized, but in June a proposal to extend a new four inch main along East 8th Street between Bridge and Schuyler was tabled even after the Water Works Committee had reported favorably upon it--the committee's first report in sixteen months.

Also in June 1887, the Common Council voted to raise by taxation the sum of $26,525 for payment to the Oswego Water Works Company pursuant to the contract of 1867, which would of course expire before this payment would ordinarily have been made. The Council was apparently anticipating that there might be no contract at all--which would have meant the continuation of the old one.

However, by this time, negotiations with the company had been completed and the struggle was shifted away from public v. private or from river v. lake water to the more limited question: to approve or not to approve the proposed contract.

The Company's offer of October 1885 had finally come before the Council in the form of a report to the Council by its water works committee on July 5, 1887, containing a proposed new contract. The contract set the base price for the city's water supply at $15,000 per year for a twenty-year period, that is, from 1887 to 1907. New fire hydrants were to be paid for and owned by the city, the company supplying each new one at a yearly rate of $50. The company also promised to keep the hydrants in good repair unless damage to them was caused by city negligence. The city was to be able to authorize new mains with two provisos: 1.) that they be consistent with "the general plan of the works," and 2.) that for each 500 feet of main or fraction thereof a hydrant would be erected. The Company promised to keep the system in good repair and there was a clause which scaled down the city's payments if water service should be interrupted for more than seven consecutive days. Private water rates were to be frozen at their 1886 level. Finally, the Water Works Company agreed to sell its property to the city at any time before the expiration of the contract for "the actual cost of the works" plus twenty percent.

The contract was reported and a resolution introduced that it should be held over for two weeks. The council had been reduced to eight members in March. At this meeting two members were absent. When the motion to table the contract lost, two Democratic aldermen, Higgins and Ryan, left the chamber, and the meeting, for want of a quorum, adjourned until the

following week. When the meeting reconvened on July 12, all eight aldermen were in their seats. The clerk was instructed to read the proceedings of July 5. Alderman Higgins moved that all references to the Water Works committee's report be stricken from the journal. This motion produced a tie vote which Mayor North broke with a negative (i.e., pro-contract) vote. Then Alderman Higgins moved a two week postponement. This lost by the same combination. Next, Higgins moved adjournment. When this motion lost, five to four, he, plus aldermen Ryan, Griffin and Wright left the chamber. (The Mayor could vote as a member of the Council, but five aldermen were needed to create a quorum.)

By this time, the actual arena of the dispute had been so narrowed that delaying tactics on the part of the pro-public water supply people tended to be advantageous to the Oswego Water Works Comapny. On the short range, the absence of a contract as of November 1 would mean continued payments at the old rate--or perhaps no water. On the longer range, the pro-public works people had very little of an alternative to offer to the Company. They had been defeated at Columbia Hall, in Albany, and repeatedly in the Common Council. Newspaper support began to drift away, too, in the name of finally settling such a protracted dispute.

There had been two provisions of the bill which Governor Hill has twice vetoed that were particularly controversial. The first, inserted in the second bill at Mr. Sloan's insistence, provided that only taxpayers could vote in electing the proposed water commission. The second, maintained since Littlejohn's original bill over Company opposition, provided that if the city and Company failed to agree on the value of the works--should the city decide to buy--a special commission was to be appointed by the State Supreme Court to establish a binding selling price. The first of these issues was

not a part of the 1887 phase of the struggle, but the second one was. The proposed contract spelled out the sale price with no provision for settlement of fair value beyond the company's own estimates. This would have meant that any future deal between the city and the company would have been on the company's terms.

As time passed, the anti-contract forces were placed increasingly on the defensive. The dispute had dragged on for over three years and time was running out. With no city water commission, no state authorization for a public water works, and still no contract with the Company, the city's papers were sympathetic to Alderman Higgins only to the extent that they felt the contract approval should not be railroaded through the Common Council without ample time for consideration.

Nevertheless, the four man minority of the council persisted.

The mayor called a special council meeting Monday evening, July 18, 1887. He read two separate requests for the meeting, one from Aldermen Wheeler, Murdock, Sharpe and Cooper that there be a special meeting to conduct the city's business, and a second from Aldermen Higgins, Wright, Ryan and Griffen that there be a special meeting to dispose of all business except the Water Works contract. Alderman Higgins immediately moved that the meeting be conducted according to his request and upon one predictable 5 to 4 defeat, he and his three colleagues left the council chamber. The following evening a regular council meeting could not be held because the same four Aldermen did not present themselves at all. They did attend a meeting on July 30, but by advance agreement, the water contract issue was not raised; there was a two month backlog of other city business to dispose of. The Mayor made another attempt to have the contract approved on Aug. 2. A motion by Alderman Higgins to defer consideration for three months lost, five to four, but the council immediately after adjourned so all the aldermen could leave together.

The five to four split on the council seemed to function for sewers as well as water. The August 16th meeting of the council was devoted to a lengthy debate about new sewers, construction ultimately being authorized by the four pro-contract aldermen plus the mayor. A motion to construct a new water main was first tabled and then referred back to the water works committee.

Higgins carried his fight beyond the city council chambers. At a July 30 public meeting resolutions deemed "red hot" by the Times were passed demanding the resignations of the Republican mayor and the four Republican Aldermen who were "tools" of the Water Works Company, variously identified as "Moneybags & Co."

On August 16, 1887, the Company withdrew its offer. The communication of withdrawal was referred to the Water Works Committee. Mr. Littlejohn attended the Council meeting, but spoke about the need for encouraging manufacturing, not about water. Also at the same meeting, the Company's regular quarterly payment was authorized without opposition.

The stalemate continued throughout the summer into the autumn. Two of the city's four public fountains ceased to function. Incidentally, the new contract had proposed to reduce the number of public fountains to two. The Company suggested that the city move a fire hydrant, and the city told the Company that if it wanted to move the hydrant, it would have to do so at its own expense.

On November 21, the anti-Water Works Company aldermen were forced to pay the immediate price of their tactics: the Council authorized a regular quarterly payment to the Company under the terms of the old (expired) contract. Late the following January (1888) the first break in the payment routine occurred. The quarterly authorization resolution was presented and rather than vote the money the council sent it to the water works committee. The Company, apparently

feeling secure in the absence of any legal leverage against it, was by this time in no hurry at all to negotiate another contract. Alderman Higgins moved on February 6, 1888, that the $5,000 quarterly payment be reduced to $3,000, "the same being in the opinion of this council a fair and equitable price for the water... used by this city." This motion was tabled indefinitely; the four pro-Company aldermen plus the mayor did the tabling. The annual statement of the City Clerk delivered at the end of February showed a $5,000 balance in the water works account. However, at the last council session for that political year, the same four aldermen (three of whom had already been replaced by the voters) plus Mayor North (also about to leave office) voted to pay the $5,000 to the company.

It is interesting to note that in the March 1888 election, all four East side aldermen (three of whom were anti-Company and pro-public water) were re-elected and all four west side aldermen were replaced. The new Mayor was Henry McCaffrey who as an alderman two years earlier had prevented passage of a resolution favoring the successor to the Littlejohn public water bill. He had defeated ex-Mayor Alanson S. Page, also an ex-member of Mayor Dowdle's 1884 citizens' advisory committee.

Mayor McCaffrey's inaugural remarks had the virtue of indicating unmistakably his views on the water issue, and from the point of view of the city's choice, they seem realistic:

> "In my judgment the city should make a contract with the Oswego Water Works Company. The price, terms and conditions should be settled in a business(like) manner. We represent the city in making

> this bargain...I hope that the entire council will assist in making a business transaction of this manner, permitting no personal feeling, prejudice or partisan spirit to be manifested. I shall favor the greatest publicity in the negotiations and trust, that when we have concluded a bargain, the ideas ...(in the contract)...will merit the approval of all good citizens."

Perhaps to help with a new approach, the Mayor appointed three freshmen aldermen to the Water Works Committee--Parsons, Hunt and Rowan. Rowan proved to be anti-Company, but Parsons and Hunt proved to be pro-Company. In fact, Alderman Rowan did not participate in the contract negotiations (or renegotiations), did not sign the committee's report and eventually voted against the agreement.

In spite of the 50% turnover, the even division between the pro and anti aldermen remained. The three re-elected anti-company aldermen were joined by Alderman Thomas Rowan. The one re-elected pro-company alderman, Murdock, was joined by Aldermen George Hunt, John Parsons and William Drumm.

It was not until June that the next, and final, edition of the contract was completed. The draft turned out to be the same old contract the company had been presenting since 1885, with only minor exceptions: its major provisions:

1. The contract was for 15 years at $15,000 per year
2. The city would not longer pay interest on main costs
3. The city would be excused from additional payments for extra pressure
4. The city would continue to pay $50 per year for each new hydrant, but the city alone would specify where the hydrants were to be placed

5. The company was required to deliver water until the the city's payments were one year in arrears
6. The company would not raise private water rates
7. The company agreed to sell out to the city at any time for the cost of the works plus twenty per cent.

The Common Council met on July 24, 1888, to consider this contract; or to be more specific, half the council met. Four anti-company, anti-contract aldermen were not present. Rather than adjourn for lack of a quorum, the Mayor ordered the clerk to summon the absent members. The clerk found and summoned Alderman Ryan; the other three missing legislators were nowhere discovered. In an effort to compel attendance, the pro-Company aldermen passed a force resolution saying the "members (who) are here present, do hereby require and command each of said absent members to attend...(a) meeting of this council hereby appointed for Friday evening, July 27th, at 7:30 o'clock p.m....) And the four recalcitrant members did come to the Friday meeting. They did not stay very long: as soon as the other business was disposed of, a resolution was again introduced calling for the city's acceptance of the contract, which since its introduction had been revised to insert the requirement that fire hydrants had to be placed at the rate of one for every five hundred feet of main, or fraction thereof. After losing, five to four, a call for postponement, Higgins and his three compatriots legally removed the quorum by physically removing themselves. Mayor McCaffrey suspended the council meeting for three days--until the 30th of July. At the July 30th meeting, the need for a quorum to transact a month of city business forestalled any water action at all, but the long conflict was nearing its end. The best the anti-Company aldermen could have accomplished would have been a stalemate. And a stalemate is not a solution. Four aldermen plus the mayor were enough to accept the contract, and the other four aldermen, without the mayor, were not enough.

On August 3, the Council, meeting as a committee of the Whole met in the Mayor's office with representatives of the Water Works Company. The anti-company group, as might be expected, had little success in amending the contract. Alderman Higgins tried successfully to get two additional drinking fountains. He carried an amendment that water mains could be extended by a majority rather than a two-thirds Council vote. He won another small success by moving that a hydrant was not necessary on any fraction of five hundred feet of main unless that fraction was at least 200 feet long and one hydrant was called for by the Council. A pro-company alderman then reduced the distance to 100 feet. Higgins also demanded - successfully - that the Company promise to provide 2,000 gallons per minute when needed for fire fighting.

Higgins finally tried a somewhat ingenious device designed to prevent the city from purchasing the Water Works Company. He moved that the price of "the cost of the works plus twenty percent" be changed to "the cost of the works plus twenty percent plus four hundred thousand dollars." But two of his own colleagues were unwilling to support him on that risky venture. Next, Higgins moved the shortening of the contract. Motion lost. But for the minor changes noted above and the incorporation into the body of the contract of the rates for private users,[1] the document remained unchanged. In an anticlimatic regular council session on Tuesday, August 7, 1888, all alderman present at the beginning and at the end of the meeting, the contract was accepted by the city. Alderman Higgins introduced a motion to scale down the annual payments from fifteen to twelve thousand dollars. The council voted him down by the expected five to four vote. Then Mayor McCaffrey joined the four pro-Company aldermen to formally consummate the deal.

The contract remained in force for fifteen years.

In retrospect, this episode in Oswego's history represents ultimate victory by a small number of people with a vested interest in the Oswego Water Works Company over the probable views of the majority. The Columbia Hall and Academy of Music meetings in 1885 had mobilized public opinion against private ownership and against Oswego River water. But by exercising sagacious tactics in Albany and by infiltration into the camp of its enemies, the Oswego Water Works Company sought and won time. By 1887, it was clear there was no meaningful alternative left to the city: it had to deal with the company. As of the 1888 contract, the Company won for itself two significant victories: the first was a fifteen year extension of its monopoly and the second was an assurance that its facilities would be purchased by the city as a part of taking over its own water supply distribution. In 1902, a bond issue of $550,000 was authorized for that purpose.

WATER RATES - Per Annum

Dwellings

One faucet for culinary purposes	one story	$ 5
	1 1/2 stories	$ 7
	two stories	$10
	All others	$12

(Stores in dwellings charged extra)

Bathing Tubs - Private houses	$3
In Hotels	$5-7
In Barbershops & Bath Houses	$6-8
Bakeries - for each barrel of flour used daily	$4
Barber Shops - first chair	$4
each add'l chair	$2
Blacksmith shops - one fire	$7
each add'l fire	$3

Breweries - Special rates by measurement

Laying stone - per perch 2¢
Laying brick - per thousand 6¢
Plastering - 100 yards 20¢

Foundries - special rates

Fountains - 1/16 inch delivery $ 8)
1/8 inch delivery $15)
1/4 inch delivery $50)
1/2 inch delivery $100)
None permitted to run more than 4 hrs. per day w/ permission

Taverns and Hotels - special rates
Mechanics shops-
Not exceeding 10 hands $ 10
Each additional hand $ 1
Offices - $5-8
Saloons & Eating Houses $5-40
Stables - Livery, omnibus, horse car, per stall $2
Water for washing - one horse $3
For each horse over one $2
For cart or workhorse or cows $1.50 ea.
Steam Engines - $4 per horse power
Hose -not more than 5/8 orfice $6) limited to one
if no faucet inside house $10) hr. per day
Urinals - in private house - $2 each
in stores, banks, offices, hotels, boarding houses and saloons $5
For each additional $3
(If flow is constant, double the price)
Water closets - in private homes $5
each additional $3
in stores, banks, offices $5
each additional $4
hotels, boarding houses $6
in saloons $5

PIONEER IN OSWEGO: NEIL McMULLIN

by

Mary Kay Stone

July 1796

Joyous news! The stars and stripes are finally flying over the English fort at the Oswego River mouth on Lake Ontario. I was there on business several years ago when it was still in the hands of the British. It has great possibilities for Indian trade. Three important Indian trails cross the area. One follows the Seneca and Oswego Rivers to Lake Ontario and then goes along the lake toward the fording place at the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River. Another, known as the Salmon River Trail circles Oneida Lake and proceeds to the Salmon River. A third comes from the west along the south shore of the Erie Lake to Lake Ontario and along to the Oswego River. Where else could one find a better location for Indian trade?

The English built a fort to guard the entrance to the river. It wasn't surrendered after the War for Independence and the Redcoats continued to make trouble. The devils held up trade going in and out of the river, searched boats, and stole the furs that were on their way to Albany. I hadn't considered moving there before but now the Militia somehow has the fort and it would be safe to settle in that area. Such an opportunity!

Next day

I haven't told my wife, Mary, of my plans yet; I don't know quite how she will feel. A good home, neighbors, and living in a settled area mean a lot to a woman. I shall have to sell my merchants establishment here in Kingston, of course, and it will be hard on both of us for a while, but it will be hardest on her. We shall succeed though; I know we shall! I shall tell her tomorrow.

August 1796

Today, I closed my business. I also sold my horse, which I am unable to take with us. The poor beast stands outside now in the hot August afternoon, switching flies from its back with its tail. I expect the new owner soon.

As I had hoped, Mary received the news well. Energetically and practically, she hustles around the house in spite of the heat--organizing, packing, discarding, and giving away. The other day, coming into the parlor, I found her weeping over a treasured piece of furniture, huge and ornate, that must be left behind. She has been trying to hide any signs of sorrow or regret concerning our leaving. My darling, sentimental Mary, what a trial this must be for her!

As a surprise for her, I have decided to have a house framed here in Kingston and take it with us to the wilderness. My friends tell me that I am a fool to try to haul an entire house to uncivilized country, but I pay them no heed. To be able to give my wife a real house to live in, and not a primitive, rough, cold log cabin, is worth all of the labor and expense that will be faced in the venture. I shall enjoy living in a decent home, too.

I have lately been considering several routes of travel, and I am beseiged by advice on all sides. One possible route would be to go by boat to Oneida Lake and then, as one of my associates suggested, transfer the house,

furnishings and other cargo to a wagon or sled for the remainder of the trip. This would mean by-passing the rapids and tedious fordings on the Oswego River, but it might be more dangerous. On the overland leg, traveling would be complicated by the complete lack of roads save for a few Indian trails. There are forests and swamps in the region between Lake Ontario and Oneida Lake and numerous rivers and streams to ford. Another friend suggested waiting until winter, for perhaps traveling on thick ice and hard snow would be better than streams and swamps. Now I am coming to the conclusion that an all-water route would be best -- up the Hudson and west on the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, Oneida Lake and Oswego River. In spite of the many times we will have to carry the boats around falls, or rapids, particularly the Oswego Falls on the Oswego River, a water route would be more comfortable. We hope to start soon for I wish to get settled into the new house before the snows come. I have heard that the lands around the lake have extremely long and severe winters. The house will be framed by the beginning of next month. We shall start immediately.

September 5, 1796

Take a long look at your house, Neil; you are leaving it tomorrow. I think that this house and the other familiar wooden and stone houses of Kingston, the dusty streets with their rush of people in carriages, on horseback, and walking, and the varied sounds of the big city will often come to my mind when we are out there alone. Sometimes, I even wonder why I want to leave, and then I feel that thrill of pioneering the unsettled land, and opening the new lands in the west, along with the prospect of prosperous barter with the red savages. We are going to be rich!

Well, tomorrow we shall depart. The house is finished and I have hired a crew to load it on the Durham boats. The furnishings, clothing, food, and small things will be loaded at the wharves tomorrow just before we leave. I am recording, here in my journal, a list of things we are taking:

One house frame
A large chest of drawers containing all our clothing
A second large chest
Two small chests
Bible and Almanac and several other books
Spinning wheel
Feather bed
Three splint-bottom chairs
Table and carpet to cover it
Cooking utensils of various kinds
Two iron pots
China and silverware
Tea
Three bags of flour
Two sides of pork
Three bags of potatoes
Trade goods including blankets, cotton, clothing, iron pots, weapons, rum

September 11, 1796

The weather has been most pleasant for the first part of our trip. The ride up the Hudson was very slow and tedious. We are now on the Mohawk and will soon be at Wood Creek.

Mary seems to be quite spirited as if she is enjoying the change of scene. We customarily sit atop the boat during the day and watch the shore as we go by. It is so very peaceful.

Cities and villages became sparser and sparser when we turned onto the Mohawk River after leaving the port of Albany and once we are on Wood Creek and onto Oneida Lake, groups of more than two farms will probably decrease even more.

I have been worried about portage to Wood Creek. Our boats are quite large, averaging 80 feet in length and drawing about 2 to 2 1/2 feet of water. The portage between Wood Creek and the Mohawk River is a long one. Geographically, they are quite close, but high ground between them in the vicinity of the town of Rome, sends one flowing into Oneida Lake and the other down the Mohawk Valley and into the Hudson. So, a portage one mile long has to be crossed to get onto Oneida Lake. It may delay us.

September 15, 1796

We arrived here at Fort Brewerton on the western shore of Lake Oneida late last night. It took us two long days to get from the Mohawk River to Oneida Lake, but we hope to reach Oswego Falls in another day and a half.

September 17, 1796

Mary and I are staying at a tavern here at Oswego Falls while the boatmen push and pull our boats along the one mile skidway between the Upper and Lower landings as they are called.

We met the most interesting person here. He is Daniel Masters, an Indian trader and operator of the portage. He has been here since 1793 and tells the most fascinating stories about the battles and other military events that have taken place here. He knows the Indians very well and is acquainted with their customs. Mary seemed quite interested in the fact that the Oswego River mouth was an important place for

Indian meetings and councils. She asked many questions about their customs and finds their system of money, known as wampum, very strange. It was amusing to see her puzzle over how sea shells could be both money and a sort of written language. Daniel patiently explained to her how it is used to bind agreements or promises. An Indian bound by a promise can only be relieved by getting a belt of wampum back. To accept a belt of wampum can also mean the acknowledgment of a message, the signing of a treaty or the sealing of a compact, he says. Mary tells me that she still thinks it is strange.

Another cordial fellow is Major Lawrence Van Valkenburgh, who built this tavern for boatmen two miles below the falls just last year. Both he and Daniel Masters agree that the area offers unlimited advantages for trade and growth.

September 19, 1796

It was dark when we reached the mouth of the river tonight. The moonlight sparkled on the river and lake and recalled to my mind the Indian name for the lake, "Skanandario", meaning "lake beautiful." It is really beautiful. The trees by the edge of the shore cast deep black shadows on the water and through the darkness the rhythmic beat of waves upon the stony shore lulls us to sleep.

September 20, 1796

This morning the boatmen began to clear an area near the shore of the river, upstream and across the river from the fort. There is only a small garrison stationed at the fort, I found. The only other persons located at the river shore are two traders, John Love and Ziba Phillips, who have been engaged in trading with the Indians since before the British left. They have neither a family with them nor homes except for a log cabin where the Indians come to trade.

September 29, 1796

I think I shall take a moment's rest from the strenuous work of gathering branches and burning them. A large clearing has been made and the sides and roof should be up in a few days. It has taken much toil and time to cut down the trees, strip them and clear the underbrush. Everything must be burned and the ashes collected for they are valuable and could be sold to the people in the East for use in soapmaking. Several of the men are occupied at making puncheons for the floor by splitting straight-grained logs and hewing them into thick planks that can be laid loosely as a temporary floor.

Mary follows the program carefully, for there is not much else that she can do besides cook. There are no women for miles around and no one with whom she can spend her day. I will be very glad when our little home is completed.

October 11, 1796

We were just putting the wooden hinges on the board door this evening at twilight when a boat passed by our shore and went to the fort. In the dim light we could distinguish across the river the figures of a man and woman along with several boatmen. I will investigate tomorrow.

October 12, 1796

A new neighbor! Captain O'Connor, a retired soldier, and his wife are settling here. He is an Irishman and an educated gentleman and will be a welcome friend. His wife and mine will help each other adapt to the wilderness life. He was a soldier of Willets band who spent the long, severe winter here in '83 in an effort to capture the English post. O'Connor plans to make a small clearing similar to mine in the second growth timber a short way up the river and build himself a log cabin.

October 29, 1796

Autumn weather has reached its peak and it is very welcome here in Oswego for with the autumn come the red men with their beaver pelts and other furs.

The blazing foliage lines the river and stony shore and carpets the interior as far as the eye can see. The brilliant reds and oranges dotted with species of brown and green dazzle the eyes and bring particular excitement to Mary who is a great lover of beauty. She loves to sit down by the shore and watch the red and gold trimmed branches frolic in the fresh autumn breeze and drop their leaves into the river water to float down the gliding current into the lake -- brilliant colors against the deep blue water.

November 23, 1796

The weather has been severely cold for the past three weeks, and we have had several snowfalls. Mrs. O'Connor is terrified of spending the winter here where, after the river freezes and the lake, we are completely cut off from civilization. She envisions many types of calamities such as starvation or epidemic. She begged O'Connor to move to Salt Point for the winter, and he finally became persuaded. They are leaving as soon as possible, so as to get through before ice forms on the river. Salt Point is a growing community situated on Lake Onondaga below the Oswego River.

With the O'Connors gone, the place seems quite deserted. Communications with the fort are difficult because although there is ice on the river, the running current underneath does not let it become thick enough to walk on.

A thick blanket of snow covers the ground and the leafless trees stand out stark against the sparkling white background. Although the outdoors is very beautiful, the warm cheery fire inside is much more inviting. Mary and I spend most of our time in front of the fireplace where she sews and I read from the Bible or one of my other books.

January 13, 1797

Food has become scarce. For the past two months we have been living on our store of salt pork, corn meal and vegetables with occasional wild turkeys, rabbits or duck when the Indians brought them or the men at the fort went scouting for food.

Last night, Love, Phillips, the soldiers and I decided to go out tomorrow and hunt deer. They have made snow shoes, an Indian contrivance for walking on light snow. They consist of a light ashen or hickory frame 28 to 30 inches long and from 14 to 16 inches wide, braced with bars and plaited with leather thongs. When strapped to the feet, these enable the hunter to walk over snow four feet deep at the rate of three or more miles per hour scarcely sinking below the top.

Next day

Today, early, we set out in a southwestern direction. It wasn't long before we came on a group of deer that has gathered about fifteen or twenty together to dig down through the snow with their feet to obtain scanty nourishment from the shrubbery below. It was very easy to pick off several bucks from the outer ring.

We returned home triumphantly with the venison and the sight of it dispelled any fears May might have had of starvation.

March 17, 1797

Spring! The very word is enough to lighten our weary hearts. The winter has been hard. We are tired of the cold, the drifting snow and the rushing blasts of icy wind across the lake. It is pleasant to be able to come out of the house and watch the world become alive again.

The ice on the river has melted enough to allow a small boat to reach us bringing with it the first news and supplies in more than three months. O'Connor sent word that they had passed an agreeable winter in Salina where he was a schoolteacher and also that his wife had presented him with a daughter in the early part of the year.

July 10, 1797

A man named Benjamin Wright arrived here today. He is a surveyor for Surveyor-General Simeon DeWitt and he has come to lay out a city on the west side of the river. Imagine! a City! O'Connor's and our clearings are the only ones on this side of the river. That thick forest resembles a city no more than I do an Indian!

Next day

I had another talk with Wright today. He was beginning to survey down by the lake. It appears that the legislature passed an act last spring directing the Surveyor-General to lay out one hundred acres on the west side of the Oswego River mouth with a public square in the center. This was to be called Oswego.

July 19, 1797

Work on the "city" is progressing, although all there is to show for it are a number of blazed trees marking streets, blocks, etc.

Benjamin took me to the hill behind my house and explained to me what our "city" will look like. The area surveyed runs from the river west to military lot 6, and from the lake southward. Principal streets running east and west will be 100 feet wide, while cross streets will be 60 feet wide. There will be a public square in the center and a cemetery near the lake.

Then he told me what the streets were to be named. Streets running north and south are to be 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc., starting at the river, but it seems that Simeon DeWitt has a peculiar liking for Greek and Roman names (he named the town of Hannibal, for instance), so the east to west streets are to be called by constellations. From the lake they will be Aquila, Lyra, Aries, Taurus, which passes directly through my clearing and my house, Gemini, Cancer and Leo. DeWitt is turning Oswego into a celestial city!

September 19, 1797

As summer fades into the autumn of another year, Mary and I celebrate one year's passage since we came to Oswego. Although we have not become wealthy from Indian trade as I speculated last year when we so boldly advertured into the wilds, we have found a contentment in living close to nature and a challenge and more purposeful meaning to life that is more valuable than any amount of beaver skins the Indians could bring to the post.

DAVID VAN BUREN OF FULTON, NEW YORK

by

Kevin Murphy

There isn't an area in the United States that can't claim some significant role in the early development of colonial America. The area in and around Fulton, New York, is no exception. It has long been known that the Iroquois Nation of Indians were frequent visitors on the Oswego River and invariably were the first humans to view the magnificent surroundings of Oswego County. It wasn't until the late eighteenth century that the first white men traveled to this region.

In 1796, John VanBuren came from the Hudson River Valley to Fulton, New York. At the time that he came, there was nothing at all in the way of a permanent settlement. In fact, the only settler in the Fulton area was a relative of his wife, Major Lawrence Van Valkenburg, who had built his cabin in a wilderness clearing on the east bank of the Oswego River near the present Rogers Dairy farm. With John VanBuren on the long and dangerous journey through the wilderness were his young wife and his four boys. The youngest boy, David, is the subject of my story.

John VanBuren decided to build an inn that could accommodate travelers on the Oswego Waterway and future settlers to the area, while also serving as a home for his family. First, with the help of his boys he built a small house to live in while the inn was being built. The wooden frame for the house came from their own trees and was fitted together with wooden pegs, it has stood the test of time. The two younger boys were left to keep the house as best they could while the others worked with their father at clearing the site. A building of stone, brick and timber was planned.

The inn was begun shortly after 1800, and there it stands strong and sturdy today. The cost was a staggering sum of $5,000.

This new home faced directly on one of the few great water routes from the Atlantic into the heart of North America. Up the Hudson it came from New York, then westward along the Mohawk to a short passage or carry from that river to Wood Creek at Oneida Lake, and then by the Oneida River to what we know as Three Rivers where the route turned northward into the Oswego River. Here in what is now Fulton, there was a carry of more than a mile around the great Oswego Falls. Then on to Lake Ontario and the other Great Lakes all the way to Minnesota.

Travelers on this waterway, VanBuren figured, were bound to increase in numbers and would need food and water, a break in the tiresome trip that would give them a chance to socialize a bit and make needed repairs, as well as stock up their supplies, for the next stage of the journey.

From the first, the Inn was a success and John Van Buren made it a self-sustaining unit. In back of the main building were the blacksmith, carpenter and copper shops, the smoke house, the grocery store, the stables, the vegetable garden and the fields of corn and grain. On the river was a wharf set on sturdy piles where boats tied up with such cargoes as salt, corn, fish or furs.

As the boys grew up and married, they set up homes of their own. David, my subject, was twice married; ironically, to sisters. His first wife was Eunice French who died in 1830; his second wife, Lucretia French, outlived him by one year and died in 1888. David built the north brick house a few hundred feet from the house (Inn) of his father. This brick house is notable for its fine Ionic construction and by the time the new house was completed, the VanBurens were "Society."

The VanBurens have always been proud of their relationship to President Martin VanBuren who was a cousin of the original John VanBuren. Martin had interests in this area. In 1822, he was conducting a lawsuit for a client in Oswego over some land. When the suit was over, Martin owned the land which he proceeded to rent and sell. Many Oswego city land holders have land dating back to Martin's holding. However, it had political implications for him. He was in the New York Legislature when it was proposed that a canal be built through the Oswego River to Lake Ontario. Martin VanBuren was all for it until one of its opponents called him aside and told him that if he voted for the bill, they would expose his holdings in Oswego and would ruin him politically. Needless to say, Martin voted against the bill.

Getting back to David, I have to note that he had a lot going for him for several years. He was always a canaler at heart, and even when he had accumulated a considerable wealth, he still traveled the "Old Erie." David owned a few canal boats, which carried flour from Oswego to Syracuse and brought back salt from Syracuse to Oswego. Oswego at that time was a prosperous mill town and many boat owners took advantage of the lucrative shipping trade that was being carried on during this era.

David also raised sheep at Jackson Hill near Fulton. He had several hired employees to mind the herd. It's good to note here the contrast between the Northern hired help and the Southern slavery that existed at this time in history.

There are two amusing stores that I have been told by Mr. Jesse VanBuren, David's great-grandson. The first story concerns his early years as a canaler and the second can be considered an analogy to today's problem with children.

It seems that David used to look rather ragged at times when he was working on canal boats. Once when he was at a stopover in Troy, New York, he went into a general store and was looking very enthusiastically at a new harness. He suddenly yelled, "How much?" The storekeeper, surprised that such a specimen could afford it said, "Twenty dollars." David could only reply, "I'll take it." As it turned out, he had to pay for it out of several weeks' wages because he was too proud to admit that he couldn't afford it. It's quite obvious that people don't change, no matter what century they live in.

The second story takes place after David is married, with children, and living in his own house.

David often put the boys to bed and as he left the room, he would put the latch on the door in order to know at all times where the boys were. But the boys, like kids today, outsmarted their father and went out a skylight in their ceiling and down a ladder which they would place there along the side of the house. Kids haven't changed either.

David was a funny person in a lot of ways. He tried to remain as silent as possible during the Civil War. His brother, Beardsley, however, was very involved in the underground railroad in this area.

In all, the VanBuren family heritage is a great one that still exists today. They contributed much to the early establishment of Fulton. They have left an indelible mark not only on the history of Oswego County, but also on the history of the United States. They were our early citizens, our early businessmen, our founders of industry. These are the very people who laid the foundation for what we enjoy today. As a Yorker, I can help to honor them by just a simple essay which calls to mind some of the accomplishments of these people toward a common goal of a great New York State, a great United States.

THE HISTORY OF GLASSMAKING IN OSWEGO COUNTY

by

Mary Bucher

Today we live in an age of almost complete automation. Man has invented machines that can do practically everything. As a result of this, we tend to forget that such common items as glass dishes and bowls were once made only by skilled craftsmen who worked for years to learn their trade. When craftsmen such as glassblowers immigrated to our country, they brought their skills with them. That is why during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries so many glass factories sprang up in our country.

One such factory was established in the small town of Cleveland, New York. Cleveland is situated on the banks of Oneida Lake in the extreme southeastern corner of Oswego County. To understand its founding fully, it is necessary to trace the history of glass manufacturing in another part of New York State.

About 1786 in Sandlake, near Albany, a glass works was established. The proprietors of this glass factory sppealed in 1788 to the people of New York State to sustain their glass business. Unfortunately, the people did not listen. The factory was soon deserted because of the lack of operating funds. An effort was made to reopen the factory in 1795. This effort met with a certain amount of success. In 1806 the state legislature passed an act to incorporate the stockholders of the Rensselaer Glass Factory. The incor-

porators were Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, John Saunders, Elisha Jenkins, Elkenah Watson, George Pearson, James Kane, Thomas Frothingham, Frederich Jenkins, Rensselaer Havens and Francis Bloodgood. The stock was not to exceed 100 shares at $1000 each.

Skilled employees were needed to work in the glass works. Mr. William Richmond, a Scotchman, was superintendent of the works. He went abroad to get workmen. Disguised as a tramp, Mr. Richmond wandered through the glass district of Dunbarton in Scotland and engaged glassblowers to come to America. The blowers had great difficulty in hiding their tools on the ship because it was a penal offense for glassblowers to leave Scotland. In this VanRensselaer factory, the crown blowers were Scotch, but many of the cylinder blowers were German.

In 1816 a fire was started by sparks from the pipes of the blowers who were playing cards on a pile of straw in the packing room. The cylinder works was burned down. This was rebuilt in 1818 and continued functioning until 1853.

However, the same company had in 1845 built a factory at Durhamville in Dunbarton. In 1838 the Rensselaer glass works was owned by Monroe-Cowarden and Company. George Cowarden was a son-in-law of Anthony Landgraff, who with his father-in-law and his brothers-in-law came from the village of Vernon to Cleveland in 1840 to establish the Cleveland Glass Works.

For the first year after establishing his works in Cleveland, Mr. Landgraff boated his sand from Verona on the south shore of Oneida Lake. This was not of great necessity because sand of superior quality was discovered in the Cleveland area as early as 1813. Mr. Landgraff discovered that in 1841 his works were located on a bed of sand far superior to that he had been using. As a result of this discovery, two other

glass factories were established in the village. A large amount of sand was exported to other glass works in New York State and Canada.

As odd as it may seem, the reason for the establishment of the factory at Cleveland was the scarcity of hemlock at Vernon. Hemlock was the fuel used for melting the glass. Cleveland was then surrounded on three sides by primeval forests which were only marked by the axe of the pioneer. On the remaining side stretched the glistening waters and the broad expanse of Oneida Lake which is rich in association with Indian traditions and customs. The whole region was considered a sportman's idea of paradise.

The village dates its development from the building of the Old Eagle Tannery in 1834, so that when the glass factory came six years afterward, a thriving little village had been established. The village was growing at a steady rate. However, on the north the forest still held its own. The glass factory was built almost, if not completely, in the forest. The fuel then used for melting the gass was hemlock from the nearby forest. The early works had a small capacity. The new factory buildings were large and substantial for the times; but the melting furnace was only about six feet by eight feet on the inside, and the melting pots were little larger than good-sized water pails. A single blower could carry and place them in the tempering ovens. They had a capacity of about 300 feet of glass. Unfortunately, these ancient pots held only about 150 feet of glass. The cylinders were mere pygmies beside the huge rollers of today, but they were opened by hand without the aid of pole or crane. Each blower gathered, blew, flattened, and sometimes cut his own glass; the tending boys, now gatherers, were merely water boys and roller carriers.

These were the days of long working hours, but the wages more than made up for it. They were exceptional for those days, averaging more than a dollar a box. The manner of selling the glass was in keeping with the times. Oneida Lake was connected with the Erie Canal system by a wide cut, and it was customary that a boat be loaded with glass and peddled in the towns and villages from Troy and Albany to Brockport and Buffalo. Often it was bartered for supplies.

The Landgraff family conducted the old Cleveland Glass Works for twenty years from 1840 to 1860. Then, after a brief period under William Saunders, it passed in 1863 into the hands of J. Caswell and Crawford Getman. In 1877 Mr. Caswell retired, and Mr. Getman continued the business alone for many years.

A second glass works was established at Cleveland in 1851. The Union Glass Factory, as it was called, was built by a stock company composed mostly of Cleveland citizens. However, after a year or two, it was reorganized and came under the control of William Foster, Farris Farmer, and Charles Kathren who ran it with success for more than twenty years. Then for several years, this factory remained idle. In 1882, after several changes were made, the factory was sold to Crawford Getman, the proprietor of the Cleveland factory, who operated them until 1889 when he sold both plants to the United glass Company. This company conducted them both until 1893, the old factory until 1894. Then, because of the hard times, the United Glass Company closed them down thus completing the first period of glassmaking in Cleveland.

The second period was a short one. In the spring of 1897 the United Glass Company, at great expense, converted the old Cleveland factory into a modern factory with an electric plant attached. This factory had every facility except for making cheap window glass.

However, their two fires were short. In the fall of 1899, the plant was sold to the American Window Glass Company. Strangely enough, they promptly closed it down for quite some time. After a while they reopened it for three months. Then it was closed down apparently for good. This ended the second period of glassmaking in Cleveland.

The forty years from 1834-1874 were the most prosperous for Cleveland. With its various industries it was a bustling place. People of all occupations lived in Cleveland. But one by one these various industries dropped out or were abandoned, and finally, nothing remained by the glass industry. The glass works would have gone, too, if Cleveland hadn't had among here residents two veteran glass managers and manufacturers - Crawford Getman and Eugene Morenus, who believed that under the proper conditions and good economical management it could still be made to pay. They kept the factory going until 1912. The workers controlled their wages to some extent through a cooperative association which the Cleveland citizens backed. With passage of the Sherman Act, they figured it might be illegal to run their factories as they had. They sold out at a great loss to people the Clevelanders called "the Jews." Afterwards, they found that they could have continued in operation.

To date, various glass implements have been found. Each is tangible evidence of a way of life long past.

ST. FRANCIS HOME
TO SUSPEND OPERATION
AFTER 57 YEARS

by

Patricia Cullinan

> Insufficient number of children, heavy expenses involved cited as reasons to close institution in this city; youngsters to be placed elsewhere.

Thus it was announced in the Oswego Palladium Times that the first Catholic orphanage in the area would be closed for lack of funds. Because of "the trend in welfare agencies of placing neglected and dependent children in foster homes rather than directing their placement to institutionalized homes" [1] the number of children at St. Francis Home gradually decreased. In September, 1952, when the home was closed, there were 61 children registered.

From Roadhouse to Orphanage

The sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis purchased the building once known as St. Francis Home in Oswego, from Michael Keeler in May, 1896. But the building's sixty-six year history previous to the purchase proves to be a very interesting one.

In 1830, Beverly Robinson and his wife Frances, seeking the most picturesque setting in the area, erected the three-story structure. The massive building was complemented with a cupola, and set far back from the road at what are now Syracuse Avenue and Burkle Street, on the city's east side. The building was located on approximately ninety acres of land on a high hill overlooking the Oswego River and the surrounding country.

The building was constructed of heavy bricks which were about one foot thick and made of mud and straw. The original floors, windows, and fireplace, built of material meant to last, are still intact, as is the main stairway of cherry wood, complemented by a curving handrail.

After owning the home for 18 years, the Robinsons sold the property to Samuel Ludlow in 1848, who later deeded it to Judge Henry Ludlow in 1882. In 1892, Henry Ludlow sold the building and property to Michael Keeler for $7,000.

Michael Keeler, upon his acquisition of the property, converted it from a private residence to a public road house. A large bar room and several small card rooms were installed on the first floor, and in the basement, rooms were set off where rooster fights took place.

Religious Acquire Property

In 1895, a group of leading citizens, under the leadership of the late Reverend Dean Michael Barry, formed the St. Francis Home Association, and approached Keeler about purchasing his property to be used as a Catholic orphanage. Members of this prominent group include: "Judge Charles N. Bulger, Owen McNally, Martin O'Melia, M. T. Kinnane, John Dougherty, David Fitzgibbons, Sr.,

Thomas Burden, Sr., John Dorsey, Frank T. Farrell, and Joseph McGowan."[2] After the establishment of the Home, these men maintained a deep interest in its welfare and work.

Upon being approached by the committee, Keeler agreed to sell the property to the sisters, asking only the $7,000 he paid for the property, but he stipulated that it was to be used as a home for children.

Before the orphanage could actually be used as such, many changes had to be made. Secret staircases were barred by built in bookcases; the famous bar-room, through whose walls vulgarity and gaity had resounded became the chapel, the house of prayer and supplication, where the Psalms, prayers and hymns now replace songs of revelry. The cock-fight pits on the main parlor floor were sealed and over those the feet of orphaned children danced and played. Today the same old crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling over the place the cocks once yawned into the night. Then, the old chandelier looked down upon orphans at play: now it sheds its light on a quiet, sombre convent reception room. It could relate interesting tales; but it remains a silent observer of drastic changes.

"Before the Sisters of St. Francis purchased the Keeler property to be used as an orphanage, Sister M. Josepha and Sister M. Clara were teaching at St. Teresa's Convent of St. Peter's Church, Oswego, where they gave shelter and care to two little girls who had lost their mother. It was due to the Sisters' care of these motherless little girls that the Sisters of St. Francis were asked by Bishop Ludden, at the request of Father Barry of Oswego, to maintain a home for orphans in Oswego. In May 1896, Sister M. Josepha and Sister M. Clara moved into the recently acquired Keeler property...and equipped the building which was to be known thereafter as St. Francis Home for Children."[3]

St. Francis Home was dedicated by the Right Reverend Patrick A. Ludden, Bishop of Syracuse, on June 13, 1896. The Reverend Charles F. McEvoy; Chancellor of the Diocese of Syracuse, J.S.M. Lynch; Pastor of St. John's Church, Utica, The Very Reverend Hyacinth Fudinski; O.F.M. Conv., Minister Provincial, and Reverend Alphonse Lerscholl; O.F.M. Conv., Pastor of Assumption Church, Syracuse, accompanied Bishop Ludden to the dedication. At this time, there were 24 children living at the home.

Following the opening, application for the approval of the organization and incorporation of the Home was made to the State Board of Charities. The approval was readily granted and the Articles of Incorporation of the Home, dated January 23, 1897, provided for the 'care, nurture, maintenance, and education for orphaned, homeless, and destitute children of all races and creeds.' The home was an important addition to the growing community, because it was a place of refuge for the "poor and orphaned children of Oswego, of which there were said to be 250 running the streets with no schooling."[4]

In 1912, after the number of children living at the Home had gradually increased, the original building proved to be inadequate for housing of both boys and girls. A new building was erected for the boys which provided living quarters as well as classrooms where a complete elementary and a two-year high school course was offered.

The children were also given, along with a formal education, the opportunity of learning a craft whereby they might later earn their living. 'The extracurricular activities included chorus, glee club, a rhythm band, handicraft, shop, sewing, homemaking, or any other line of endeavor for which a child showed an aptitude."[5]

As the years passed, many improvements, both on the grounds and the building of the Home took place. A landscaped tract of land which was once a dense woods provided playground facilities and a swimming pool for the children. At the close of the 1930's, the Home boasted five cows, over one hundred chickens, and a horse. Flower and vegetable gardens were cultivated on the grounds, and from these sources, the orphaned youngsters were provided with fresh milk, eggs and vegetables.

"These young people emerged into the world as good and useful citizens, entering many fields of endeavor after leaving St. Francis Home. With their spiritual training and education they were able to face life with an excellent chance of success in their chosen careers."[6]

Termination of the Orphanage

On September 11, 1952, St. Anthony Convent and Motherhouse disclosed that operation of St. Francis Home would be suspended. The decision was reached by the Community Council of the Sisters of St. Francis after 'consultation and due consideration.'

The formal announcement from the motherhouse read:

> "The Community Council of the Sisters of St. Francis, Court Street, Syracuse, after consultation and due consideration reached the decision to suspend the operation of St. Francis Home, Oswego, New York.
>
> The small number of children at the Home, as well as the tremendous expense which would be involved in making the necessary repairs and renovations in order adequately to operate and maintain St. Francis Home leaves no alternative but to close the Home.

Arrangements are being made with other agencies for the gradual placement of the children now at the Home.

It is with no little regret that the Sisters will discontinue their services at the Home for they are mindful of and grateful for the many years of fine relations with the priests and people of Oswego."[7]

This announcement of the decision to discontinue operation of the Home confirmed reports which had gained circulation during the past year.

When the previous announcement of the closing of St. Francis Home appeared in the daily Oswego papers, expressions of regret as well as those of admiration and appreciation of the Sisters' fifty-seven years of devoted service to the children of St. Francis Home were received by Sister M. Bernadette, Superior and Superintendent of the Home. "The following letter expressed the sentiments, not only of the writer, but of others who have voiced their appreciation of St. Francis Home.

199 South Plymouth Avenue
Rochester 8, New York
October 5, 1952

Sister M. Bernadette, Supervisor
St. Francis Home
Oswego, New York

Dear Sister:

I read in the paper, some weeks back, about the closing of St. Francis Home. I couldn't believe my eyes -- and I felt that it was my own home that would no longer be in existence. It was the only home I ever knew and the dear Sisters were the only mother I ever had.

I can put into words the awful lonesome feeling that comes over me, when I think of it. How much the Sisters did for us -- How they worked -- How they prayed and taught us to pray; they taught us how to sew, to embroider, to clean and cook and take care of ourselves, the three R's, all in the Home.

My life would have been a lot different, I am afraid, if I had not known how to pray and ask God's help through the years. That was the most important thing that I learned while there. I am thankful and always have been thankful that God allowed me to come under the care of the Sisters of St. Francis.

I most earnestly pray that He will always bless and protect your community.

Most sincerely,
Dorothy M. Kelly (Nee France)
Mrs. Edward T. Kelly
Rochester, New York" [8]

From Orphanage to School

"At the time of the purchase of the property from Michael Keeler and his wife, an agreement was made to the effect that if the Sisters of the Third Franciscan Order should ever abandon the property, or if for any reason the property should not be used for the purposes of a school and orphan asylum, that the said property should be conveyed by the Third Franciscan Order to the Rt. Rev. Patrick A. Ludden, Bishop of Syracuse, or his successor in office, for the use of Catholics of the City of Oswego." [9]

It was because of this agreement that the Oswego Catholic High School was founded. The new school opened on September 8, 1953, and it marked an important event both in the history of the Diocese of

Syracuse and of the Community of the sisters of St. Francis. It is the first central Catholic High School established in the diocese; and it is established on the site of the former St. Francis Home for children.

The buildings formerly comprising the Home were completely remodeled to meet the needs of an up-to-date high school. The remodeled Oswego Catholic High School provides today a chapel, twenty classrooms, a large library, an up-to-date science laboratory, a gymnasium-auditorium which seats over 900 and is equipped with a large stage and bleachers, a health room, a faculty room, a newly remodeled cafeteria, and offices for the principal, vice-principal, and school secretary.

Because two new buildings have been erected since the opening of St. Francis Home, the original building is no longer a part of the school. Al classrooms are in the two new buildings, and the original building, built in 1830 is now used as a convent. The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis who teach at Oswego Catholic High live in this three-story structure.

1 Mother M. Carmela Prandone, O.S.F., Greater Love... (Syracuse, New York: 1960) p. 59.
2 Oswego Palladium-Times, September 11, 1952, p. 8.
3 Oswego Palladium-Times, date unknown.
4 Ralph M. Faust, The Story of Oswego (Oswego: Palladium Times Press, 1934), p. 69.
5 Mother M. Carmela Prandone, O.S.F., Greater Love..., (Syracuse, New York: 1960), p. 36.
6 Oswego Palladium-Times, date unknown.
7 Oswego Palladium-Times, September 11, 1952, p. 8.
8 Oswego Palladium-Times, date unknown.
9 Oswego Palladium-Times, date unknown.

THE HISTORY OF ITALIANS IN OSWEGO
PART I

by

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Introduction:

In the two decades connecting the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Oswego was undergoing an economic and social transformation. Once the site of heavy port operation and milling activity, Oswego was seeing these two key activities fade into insignificance. In their places were arising numerous manufacturing establishments ranging from light to heavy industry. In the process the demand for a large unskilled labor supply oftentimes outstripped the supply. Those Oswegonians who remained in Oswego in the trying times of transition from commercial to manufacturing activities were seldom willing to take up the rough, hard labor required in the new work. The Irish, German, and French-Canadian immigrants provided many willing laborers but hardly enough to meet the enormous demands of a city changing its economic character. The door was thrown open to a mass migration of Mediterranean and Eastern European people. They came by the thousands in the two decades before restrictive immigration policies put a halt to such movements. They competed with the local work force for jobs. Sometimes they accepted lower wages; frequently they struck for equality in wages and working conditions.

Often, initially, they were used as strikebreakers; on other occasions, they themselves were the strikers. Hungry for work, the newcomers gladly filled in the bottom rungs of the economic ladder and pushed the earlier immigrants up into the ranks of economic security and social respectability. The social changes have already been noted by one of Oswego's foremost historians, Charles M. Snyder:[1]

> Manufacturers in Oswego, who could not have bid against the lawyers and millers for the choice pews in the local churches in the early years, were second to none in prestige before the century's close.

Dr. Snyder then revealed the ethnic mix in community leadership in 1900 that was not to be found a generation before:[2]

> The Bunners and McWhorters were gone; also the Fitzhughs and Littlejohns...Allens and Churchills...
>
> But...new ones took their places: The Downeys, Emericks and Culkins, and Mackins, Bulgers, Morrisons and Fitzgibbons filled the gaps, and mingled with the Motts, Pages, Johnsons, Penfields, Bates, Posts, and Kingsfords as leaders of the community.

Indeed, the Irish, the earliest immigrant group to come en masse to Oswego, were working their way into the American Native-stock "establishment." They had come a long way from the squatters' days on back lots and waste patches, when their tenements in Pea Soup Flats were sometimes destroyed on order of the city health officials for fear that such sub-standard housing would be detrimental to the health and welfare of Oswego's residents.[3] In due time the Germans and French-Canadians would follow the rise of the Irish though they were never held in such low repute as the sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, these older immigrants and natives alike wondered about the most recent arrivals: The Italians, Poles, Austrians, Jews and others who were beginning to jam into Oswego. Would these strange and difference people stay? Would they assimilate? Would they contaminate? Many believed the new immigration of the 1890's was a temporary phenomenon. Among the few who believed otherwise, that these people represented more than just migratory birds of passage and that they would have a permanent and salutary effect on the future of Oswego, were astute politicians like Francis D. Culkin and C. N. Bulger. These leaders worked hard to cultivate the friendship and loyalty of the immigrants whom they considered prospective voters. They sought to impress upon them the duties, responsibilities, rights, and advantages that went with American citizenship, Americanization, and loyalty to one's party. Those who believed as did the Culkins and Bulgers proved right in the end. The immigrants from southern and eastern Europe remained to make their mark in the city's history as did those who preceded them.

But what of the Italians? What did they contribute? Have they left any indelible marks on the character of this port city? What of their positive contributions? Their negative ones? Their enduring ones and their passing ones? These are the major concerns in this paper. But, before turning to the story of the Italians in detail, a closer look at the Oswego scene into which they came is in order.

Oswego: The City in General

Oswego's growth in the nineteenth century was marked by heavy activity in shipbuilding, commerce, and milling. As the century drew to a close these activities became less and less linked with the progress of the city. Prior to the Civil War, shipbuilders were kept busy trying to keep up with the rising demand for vessels, brought on by the ever-increasing traffic through the port of Oswego. As many as four schooners were known to have been launched in one day and hundreds of vessels were enrolled in the Oswego Custom House. By the century's end shipbuilding was a thing of the past and fewer than thirty ships were now enrolled in the Custom House.[4] Numerous factors contributed to the fall of the Port of Oswego. Some of the major ones can be cited. The decline began in 1865 with the end of the Reciprocal Trade Treaty with Canada and was intensified as New York State first lowered its tolls on the canals and then altogether eliminated them. Buffalo, which was ideally situated geographically to benefit most from a free Erie canal, was able to take full advantage of the situation by improving its harbor facilities. In contrast to 16 foot channels in Buffalo, Oswego found itself with only one 12 foot dock by 1900. The seriousness of the situation was further heightened by competition from the railroads, high protective tariff policies from 1890 on, which virtually eliminated the Canadian lumber and barley trade, and fierce competition from western grain men and millers.

By 1900, then, commerce was reduced to minor importance. Oswego's grain elevators and mills, whose products exceeded one million dollars in 1890 (the total for all products produced in Oswego was a little over seven million dollars), were now unable to

compete favorably with those of the Mid-west. The malt industry, Oswego's second ranking industry with products valued at more than $700,000, fell swiftly and permanently under the blow of the McKinley Tariff in 1890.

The lumber trade, which had reached its zenith in 1873, but was still an important part of the economic scene, was so severely affected by the Tariff of 1890 that not even removal of the duties on the trade in 1894 could lead to its revival. Bewildered proprietors probably breathed a sigh of relief when fire gutted many of the empty mills and elevators on the city's lower east-side river front in 1892.[5]

Oswegonians were not unaware of these momentous changes taking place. The Oswego Business Men's Association alertly embarked on a program of selling Oswego as an industrial site to prospective manufacturers, using as the chief inducements the availability of cheap water power, railroad transportation, water transportation, low taxes, and a plentiful labor supply. Their efforts brough swift results. Many new industrial concerns located in the city and a number of those already here put substantial capital into ambitious expansion programs. Probably the biggest coup was landing Diamond Match Company in 1894.[6] By 1899 manufacturing was flourishing as it had never done before. More men were on more payrolls than ever. Virtually every manufacturer was operating to capacity. Some like Oswego Machine Works were running overtime. Quirk Knitting was producing day and night. Ames Iron Works had doubled its capacity and National Railway Spring Company had trebled its business. Fitzgibbons Boiler was only one of many concerns which was behind on its orders. Manufacturing was coming of age and the railroads kept pace. Sidings were provided for the new and expanding concerns. The train shops were operating to capacity

and plans were being made to enlarge the terminal facilities in the city. Helping to spark the railroads' growth was the demand for coal. New life was breathed into a moribund port as coal shipments, fed by the Delaware-Lackawanna, the New York, Ontario and Western, and the Delaware and Hudson, began to mount. Steel rails, fourteen abreast in parts of Oswego, were living testimoney to the new industrial Oswego. Viewed from this viewpoint, Oswego's economic future looked promising.[7]

After 1900 industrial expansion proceeded at a frenzied pace. By 1905 local manufacturers were complaining that full capacity operations were being hampered by a shortage of boarding houses which discouraged the movement to Oswego of a plentiful and cheap labor supply.[8] That situation prevailed when the masses of Italian workers began to descend upon Oswego in response to the growing and desperate demands for labor on the part of the railroads and other industrial companies. This suggests that the immigrants did not willfully create "slums." Their labor was sought. They came to Oswego. They had little choice but to tolerate sub-standard housing conditions. In so doing, they made possible the continued expansion of industry with a minimum of interruptions by providing the necessary brawn. This is evident in the New York State Census of 1905. The census revealed that more than 250 Italian born were employed in the City of Oswego, 80 per cent of whom were railroad and day laborers, the greater majority being in the latter category. Most of the others worked at Diamond Match or the knitting and yarn mills in the area. A few were self-employed craftsmen and shopkeepers. There was one music teacher, but no other professionals.[9] Despite the Italians' efforts, labor remained at a premium. The work at Fort Ontario, the rebuilding of the starch

factory, and the continued heavy demands put on the local manufacturing establishments called for more workers, both skilled and unskilled, than were available. Not one person from Oswego was known to have answered a call for carpenters in Panama. The United States Government was offering $.56 an hour for an eight hour day, plus quarters, free transportation, medical aid, and other fringe benefits. A local correspondent commented: "A number of years ago (the government) would have been overrun with applicants."[10] Not only was labor scarce in the city, but the farmers were having a great deal of trouble locating hands to harvest the hay crop despite the "big wages" offered.[11]

Italians were available, but they were also suspect. Like the Irish before them, the Italians were closely checked by the local health authorities to insure that no "epidemic of fever, small pox, or some other disease" attack the city.[12] Where once the shortcomings of Italians were seldom singled out in the local press--and there were general complaints about less desirable immigrants from southern and eastern Europe--by 1906 and 1907 the Italian immigrants in particular had become a cause for serious concern. Local observers, noting with apprehension the intensified Black Hand and Mafia activities throughout the country, decried the rising incidence of "crime" involving Italian immigrants in Oswego, little realizing it reflected the high proportion of Italian immigrants who were now finding their way to this city. More improtant, Italians were now faulted for congregating largely in eastern cities where "labor is least needed."[13] This suggests that local newspapermen were not familiar with the local economic situation as reported in their own newspapers or chose to ignore the logic of the situation. Moreover, memories were short. The Irish were now portrayed as a hardy stock who had been willing to go anywhere to work:[14]

> All they wanted was a chance to work. The country is better and richer for their coming here. It is a matter of regret we can't have more immigrants from Germany or Ireland and fewer from Southern Europe.

No one will deny the contributions and desirability of Irish immigrants. But, as a matter of record the Irish were hardly welcomed with open arms when they first arrived in Oswego as common laborers and built their shanty-towns. Additionally, Irish immigrants might have been willing to go anywhere for a job, but the fact of the matter is they did not. The Irish huddled together in the eastern cities more so than many southern and eastern European groups.[15]

In response to the above mentioned complaints made by manufacturers of inadequate housing facilities in Oswego, the real estate operatives set out to improve the situation. By 1907 a large number of houses had been built, but the pressure of overcrowding was only partially relieved. There continued a pressing demand for rental property in the $15 to $18 a month range and below as new workers continued to stream into Oswego. The housing problems were made more acute because of the peculiar guidelines that builders followed. One prominent contractor expressed the prevailing philosophy:[16]

> It is the rule to build when times are dull and labor and material cheap. Now both are high. The real estate men are afraid to take a chance....something must be done, what, I don't know at this time. It is a most serious matter.

Needless to say the mill and factory managers continued to complain that they could not get enough people to work for them and began a search for independent agents to go outside the community to bring in desirable labor, both male and female.[17]

Through the ups and downs of the business cycle, industrial growth was maintained to the end of the decade. New companies located in the city: Ontario Industrial Company, Howard Thermostat Company, Benson Paper Box Company, Barnes Gear Company, to name just a few. The railroads added new freight terminals, yards, and other improvements. Some of the old plants like Ames Iron Works, and even some of the newer ones like Diamond Match, modernized old factories and added new ones. The fever of economic activity was spreading. First National Bank built a new facility; City Savings Bank and Second National Bank remodeled. The newly arrived Polish people, unlike the Italians, very quickly erected a church. The city shared in this early twentieth century urban renewal by building a lower bridge, a water plant, a high school building, all new projects, in addition to keeping abreast of the usual street paving and sewer work that its citizens were demanding by the turn of the century. Even the U.S. Government contributed by undertaking the construction of a million dollar breakwater to encourage port activity.[18] Unquestionably there was a new spirit at work in Oswego. The Oswego Daily Times carried a full page proudly displaying the improvements it had made in its press facilities and charged the people of Oswego to join and work for "the Newer Oswego":[19]

> Let there be the kind of patriotism cultivated that builds up a town.... There has been too much moving out of Oswego for the city's good. This is a spirit to which a sharp halt should be called and a new leaf turned over.
>
> Buy here, build here, stay here should be the slogan for the Newer Oswego.

To anyone familiar with the early Italian settlers of Oswego and those families who reside here today, it

is no exaggeration to say that, by and large, whether or not the Italians were aware of that spirit, they certainly put down their roots in this area. Today 30 per cent (over 1600 people) of the foreign stock of Oswego is Italian.[20] Many of these first and second generation Italians can trace their origins in this community to the beginning of this century.

Despite the emphasis on manufacturing in the pre-World War I years, a commercial renewal added to the overall growth of Oswego. The local coal interests, their spirits buoyed by steady growth in port shipments, reflected a confidence not seen in many years among the commercial entrepreneurs. Their optimism proved well founded since coal shipments were substantial from 1900 on and reached a peak of 700,000 tons in 1913.[21]

One does not normally think of agricultural history in dealing with urban history. Yet the farms and farmers, both in and out of the city, can not be ignored. City residents, had ample opportunity either to make their living full or part time from the surrounding countryside. Probably the great majority of those who engaged in agricultural activity did so to supplement the family income, otherwise they would have moved out to the farms where room and board would have been granted as part of the wages of full time farm labor. Some city folk farmed full time. Among the southern and eastern Europeans in general, and the Italians in particular, it was not uncommon to live in the city and commute daily to their farms which were either owned outright, or as was more common in the early years, rented or sharecropped.

Seasonal work proved to be the major attraction on the farms to Oswegonians. Prior to the advent of the twentieth century, hop picking provided seasonal

labor to hundreds of city dwellers each August. During the season the New York Ontario and Western would carry men, women, and children from 10 years of age to 70 to the hop fields of Madison and Oneida Counties. The joyous departues from the railroad station indicates that the work was not only financially rewarding but had an air of "vacationing" about it. [22] There was probably relatively little seasonal work in and around Oswego for the farmers tended to general farming which required fewer hands the year round, rather than many hands during peak times as was the care in specialized agriculture. For example, 1900 marked the zenith for total number of cattle, dairy cows, horses, hogs, and sheep in Oswego County. Thereafter, the number of cattle and dairy cows slipped substantially from the peak but remain significant even today in the county's agriculture. The number of horses, hogs, and sheep have declined to the point where such livestock has lost its significance now. Chicken farming has remained important throughout the years. Fruit farming, particularly apple and to a lesser extent, pear production, has fallen off considerably from the once richly productive era circa 1900. Maple sugar (in pounds, not gallons) has just about disappeared. More and more farmers since 1900 have turned their attention to truck products, especially beans, lettuce and onions. The latter two, immensely important products today, are produced on Oswego's famous muck lands which were hardly touched by 1910. As a matter of fact, the riches of muck in this area were just being uncovered in neighboring Ontario County by a group of Dutch immigrants. The stories of the fantastic profits (one farmer reportedly made $8,000.00 from eleven acres of lettuce in 1908) undoubtedly stirred farmers to turn their attention to the muck in this area or sell

off their muck lands. Many chose to do the latter. Income from the sale of this land proved to be a windfall to the upland farmers who had little need or desire to clear the swampy, cluttered lowlands and who saw in the demand for such land an opportunity to dispose of acreage heretofore considered of little value. Accordingly, they sold off their muck lands to those who were willing to do the back-breaking work of clearing the land manually in preparation for farming.[23]

The points to be made are that from 1900 on more and more seasonal workers were in demand in the Oswego area and the immigrants supplied a disproportionate share of them. Native Americans felt their women were above doing field work. Consequently, when a Dr. Henry L. Elsner of Syracuse employed two women to pick dandelion roots from his lawn he attracted widespread attention. It soon became known that German women were hiring out daily as farm laborers in the Syracuse area. Investigations locally showed that while Oswego women had not been engaged on lawn work in the city, many women were seen picking strawberries and peas, and hoeing potatoes in the surrounding area. (Berries were then and still are a valuable asset to the economy of Oswego County.) Women had begun to invade a traditional men's work area. They were making $.75 to $1.00 a day usually, and, in berry season as much as $1.25 a day at the rate of $.02 a quart. Most of the laborers in the Oswego area were German though some came from "good old New England stock." Wages for common laborers at that time ranged from $1.25 to $1.50 a day for a ten hour day.[24] Farmers were delighted with the female help since they felt the fairer sex more reliable, less troublesome, and not as demanding in wages as their male counterparts.

Local reporters also discovered that a grower of fine strawberries had begun the practice of importing Italian families from elsewhere in New York to help with the harvest of his fruit.[25] By 1905 the Italian population of Oswego had increased to the point where the demand for such seasonal help could be met often by making arrangements with Italian leaders like Rosario D'Angelo, John Lapetino, and others.

The need for agricultural workers was particularly felt when the Oswego Preserving Company opened up operations in 1901. The first contracts made with local farmers called for a supply of beans and peas. Over the next decade the company established a reputation for quality fruit and vegetable preserves. In addition to stimulating specialization in agriculture, the canning operations created jobs for nearly 200 factory operatives.[26]

By 1909 the Italians in Oswego, following a trend that was developing throughout the state, began to show a more than passing interest in the new directions that agriculture was taking. Never ones to go in much for general farming in the United States, these peasants from Italy now exhibited a keen interest in the specialized and newly emerging truck and muck operations. Their initial movements into those fields locally were commented upon by the editor of one of Oswego's papers:[27]

> The Italians in Oswego...have stopped herding together and have become individual property owners. They have their truck gardens in connection with their dwellings where the soil is sufficiently fertile and raise enough potatoes and other vegetables for their respective families.

> The Italian farmer has not yet developed in this section...although the tendency is to get into the open and farther away from the crowded centers.

In brief, the transformation of Oswego, had taken place by 1910. The city had changed its face. The economic lifeline was once predominantly the river front. There, flourishing flour mills and grain elevators had stood majestically. There, first sailing vessels and then steamships carried the salt, lumber, grain, and railroad iron that passed daily through the port of Oswego. Now, on the eve of World War I, Oswegonians were finding employment more and more away from the waterfront. The number of manufacturers was still increasing steadily and devouring all the laborers that became available regardless of national origin. Over 5000 hands were employed in twenty-two of Oswego's leading manufacturing companies. (See Table A). Perhaps the key to understanding this change lies in the observation made by one unidentified former Oswegonian who was visiting his birthplace in 1905:[28]

> From my observations in the past I concluded that the moneyed men of the town did not want the city to grow...the prominent ment seem different today.

Into this "different" Oswego came the Italians. They too were considered "different" than the common laborers they succeeded. It is to their story that we now turn.

The Early Italians

The present Italian population in Oswego can be traced to 1874 when Antonio Russo came to Oswego to work at his trade as a barber. He brought with him his wife, Rosalia, and their three children: Joseph (17), Rosalia (14), and Sarah (11), all born in Italy. There were only a handful of Italians living in Oswego at that time and Russo apparently had little trouble in finding acceptance in the community. Upon his death, he was characterized in an obituary article, as a pleasant, social gentleman who labored at his trade for seventeen years in the same shop at the Doolittle House, one of Oswego's more popular hotels located on the site of the present Pontiac Hotel.[29]

Two of the Russo children, Joseph and Sarah, found even quicker acceptance and success. At first Joseph followed in his father's footsteps as a barber, but his ambitions went beyond that. He was a contributing member of the Oswego Business Men's Association which was attempting to attract manufacturing interests to Oswego and emerged as one of the first interpreters for the vanguard of Italians who appeared in Oswego in the early 1890's. No doubt in both capacities he served as a model for would be interpreters and leaders of the future Italian community. One of his early cases involved that of complaints brought in 1893 by the Lapetino and Gargano Saloon against an employee, William Barry. Russo was brought in to interpret because the Italian saloon owners had difficulty with English. (It should be noted that this is the same John Lapetino who was to become interpreter and leader extraordinary of the Italian community. Nothing else is known of Gargano.)[30] Soon after this case Russo removed to Syracuse where he became acquainted with Thomas Marnell, a man destined to become the outstanding leader of the

Italians in Central New York, and other leaders, such as James Lanzetta, publisher in the early 1900's of Risveglio Coloniale, an Italian weekly of that city.

Marnell and Russo provided that most important links between the Italian communities of Syracuse and Oswego. Syracuse, the older of the two Italian communities, was the source of some of Oswego's first Italians like James Sereno and Joseph Cosentino, to name only two of the more important early names.[31]

Marnell's interest in Oswego stemmed from his activities as a padrone. Anxious to expand his business of providing all kinds of services for his countrymen he was quick to perceive that Oswego's waterways provided a natural link to Syracuse and that the railroads were an even more effective man-made tie. It is not surprising then that he was frequently located in Oswego with his railroad work gangs, or searching out laborers for jobs elsewhere. He was often found in Oswego's courts serving as an advisor and interpreter for Italians involved in legal difficulties. His works were known to have settled some serious personal and family squabbles which took place with disgusting regularity among his countrymen. Such was his influence. It is inconceivable that Oswego's stream of immigrants was not fed initially by Marnell's wellspring of Italian laborers.[32] (This theme will be brought out throughout this paper.) By 1900 the City Directory had a liberal sprinkling of Italian names: Coradino, Damico, DeAngelo, DeSantis, Lapetino, Marshall, Russo, Salise, Sereno, and many others. Some would emerge as the leading Italian families over the decades. Many descendants of these early settlers are with us today. In some cases, the early immigrants themselves are still respected and active members of our community. Others of these early names have just faded away. That

was the fate of Russo, but not before it gained still more honors. While Joseph Russo moved on to Syracuse and provided some link between the Italians of that city and the growing immigrant population of Oswego, his sister Sarah remained behind to achieve distinction unsurpassed by any other Oswegonian of Italian extraction to date.

Sarah Russo had established a reputation in Oswego as an organist in 1894 at the age of twenty. Over the years, she served three parishes in Oswego in that capacity: St. Peter's, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's in that order. While at St. Peter's, her performance at a concert in Syracuse in 1894 led to an attractive offer to serve as organist for St. Joseph's German Church in that city which Miss Russo accepted. In Syracuse, Miss Russo demonstrated her talent as a composer of Church music and enhanced her reputation as an organist. An item in the Syracuse Evening News described her as an accomplished organist "to whose rare musical talent, genius and untiring efforts are due mainly the high standing and excellency of the music at St. Joseph's Church..."[33]

Sarah Russo was also a gifted teacher. Through the years she taught voice, piano, and mandolin and presented her students in yearly recitals usually at Fitzhugh Hall, described as a modern theatre on a small scale. One of her pupils, Rosario M. D'Angelo (no relation), subsequently reached the heights of opera as a star at the Metropolitan.[34]

By 1900 Miss Russo had returned to Oswego where she took over the organist duties at St. Mary's and proceeded to exhibit still other worthy talents, those of acting and directing. She turned out annual talent shows which were always well received. Occasionally she would produce a benefit for St. Mary's at the Richardson Theatre. She, hereself, was often called on as a featured performer at formal affairs in the city.

To cite just one, she starred in a musical program which formally opened the Knights of Columbus rooms in Oswego in 1907 and proved to be (along with her husband for she was now married) the only one of Italian extraction listed among a large number of honored guests.[35] Among her theatrical productions, probably her most successful was "Trail by Jury" by Gilbert and Sullivan, at which standing room crowds paid rousing tributes to the singing, acting and directing abilities of Miss Russo.[36]

In May, 1901 Sarah Russo married Rosario D'Angelo, her first cousin who had been boarding with the Russo family and who had failed as manager of the Ontario Hand Laundry. Together they took in boarders, ran a grocery store, steamship agency, "bank", and, in general, provided the many services which Italian immigrants came to expect from their leaders throughout the United States. In 1912, they moved to Syracuse where they expected to find better opportunities to expand their operations. Soon disappointed there, they returned to Oswego and remained until 1923. Then they moved south to live out their years in leisure. In her later years Sarah Russo D'Angelo directed the choir of St. Joseph's Italian Church.[37]

Mrs. D'Angelo has been characterized by some old-time Italians as a beautiful lady (her photograph attests to that), well-educated, intelligent, the brains and driving force behind her husband. Many gracious ladies of diverse ethnic origins have recalled for this writer with fond memories the charm and grace of that delightful woman who once taught them at St. Mary's. That this is no late praise for a gracious Italian immigrant lady is seen in the fact that when the Hospital Board gave a reception for the workers of the fund raising drive in 1910, she was listed among the patronesses who included Mrs. John Michalski, Mrs. Clark Morrison, Mrs. John T. Mott, Mrs. Henry Post, etc.[38]

A good many of those people who were so quick to honor Mrs. D'Angelo were just as quick to dismiss her husband as an interloper in the Russo family. We can not dismiss him so quickly however.

Rosario D'Angelo first appears in Oswego in 1893 as an operator of a laundry on West Second Street. Unable to make a go of it, he reportedly left town after a mysterious fire destroyed his shop.[39] Little else is known of this tall, untutored Italian (his oral facility in English and Italian was adequate but his written abilities left something to be desired) until he begins to emerge as a leader of his people in 1900. At that time he attended a meeting at Gokey's complete with entertainment sponsored by the Democrats to keep Italians informed on the issues of democracy.[40] This was a euphemistic way of announcing the beginning of an Italian Democrat Club. The Democrats apparently had little success in convincing D'Angelo to join their cause for long because three years later he appeared as a featured speaker at an Italian Republican Club rally along with Francis D. Culkin, 8th Ward leader. Culkin, it was noted, having not yet mastered Italian, was the only one who addressed the group in English. Most of the Italians did not understand a word he said but, appreciative of the copious draughts of beer being fed them, they applauded him on signal. Mindful of the ever-increasing number of Italian laborers coming and settling in Oswego, the Republicans were making an obvious play for votes. D'Angelo was acting as a go-between and securing quarters for many of the newcomers in the Gambrinus Hotel which was eventually turned over to the Italians. This insured that the new workers not only had lodging, but also that they could keep their own kitchens. It was felt that most of these Italians would become members of the Republican Party.[41] D'Angelo had been instrumental in forming and became

president of the Christopher Columbus Society in 1903, an Italian benevolent association which served also as an unofficial wing of the local Republican Party.[42] Later, he emerged as an interpreter at the Taldeboni trial in which Francis D. Culkin served as defense attorney.[43] The pair of Culkin and D'Angelo was a common sight to the Italians of Oswego and worked together to insure the political "Americanization" of the newcomers from Italy. Culkin cultivated the Italians. He flattered them and made them proud and welcome by publicly announcing "there are no more law abiding people in the country than those from sunny Italy."[44] This was no small praise, coming at a time when Black Hand headlines were common and when many still remembered the conviction of Taldeboni for manslaughter. D'Angelo insured that Culkin's efforts were not in vain by leading Italians to the County Clerk's Office for their final naturalization papers.[45]

Political dignitaries from the state and national level and nearby Syracuse, Americans and Italians, attended occasionally the local Italian rallies lest the immigrants feel they were taken for granted. Usually the visiting bosses stressed the national and statewide achievements of the Republicans and urged the voting of a straight ticket to avoid making mistakes in trying to split the ticket.[46] The results were gratifying. The Republican leadership was highly pleased with D'Angelo's work and with the loyalty that Italians showed to the Party. In 1907 D'Angelo's name (the first Italian so honored) appeared on a list of appointments for Oswego County and City for Notary Publics and his name was prominently rumored for the post of Fire Marshall in November of that year.[47] This was the height of his political career and influence with Italians. Until this time he was considered in complete control of the affairs of the Italians in the City, but now another ambitious Italian was

beginning to make himself heard, John Lapetino. Within a year, Lapetino had gained the ascendency and before long he would extend his influence and power beyond that exercised by D'Angelo. But what of D'Angelo? Over the years Rosario D'Angelo had performed many services for his countrymen. He got his people housing and jobs. He arranged for agricultural workers in the berry picking season. His importing store provided his countrymen (and Americans as well) with Italian foodstuffs and doubled as an office for his steamship agency which facilitated transportation to and from the old country. His services as an interpreter and notary public were all the more valuable in those early years when there were few Italians able to engage in those activities. His services proved invaluable to his adopted countrymen also. He helped provide the laborers so sorely needed in Oswego and smoothed the transition process from Italian to American. He worked hard to "Americanize" the Italians not only politically as has been shown, but also in many other ways. He preached non-violence before that word became a modern shibboleth. He counseled the Italians to avoid carrying concealed weapons and place their protection in the law. Deploring the many outbreaks of "unintentional" trouble, he urged Italians in the mills and factories to pay no heed to the annoyances to which they were daily subjected but to work hard to remove the prejudice against them. With his wife, Sarah, he formed a team from whom many Italian immigants drew strength and courage to work hard for success in the new world. The attainment of that success was due in part to the leaders of the Italian community, people like the D'Angelo's, who bridged the gap between the immigrant and native and paved the way for rapid assimilation over the years.

Table A: List of Leading Plants and Number of Hands in Each

New York Central Shops	675
Ontario Knitting Company	600
Diamond Match Company	425
F. Conde Knitting Company	400
National Starch Company	400
Minetto Shade Cloth Company	400
Ames Iron Works	350
Standard Spinning Company	325
Standard Oil Box Factory	250
Railway Spring Company	175
Oswego Tool Company	165
Oil Well Supply Company	152
Kingsford Machine Company	150
Oswego Candy Company	150
Oswego Knitting Company	125
Maize Products Company	105
Oswego Machine Works	Not Reported
Fitzgibbons Boiler Company	90
Mohawk Manufacturing Company	75
Oswego Boiler and Engine Company	60
Oswego Shade Cloth Company	Not Reported
Nottingham Knitting Company	35
D. L. & W. Shops	22
O. & W. Shops	19

Source: Oswego Daily Palladium, February 23, 1907. p.4. The number of hands was supplied by the managers of the companies.

Footnotes

1 Charles M. Snyder, Oswego: From Buckskin to Bustles (Port Washington, 1968), p. 252
2 Ibid., 260.
3 Ibid., 258-59.
4 Oswego Daily Palladium, March 26, 1897, p. 4, report of a paper read by Captain John Molther, "Reminiscences of Early Days on the Lakes," before the Men's Club of Christ Church.
5 Ibid. and Snyder, op. cit., pp. 189-99.
6 Oswego Daily Palladium, February 23, 1907, p. 4.
7 Oswego Daily Palladium, January 9, 1899, p. 6 and Snyder, op. cit., pp. 198-99.
8 Oswego Daily Palladium, November 20, 1905, p. 4 and April 7, 1906, p. 4.
9 New York State Census, "Manuscript Books of the County and City of Oswego," 1905.
10 Oswego Daily Palladium, August 10, 1905, p. 4.
11 Ibid.
12 Oswego Daily Palladium, August 3, 1905, p. 4.
13 See, for example, the editorial in Oswego Daily Times, December 18, 1906, p. 2.
14 Editorial in Oswego Daily Palladium, May 18, 1907, p. 7.
15 For brief discussion of immigrant distribution and additional sources see Luciano J. Iorizzo, "Italian Immigration and the Impact of the Padrone System," Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1966, pp. 38ff.
16 Oswego Daily Palladium, March 17, 1908, p. 5
17 Oswego Daily Palladium, November 8, 1907, p. 5.
18 Oswego Daily Times, March 12, 1910, p. 1 and Daily Palladium, June 26, 1909, p. 4.
19 March 12, 1910, p. 12

20 Business Fact Book, 1963, Part 2 Population and Housing, Department of Commerce,(Albany, New York), p. 28

21 Oswego Daily Times, April 23, 1910, p. 10 and Snyder, op. cit. p. 199

22 There are numerous references in the press. See especially, Oswego Daily Times, August 27, 1883, p. 1 and Oswego Daily Palladium, Sept. 7, 1900, p. 6

23 M. C. Bond, "Oswego County", AE 892 Census Date, Department of Agricultural Exonomics, Cornell, July 1953 (Mimeograph) and Oswego Daily Palladium, March 12, 1908, p. 4.

24 Oswego Daily Palladium, June 30, 1900, p. 5.

25 Ibid.

26 Industrial Oswego, A Souvenir Industrial Review of the City of Oswego, The Oswego Chamber of Commerce, 1910, p. 37 and Oswego Daily Palladium April 1, 1901, p. 5.

27 Oswego Daily Times, July 15, 1909, p. 2.

28 Oswego Daily Palladium, December 2, 1905, p. 4.

29 Oswego Daily Palladium, January 27, 1891, p. 5.

30 See especially, Oswego Daily Palladium, July 29, 1893, p. 6.

31 See obituary of Joseph Cosentino, Oswego Palladium Times, August 6, 1940. p. 4. Sereno's switch of residency from Syracuse to Oswego is well known among "oldtimers" interviewed by this writer.

32 For a brief view of Marnell's padrone activities in Central New York See Iorizzo, op. cit., pp. 125-133. From time to time Marnell's activities and influence among Oswego's Italians were reported in the local press, e. g. Oswego Daily Palladium, December 5, 1901, p. 4.

33 Cited in Oswego Daily Times, April 13, 1895, p. 5.

34 Oswego Daily Paladium, December 29, 1908, p. 5.

35 Oswego Daily Palladium, December 15, 1907, p. 5.
36 Oswego Daily Palladium, June 6 and 7, 1900, p. 5.
37 Numerous interviews with "oldtimers."
38 Oswego Daily Times, April 29, 1910, p. 5.
39 Oswego Daily Palladium, October 6, 1893, p. 5.
40 Oswego Daily Palladium, November 5, 1900, p. 8.
41 Oswego Daily Palladium, September 30, 1904, p. 4 and October 13, 1904, p. 4.
42 Oswego Daily Palladium, October 18, 1904, p. 5.
43 Oswego Daily Palladium, January 17, 1905, p. 4.
44 Oswego Daily Palladium, May 29, 1906, p. 1.
45 Oswego Daily Palladium, May 10, 1906, p. 5.
46 See, for example, Oswego Daily Times, Oct. 19, 1906, p. 5.
47 Oswego Daily Palladium, November 7, 1907, p. 4.

SANDY CREEK FAIR

From the Horse and Buggy Days
to the Jet Age.

Complied by

Miss Alice L. Carnrite
8634 U. S. Route 11
Sandy Creek, New York

The Sandy Creek Fair was organized in 1858, when Sandy Creek itself was only 33 years old. This was less than 60 years after the death of the revered Washington, during the administration of the democratic president, James Buchanan; while the 32 states of the Union were milling over the disputed question of slavery, standing divided 15 for slavery and 17 against; in the year following the Dred Scott decision which so fired the minds of anti-slavery proponents and threatened disunion of the states; in the year of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates, and right in the midst of the great business depression of 1857 when bank failures were everywhere in the country, when railways could not pay their debts, when manufacturers were daily being ruined because of over-production of supplies, and the country was in a state of turmoil. This was the time when the small town of Sandy Creek called a meeting to organize an agricultural society.

The following appeared under General Regulations in their original form: "Members of the Society and all who become such by the payment of one dollar to the treasurer will be provided with badges which will

admit the member, the ladies of his family and sons under 21 years of age to the exhibition at all times during its continuance. Single tickets of admission, 10 cents."

The first officers elected were: Oren R. Earl, president; Horace Scripture, vice-president; E. H. Sargent, secretary; W. W. Alton, assistant secretary; P. M. Newton, treasurer; M. A. Pruyn, general superintendent of fair and grounds. The Directors were: B. G. Robbins, A. S. Warner, P. H. Powers, Freeman Davis, N. P. Gurley, Abraham Pruyn, W. Marks, J. A. Clark, Samuel Scripture, John Davis, W. T. Tifft, W. C. Weaver, Lorenzo Salisbury, Morgan L. Wood and M. A. Pruyn.

During the first few years cash awards were given for first and second prizes, and diplomas were given for third places.

The fairs have been continuously held on the present site which lease was donated by Oren R. Earl, who served the Association as president at irregular intervals for 20 years. The grounds were then heavily wooded and many acres smaller than at present.

At the first meeting smaller articles were displayed on tables under the trees, and the poultry was displayed nearby in coops set on planks. The only building was a 20 by 25 foot barn used for a hall. The animals were tied to fences and led out into a cleared off circle for showing. Fairs for 15 years were held for only two days and always in September. There was always a question about whether to close school--they usually did one day. Undoubtedly, this later date is the reason for the saying, "Sandy Creek Fair is over--it's time to bank the house for winter."

Patriotism was demonstrated during the first year by the raising of a flag pole.

The first hall built on the grounds was called the "Hall of Industry." $200 was appropriated for its building.

The first report mentioned as being made to the State Agricultural Society was on July 1, 1861, the first year of the Civil War. This showed a balance from the previous year of $78 and the total balance to have been $271.94.

At the third fair a balloon ascension was the chief attraction.

Reports of the 9th fair mentioned an annual address in the afternoon of the second day delivered by Albertus Perry, Esq., of Oswego.

That our early settlers had temperance tendencies is shown by the motion made and carried at the annual meeting of 1867, when it authorized and empowered the Board of Managers to let the stands on the fair ground with the express understanding that no spirituous, malt liquor or lager beer be sold therein during fair days.

The 1871 fair treasurer's report showed $350 was paid H. D. Squares balloonist.

The fair of 1872 left a deficit of $313.95, which was the first deficit in the history of the fair.

During the second 15 years a tendency to printed advertising was in evidence. Annual reports were printed in the Sandy Creek News. One financial report shows the salary of the secretary, D.E.Ainsworth, to be paid by the amount collected by him for advertisements in the annual premium book.

The first three-day fair was held in 1873.

A. Wart offered a prize of $20 for any horse in attendance during the Fair of 1874 which should trot the track of the Society in 2:30.

The grounds were enlarged in 1875 with the purchase of a 10-rod strip of land extending across the rear of the original grounds, from Mr. Wilder for $400.

In 1877 the boundaries of the Society were so changed as to include all of Ellisburg, Lorraine, Redfield, Albion, Williamstown and Parish; Henderson being added in 1879.

A careful study of the premium list for the 22nd annual fair shows a few prizes of $10 offered, some $3 and $5 awards and many ranging from $3 down to 50¢. Many judges examined the entries. Most departments had at least three judges. It is interesting to note that women didn't have equal rights in many ~~res~~ respects--the baked goods and fancy work were judged by a panel of six judges. For instance, the baking judges were listed: "Henry H. Finster and Lady, Orwell; P. M. Corse and Lady, Lacona; O. H. Balch and Lady, Mannsville.

The premium list offered competition for cattle, including classes for grades, sheep, swine, oxen, steers, butter, factory cheese, honey, fruit, flowers, painting, baking, canned fruit, fancy articles, embroidery, knitting, vegetables, grain, horse drawn vehicles, farm implements, best clothes wringer, best pork barrel, butter tub, cheese box, flour barrel, best trunk and valise.

At the annual meeting in 1880 petitions numerously signed were presented asking the Board to eliminate all gambling, immoral shows and horse racing from the fair to be held the following year. These were received and placed on file, but the Board scheduled and held two races on each of two days.

A resolution was adopted in 1881 to secure 80 or more life memberships at a cost of $10 each, the proceeds of which were to be applied on the building of a new hall. After much discussion the hall was erected in 1885 and was known as the Floral Hall.

A dancing platform attracted the crowds in 1885. One couple from Boylston, who were well along in years, were said to have spent the whole day dancing, and missed hardly a set. Bicycle races were also a feature.

Excursion rates were given on the railroads to attendants at the fair.

The first baby show was held on the grounds in 1887.

Overshadowing all events to date was the triple wedding scheduled for 1887. However, only two couples responded: Wm. DeLapp and Miss Amelia Chapman; Frank Porter and Miss Alice Presley. Preceded by Oren R. Earl, president and Rev. R. F. Main, pastor of the Baptist Church, the couples entered the band stand, decorated with baskets of flowers, a floral horseshoe and a floral bell. Both couples were recipients of elaborate gifts, receiving a chamber set from E. L. Nye and Son; a parlor stove from C.W. Colony; a copper boiler from C. D. Rounds; 1/2 ton of coal from Wm. J. Stevens, and 1/2 ton of coal from J. Lyman Bulkley; also a sack of flour from the Lacona Custom Mills and numerous other gifts.

The fair met with disappointment in 1888 -- the parachute performer did not arrive; and Whitewood, a bay stallion known for his speed, died in Carthage the day before his scheduled appearance at the Sandy Creek Fair.

A new grandstand was constructed in 1889 to replace the old one.

Premium lists were given advance publicity in 1890 when they appeared in the local paper in installments, rather than in books as at present.

People attending the fair in 1890 were highly interested in an exhibition of burning natural gas-- and a demonstration of a phonograph.

The year 1892 showed a strong fair under the leadership of John R. Allen, president, Udelle Bartlett, Secretary; and L. J. Jones, treasurer. The next fair brought an unusual attraction in the Tuscarora Indian Silver Cornet Band composed of 22 sons of the forest who were attired in all the paraphernalia of their fore-fathers, and an Indian Glee Club (both male and female voices), as well as games of lacrosse, and races, which thrilled the spectators.

Never in the history of the Sandy Creek Fair to date had there been so many entries by several hundreds as in 1894. Fakers were numerous too, with questionable games and devices. Sheriff Selleck came over from Oswego and it was said that on the last day not a questionable feature was on the ground.

In 1895 the 48th Separate Company of the U.S. Army from Oswego entertained the fair goers.

In 1897 the old dining hall was made over into a poultry hall and a new dining hall built. This is the hall which was later used as the Little Country Theatre.

The next year the old agricultural hall was moved across the tract and fitted up for a barn. Leman Baldwin was the low bidder for the construction of a new agricultural hall -- $275. He also received the contract to build a new horticultural hall at a figure of $421. In 1899 A. C. Skinkle was the low bidder for construction of swine sheds.

The first four-day fair was held in 1900, when race purses were increased, and $1,100 was paid for special attractions, one of which was C. A. Benjamin, manager of Syracuse Locomobile Co., who was on the ground every day with a horseless carriage.

The judges' stand was erected in 1901, and that year the crowd surpassed any before on the ground and the total receipts exceeded $4,300.

The Golden Anniversary was observed in 1907 when the officers were Peter C. Hydorn, president; H. L. Wallace, Secretary; and John J. Baldwin, Treasurer.

The second day of the fair in 1909 was outstanding for the coming of Gov. Charles E. Hughes which had been heralded for weeks. He arrived by train accompanied by Luther W. Mott, Sheriff Chas. W. Taft, Udelle Bartlett, T. C. Sweet, John S. Parsons, D. P. Morehouse and other dignitaries from Oswego; Senator George H. Cobb, Harold Johnson and others from Watertown. He was introduced by H. L. Wallace. 800 or more railroad tickets were sold on Governor's Day -- more than had ever been sold for the Fair. Special trains from and to Pulaski and Adams Center were run through the day.

The Fair of 1910 was written up as the "Fair of Fairs" -- "Fair weather, fair faces, fair attractions and fair races."

In 1911 the Baptist Society builts its new home-made ice cream pavilion which was constantly crowded. W. F. Corse had the honor to be the first to be served at the new stand. L. C. Snyder's marvelous exhibit of natural curios was first seen on the grounds at that time.

Company D, 3rd Regiment New York State National Guard camped on the grounds throughout the 1912 Fair and gave daily parades, drills and exhibitions.

The first delegates elected to attend the State Association of Fairs at Albany were C. W. Colony and B. D. Jones in 1913.

The year of 1913 was one of conservatism, with competition for premiums in all classes restricted, the race program limited, some premiums reduced from 25 to 50%, and some stricken out. The attractions keeping with the finacial policy were good but not so extensive as in other years. This conservatism was carried out by the courage of George H. Ackerman who was president in 1913 and 1914. It lessened the expenditures by more than $700 and left the Society entirely out of debt.

In 1915 jitney buses ran to and from Watertown, bringing people for $1 roundtrip; and back and forth from Pulaski for 25¢. Mrs. F. H. Lamon of Watertown spoke convincingly for the woman suffrage cause.

By the 60th anniversary in 1917, few carriages were in evidence, while 30 years previous it would have been possible to find many a hay rack and here and there a rope harness. Going back to the first fair one would have seen scarcely anything but lumber wagons, while many, many more walked.

During World War I American Red Cross activities were on exhibit, and there was a Red Cross auction sale to which everyone was asked to contribute, and which was successfully held under the management of Dr. E. G. Rogers. Everyone was so busy with other lines of endeavor during the war years that the fair seemed more like an old home week when people came together to confer, to sympathize and to visit. T. H. Elmer exhibited a new feature -- taxidermy.

Exhibitors enjoyed the convenience of new stock sheds in 1919, and a new poultry hall was erected in 1920. A capacity crowd of 926 filled the grandstand, with many more turned away. Miss Elizabeth Hoag (now Mrs. Sidney B. Gordon of Pulaski) won the first Oswego County spelling contest to be held on the Sandy Creek Fair grounds.

In 1921 the sole surviving Fair Association in Oswego County held the only fair between Syracuse and Watertown; Rome and Oswego. (Fairs were also held in Fulton and Oswego, but this is being confined to a brief history of Sandy Creek Fair.) Mrs. Anna Bartlett, the first woman to serve in the capacity, was elected a director. A new department of the fair this year was the junior project for boys and girls of Oswego County.

The Domestic Hall was erected in 1922, and the first County Junior Stock Judging Contest was staged.

When Dr. L. F. Hollis was president in 1923, a Welfare Tent was maintained for first aid and baby clinics. A new cattle building was built to accommodate 100 head.

The Betts exhibition building which was later known as the Floral Hall was built in 1924. The Little Country Theatre made its appearance the next year.

Among the features of the fairs of the 30's when Wilbur Wilcox served as president were: the rough riding team from Troop D of the State Police, who exhibited daring horsemanship in their spectacular rodeo; a "barnyard golf" tournament with horseshoes flying back and forth at all times; and baby shows under the direction of Miss Lucy Vincent, R.N., the Oswego County health nurse. In 1933 there were 90 horses taking part in the race program -- the largest number up to that time.

George Corse, in his words, "did the fair" in its 75th year; and wrote up a few things he thought were interesting or amusing. The column appeared in the Sandy Creek News under the heading "Rambling 'Round the Fair," under the pen name B. A. Loney (which could have been interpreted to read "Baloney".) The column soon appeared as a weekly feature called "As I See It," which continued for more than 25 years. At fair time at least a portion of the column was sure to tell of Aunt Mindy getting her preserves ready for the fair, and Uncle Jubal sneaking off to see the girlie shows, or something about the fair.

About 300 children participated in a parade at the '34 fair, with nearly a dozen floats and comedy features entered by the Skippy Club of Oswego and the Southwest Oswego Club.

Attendance reached a new record mark in 1935 with an aggregate for the four days estimated at over 30,000 -- with a crowd of about 4,000 witnessing an evening of CCC Silver Glove Championship Boxing. That same year Long's Chocolate Works ball team of Oswego defeated the Gould Taxi Players of the same city.

In 1938, under the leadership of Capt. Hugh Barclay, "Old Sandy" was extended for the first time to include Saturday. This 81st Fair was recorded as "biggest and best of all." Additional land was acquired from Paul Woodard for a 2,000 car parking lot and a 4-H cattle barn was built.

The premiums were paid "on-the-spot" before the end of the fair.

The Granger's Hornpipe proved popular - Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Colvin furnishing the music for the square dance competition.

Another outstanding attraction of this fair was the American Legion drum and bugle contest, which for color and size had never been equalled in Oswego County. Six junior and three senior corps competed and after taking part as individual units formed a massed unit and paraded the field. I can well remember this colorful event -- as I stood pulling at my Mother's side!

The Sandy Creek Fair received nation-wide attention when a preview of the official opening was broadcast over the National Farm and Home Hour in a network program in 1939. The principal speaker on the program was State Commissioner of Agriculture Holton V. Noyes. Capt. Hugh Barclay, fair president, made brief remarks of welcome and Ezra Williams, a local octogenarian who had attended 75 of the 82 fairs, was also interviewed on the network program. One of the outstanding features of the 1939 fair was Dr. B. Sproul's Eskimo and Indian Village.

Rev. Herbert Harrison, in 1940, founded the unique Oswego County Fair Church Service, which was held for many years on the Sunday evening of fair week in front of the grandstand.

Thomas E. Dewey, then leading contender for the Republican gubernatorial nomination and figure of nation-wide important, spoke to a crowd of about 4,000 attending the 1942 event. The same year Miss Betty Groves (now Mrs. Ralph Ludgren of Pulaski) was chosen Miss Oswego County in a beauty contest.

The opening day of the 1944 fair was designated Ed Gould Day in honor of the 77th birthday of Mr. Gould who served as superintendent of the grounds for more than 30 years. He was presented with a birthday cake sent from New York City by Mrs. Hugh Barclay of Pulaski; and the fair officials gave him a war bond and a life membership in the Fair Association.

Victory was celebrated in 1945 when all five days were dedicated to the members of the Armed Forces with Army Day, Navy Day, Marine Day, Air Corps Day and Coast Guard and Merchants Marine Day. A hilarious "Womanless Wedding" was staged by the Sandy Creek Grange with an all male cast.

About 15,000 people thronged the grounds on Wednesday of the 1946 day, when Gov. Dewey again visited the vair; and Congressman Hadwen C. Fuller invited the World War II Veterans and their families to attend as his guests.

Mr. and Mrs. John C. Birdlebough and the Phoenix Junior Garden Club were active participants in the Floral Department for many years.

Outstanding attractions of more recent years were top flight wrestling cards; internationally known Hell Driver troups; Martha Carson and the "Grand Ole Opry" stars from Nashville, Tenn.

Centennial Fair

The Centennial Fair received much advance promotion as the male residents of the area in mid-April started growing beards, moustaches, and sideburns.

The beard judging brought forth 33 be-whiskered individuals, several in suits of bygone years, seated on the stage for the inspection of the judges. The judges included barbers from Adams and Watertown.

Leland Stevens was the grand winner, receiving $25 for the best looking full beard grown since April 15. He also received a $15 prize for the best looking black beard and a trophy for having the most distinguished looking beard.

Gleason Sperling received the $15 prize for the best looking gray beard; and $15 for the best looking full beard, any color mixed with gray.

Edward Killam and Robert Soule each received $15 prizes for best looking brown and best looking red beards respectively.

Robert Dickinson had a $10 prize for the youngest man with the longest beard; while Wallace Readon received $10 for being the oldest man with the longest beard.

Stratton Killam received $10 for the best Abe Lincoln type beard and Ralph Smith the same amount for the best goatee.

For the best Van Dyke $10 prize, the winner was Fred Killam; with Charles Wilcox receiving the $10 award for the best handlebar moustache.

The trophy for the most comic looking beard went to Ralph Smith. The prize of $10 was awarded to Wallace Readon for the best looking full beard grown before April 15.

Rev. E. Kendall Scouten, then of Sandy Creek Methodist Church, performed the wedding at the Centennial Fair -- Miss Alice Palmer and Robert Green being married in a double-ring ceremony. Their

identity was a carefully guarded secret prior to the ceremony.

An antique auto show also passed before the grandstand.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Osborne, Fulton, R 2, received the award for having been married the longest, their marriage having occurred in 1891. They also placed second by having the largest number of living children, 8; and second for largest number of living grandchildren, 33. The Osbornes, with 68 great-grandchildren, were easy winners in that category.

Mr. and Mrs. Milton Stewart of Sandy Creek placed first for the greatest number of living children, 13; also first for the greatest number of living grandchildren, 41; and were in third place for greatest number of great-grandchildren, 17.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Brown shared the spotlight among the Golden Wedding Couples. They were the focus of attention in their costumes of yesteryear--both are still living and reside in Mannsville.

Laurie Susan and Karen Marie Williams, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Williams won first prize in the Baby Show under the heading "Floats entered for beauty."

Through the courtesy of Mrs. Douglas Holyoke, a quilt was displayed which had been shown at the first fair here, also at the 25th, 50th and 75th fairs.

Col. Theodore Presley made the necessary arrangements to obtain the 138th Fighter Squadron of Air National Guard form Syracuse for a jet fly-over, as well as a display of jet motors and other modern developments of jet aviation.

Ideal weather was enjoyed during the Centennial Fair in 1957 and attendance records were made for recent years. Paid attendance totalled 11,502 for the 5 days and nights. Total attendance, of course, actually ran far in excess of paid admission with firemen and members of bands admitted free.

Mexico Band's Sharon Lee Conrad was crowned Centennial Fair Queen, receiving $150 and her sponsor $75. Miss Carol Glenister of New Haven and Miss Mary McQueen, Oswego, were in second and third place.

Wilbur W. Wilcox, 91 year old past fair president (1930-37) attended, taking part in the Firemen's Parade, riding in the Lacona fire truck. He was the oldest active fireman in New York State at that time--having been a member of Lacona Volunteer Fire Department for 66 years and chief on several occasions.

The Sandy Creek Fair, one of only 46 fairs in operation in New York State, observed a red-letter day with the burning of its last note of indebtedness at the 1964 annual meeting, becoming debt-free for the first time in 20 years.

The Youth Department has been a keystone of the Sandy Creek Fair in recent years. The projects, work and activities of junior exhibitors are displayed effectively in two youth buildings and the cattle barns, creating a good impression of the youth of our area. The Junior Department has grown through the years with $5,000 offered in prizes for the Junior Fair last year for competition of 4-H and FFA exhibitors. A pole-barn was built in 1959 - much of the work done by 4-H and FFA members, leaders and instructors.

Anna Jones Bartlett, who died in September, 1963, was an able historian and had a remarkable memory, a tremendous pride in her community, and a keen interest in our fair. She held the exceptional record of attending 90 Sandy Creek Fairs, never missing one until the last summer of her life.

She recalled the horse races, the bands playing between the different events; the man all dressed up and wearing a high silk hat, selling whips; when the merry-go-round only cost a nickel and the ferris wheel a dime; and people bringing picnic dinners to what used to be THE BIG EVENT OF THE YEAR.

Paul Woodard was actively interested in the fair, and as president had given it almost year-around attention. He was elected president in 1940 and served continuously in the office until 1957, and was again elected to the office in 1961, serving in that capacity until his death in the fall of 1966. In tribute to him, a Paul Woodard Day was observed at the 1967 fair.

Over the years many people have contributed much to the Sandy Creek Fair - we would especially mention life members - Carl Burritt, who has served several years as president and was chairman of the Centennial Program; William J. Potter, who has served many years in various capacities, including director, secretary and currently is vice president; Mrs. Marion B. Herrick, who served many years as entry clerk, also secretary a few years.

Much credit should be given the many faithful, hard-working officers, superintendents and their assistants - as well as the exhibitors.

Now that the Sandy Creek Fair has gotten well into its second century - what has it meant?

Competition - everything from the farmer's best pig, tallest corn, and finest fruit and grain to Junior's calf, and Susie's 4-H dress and the style review - Oh yes, and Grandma's best canned fruit, preserves, and pickles - oh, and her finest needlework, too!

Yes, and the farmers always tried to have their threshing done so they could give their hired man a day off at the fair too; and Ma, she tried to have the first blackberry pie of the season, for that pinic basket in the back of the wagon.

And what fair would be complete without the small fry - and what child would be happy without cotton candy, taffy, peanuts, candy apples, and popcorn - Oh yes, and a balloon, with rides on the merry-go-round and the ferris wheel and later the tilt-a-whirl and many more.

And the Sandy Creek Fair has brought to town many varied types of entertainment through the years- everything from dog acts to elephants and a zebra; balloon ascensions, parachute jumps, a jet fly-by; horse pulling contests, spelling bees, horse races, milking contests, tractor pulling contests, cattle showing; dancing follies, parades, home talent, style shows, aerial acts, horse shows, auto races, rodeos, square dances, thrill shows, and of course, fireworks!

In closing may I urge you to support, compete and attend the Oswego County Fair, better known as Sandy Creek Fair, President Paul Goodnough and his fine, hard-working officers have many plans for the future. This year's fair dates are August 6-10.

CREDITS

Much of this material was gathered and correlated at the time of the 75th Anniversary by Mrs. Mildred G. Pratt, one of the charter members of Rhadamant Chapter D.A.R. She was assisted by Mrs. Mercia Graham.

Much appreciation is also due the Sandy Creek News, which was used as an invaluable reference.

THE OLD PRIVATE SCHOOLS

OF OSWEGO

(Read by Mrs. Homan F. Hallock
before Oswego Historical Society
April 30, 1937)

Whoever dreamed that Oswego could boast of having had in her career, at least nineteen private schools!

Having been brought up on tales of Old Oswego, and having spent a large part of my life here, I felt that I knew much about her past. Digging far back into the years, however, in search of the following information, has shown me how little I knew about Oswego's past, especially about her schools, and it has been most interesting. The lists of pupils who attended these schools are especially interesting to me, as they represent the Old Oswego which our mothers and grandmothers knew, but I shall not read them, as to a large number of present day Oswegonians they would be names only. I have incomplete lists with me, however, for anyone who may be interested. The lists are simply the names of other pupils recalled by the friends who have been able to tell me about the schools - all of whom have been pupils at some of them.

FEMALE SEMINARY

It is of special interest to me that the first private school on record in Oswego was established by my grandmother and her family. The Misses Mary and Louise Braman came here from Bramansville, N. Y., with their parents, Dr. and Mrs. Dana Braman in the

spring of 1845, and opened their school on May Day, in a large building on West Seneca Street between Sixth and Seventh Streets. The building had formerly been the United States Hotel, and later was to become the first home of the State Normal School. The homes of Miss Marguerite Henderson, Mrs. Mary Magie and John Weiner now occupy the site.

It was a boarding and day school for girls known as the Female Seminary, and had eighty-eight pupils the first year. Dr. and Mrs. Braman took care of the boarding pupils. The Misses Braman were the principals. It would seem as though the curriculum of this early school was more complete - certainly more complicated, than most of the schools which followed it. The catalogue gives it as follows:

First Year -- Reading, orthography, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, United States history.

Second Year -- Geography-completed, natural philosophy, chemistry, universal history, botany, Latin or French, Wayland's moral science, music.

Third Year -- Latin or French continued, rhetoric, geometry, astronomy, geography of the heavens, geology.

Fourth Year -- Latin or French completed, algebra, logic, intellectual philosophy, Kame's elements of criticism.

Weekly exercise in composition through the course.

The whole program aimed at the highest culture possible for young females.

Among the pupils listed were Miss Elvenah Seeley, whom many of us remember with deep affection. The Misses Condit, daughters of the Rev. Dr. R.W. Condit, whole early ministry in the Old First Presbyterian Church won him a place of honor and esteem in the hearts of all who knew him; Miss Laura Newkirk, who later brought up our esteemed citizen, Willard Straight; Miss Angelica Fort, an aunt of Miss Kitty Casey; Miss Anna R. Pardee, who later became Mrs. James Lyons,

and mother of Mrs. Karl Kellogg, and Elizabeth Halligan, grandmother of Miss Laura Bonner and Mrs. Dick Glynn.

The catalogue describes the school as follows:

"The Seminary is the spacious building formerly known as the United States Hotel. It is commodious in all its arrangements, and well adapted to its present purposes. Its location is one of peculiar beauty, commanding a fine view of the village, river and lake. It is particularly desired that young ladies from abroad should reside in the Seminary. Such will be under the immediate care of the principals. And while particular hours are appropriated to study, such intercourse with society will be secured, as, without interfering with their studies, will promote that refinement of manners and religious improvement, without which no young lady's education can be complete. The lodging rooms are well furnished and occupied by two pupils each. There is provision made for having a fire in rooms, for all those who are willing to incur the extra expense for fuel; but as the young ladies have a parlor appropriated to themselves, and study in the recitation room, it is presumed but few will desire it."

The catalogue states that the school was designed to be a permanent institution, but family records show that both sisters were married to prominent Oswego men within three years - one becoming Mrs. William H. Wheeler, the other, Mrs. Theodore Irwin. These two were in the group who a few years later established the Old Ladies' Home.

A private school was kept between 1848-1852 by Miss Mary A. Stone in the old court house which stood in the East Park. When the present Court House was built on the same site, the old building was purchased by the Church of the Evangelist and moved across the road next to the church to be used as a Sunday School. It is part of the present parish house.

Mrs. D. H. Couch, mother of Birdsall Couch, was a pupil in this school. In 1852 Miss Stone married Silas Davis, the father of two of her pupils, and the school was discontinued.

A small private school was kept by Miss Kinney in her own house on East Fifth Street near Cayuga about the years 1855-1865. Her work was mostly with young children.

The second private school on record was known as Miss Cooper's (Matilda S.) school, and was located in the basement of the old Pitkins house, on the site of the Swits Conde Mansion. A. C. Hall's home now occupies that corner. (West Fifth at Seneca St.)

The basement was not of the modern type, but a dark damp cellar, and Miss Kitty Casey, who is now 92 years old, wonders how she survived the ten years she attended the school, from 1850 to 1860.

Miss Cooper was an Irish lady of high education for that time. She came here from Cork, and was a devout member of the Church of England. She had a strong English accent which her pupils all acquired. Miss Casey recalls being embarrassed in a spelling match by spelling C-O-T instead of C-A-U-G-H-T.

When Miss Casey was ready to attend the high school, which stood opposite the park on West Third Street, it burned to the ground, and for the next two years the high school was held in Mansard Hall on West First Street near the City Savings Bank - so named because it was the first building in Oswego to have a Mansard roof. The new academy was erected during that time on the same site on West Third St. About this time Miss Cooper gave up her school and went to live with the Murray family as a governess. They were a prominent family of wealth living where Brinnington now stands on the West River Road, the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Johnson (just north of the Country Club Golf Course).

Pupils - Hayden Pardee, whose father built the home on Montcalm recently occupied by the Robert Downey family, and now belonging to Daniel A. Williams at Lake & W. 6th; Jim Wright, an uncle of Charlie Wright, Kitty Casey.

Contemporary with Miss Cooper's school were two primary schools, one on either side of the river.

Mrs. Thadeus Clark's primary school was held in a house on W. Cayuga Street, where the yellow apartment house now stands, opposite to West Park. Miss Casey also told me about this school, and said that the children learned especially about the bones of the body.

Mrs. Edwin Clark's primary school was held in her home on East 7th and Mohawk Streets. This little school seems to have been a forerunner of the kindergarten. The children marched with flags, and learned to count with toys. Mrs. Clark was the mother of Fred Clark, whom many of you remember. I believe he was a charter member of the Historical Society. Miss Cooper's school closed in 1862.

About 1865 Miss Bennett opened the Young Ladies Finishing School in a little house still standing on the northwest corner of West Second and Oneida Streets. Miss Bennett was a tall, dark, dignified woman, and a warm friend of Miss Seeley. It was largely through Miss Bennett's influence that Remenyi (Roumania), the celebrated Hungarian violinist, visited Oswego -- a red letter day for the city. He visited at the Barry home on West Third Street beyond Utica. Mr. Barry owned the Palladium newspaper and was a prominent citizen. His daughter Alice was encouraged by Remenyi in her dramatic aspirations and went to New York to study, but died just before her appearance on the state. Her brother, Stephen, achieved some prominence on the stage.

Miss Bennett later moved her school to a gray frame house on West Second Street, where the Bond house still stands, occupied now by Mrs. Enches. Among her pupils were:

Miss Lizzie Gordon, who was one of the youngest pupils.

Miss Fanny Pardee, a young sister of Hayden, who attended Miss Cooper's school, and an aunt of Mrs. Kellogg.

Miss Kitty Kenyon, who lived in the house now occupied by Dr. Wallace.

The Misses Malcolm, who lived on the corner of West Seventh and Cayuga Streets. Their mother was a niece of Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, and a granddaughter of General Philip Schuyler, and was brought up by Mrs. Hamilton. She spent much time in the White House.

Miss Louise Wheeler, later Mrs. Carrington Macfarland, and a daughter of Miss Mary Braman who established the Female Seminary.

The Misses Mary and Louise Herrick, whose father owned the Continental elevator and the car-shops. This school disbanded about 1872.

That same year --1872-- Mrs. Emerson R. Hamilton opened her private school for girls. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had both taught in the Academy. They lived in a red brick house directly across the street from the Presbyterian church house on West Sixth St. Mrs. Hamilton retired from the Academy and opened her school on the south side of her home. She had about thirty pupils. Some of them were:

Carrie Herrick, now Mrs. W. D. Wheeler
(Mother of Mrs. Homan Hallock)

Virginia Kingsford, daughter of Thomson Kingsford of cornstarch renown, later Mrs. John D. Higgins

Satie Failing, now Mrs. Allan Poucher

Cora Holbrook, later Mrs. David Page, mother of Alanson Page.
Mary Clark, who lived on West Fifth St., where the Saisselin family now lives.
Nellie Sloan, daughter of George B. Sloan and later Mrs. Danenhower.
Belle Goble, now Mrs. Henry Post.
The Misses Doolittle, whose father established the Old Doolittle House.
Harriette Jenkins, belong to a prominent East side family.
Anna Malcolm, who came here from Miss Bennett's school.
Isabel Silvey, now Mrs. Richard Piez.
Ida King - Kate O'Keefe - now Mrs. P.J. Doyle.
Julia Penfield, who later became Mrs. Hart.
Louise Rowe, sister of the later Louis Rowe.
Lottie DeWitt.
Fanny Ames, whose father built the home now occupied by Mrs. Riggs. She became Mrs. Dewing.
Addie Parmalee, who became Mrs. Fred Johnson.

Younger pupils: Florence Thompson, Helen Sloan, now Mrs. James Merriman, and Jane & Kate Stebbins.

Mr. Hamilton retired from the academy the same year, 1872, and opened a private school for boys at St. James Hall, on the west side of West First Street between Bridge and Oneida Street. In 1875 he bought and rebuilt the house across the street from his home and moved his boys to the first floor of that building.

It was called a military school. The boys wore uniforms and were well prepared for college. There were about twenty-five boys in the school each year.

Some of them were:

Thomas P. Kingsford, John D. Higgins, Elliott Mott, Sr., Rob Sloan, Theodore and Dudley Irwin, William D. Wheeler (father of Mrs. Homan Hallock), Dave Page, Jim and Charlie Wendell, Donald S. Gordon, Frank M. Gordon, Ralph Shepherd (brother of C. Sidney), D. H. Judson, Charlie Judson, Will Pardee, Tom Herrick, Alan Ames, Edward Cullinan, Harry Perry, Fred Johnson, Horace Shedd, John MacSweeney, M. D. Bond, Alfred H. Ames, George Salladin.

Mrs. Hamilton moved her older pupils to the second floor of the new building, forming a high school or finishing class. The younger girls were left on the west side of the street in the red brick house, under the supervision of Mrs. McIlroy. Mrs. McIlroy, an aunt of Alanson Page, later joined the faculty of the State Normal School and was principal of the primary department of the practice school for many years.

There were about twenty girls in the high school department of Mrs. Hamilton's school. Mrs. Hamilton was assisted in her teaching by Miss Durval, who taught French, and by Miss Gilbert. The entire school was known for many years as Hamilton Institute.

Miss Pease School, 1870-1890

Miss Pease had been a governess in the Page family. Thus Mr. Page was much interested in her school and remodelled the house formerly occupied by Miss Bennett's school to meet her needs. The whole lower floor was opened into one large room, with a door at each end. The children used the back door and were taught a proper respect for the front door, which was for adults only. The school of about twenty-five pupils was ungraded. Each pupil took his or her own table and chair, and Miss

Carrie Millison and the Lyons girls, who had real desks, were the envy of the school. The ground where St. Joseph's Church now stands was the playground for the school, and ran to the postoffice building.

For several years Miss Pease taught alone, but later Mrs. Allen, Grace Allen's mother, assisted her. Miss Pease's hobby was English history, and she had made a card game like the game of Authors, which was played daily. On each card was the name of a king, the date of his reign,and the name of his queen, and the events of his reign. The result was that these pupils knew English history from A to Z -- and have never forgotten it. The curriculum also included arithmetic, reading and geography. About 1880 Miss Mary Lathrop joined the faculty and taught English Grammar and French. I am indebted to Mrs. Mary Johnson Dodd for most of this information. Mrs. Kellogg also attended this school and remembers more than anything else the picnics held on the school lawn. Miss Florence Thompson, who was also a pupil here, recalls how the whole school spent alternate Saturday afternoons at the homes of Miss Annie Lyons and Miss Lucy Littlejohn, who lived in the large red brick house on Bronson Street, now owned by Mrs. Charles Doyle. Both of these homes had beautiful conservatories where the children observed plant life, and afterward gathered about the piano to sing -- and how they loved it. Some of the pupils of this school were Mrs. Dodd, Mrs. Kellogg and her sister, Miss Anna Page and Mrs. Leonard Johnson, Miss Alice Barry, Stephen Barry, Miss Kate Bundy, who became Mrs. Dodd, and who always brought her little sister Tumpy to school with her. Tumpy was the pet and also the pest of the school; Miss Florence Thompson, Miss Janie Poucher, Miss Carrie Mollison, Gus Murdock, Harry Morton, who lived in Miss Eggleston's house (now Dr. James Grant in 1960) (Mrs. John E. Cullinan); Laura and Tracy Lyon, Ned and Lan Kellogg, Joe Sloan, Lucy and Kate Richardson, Mattie and Bessie Scott of Fort Ontario and Elizabeth Macfarlane.

This school was contemporary with the Hamilton Institute, and there was more or less good natured rivalry between them. There was much wealth in Oswego at that time and plenty of support for both schools.

Miss Anna Page has written to me about the school as follows:

"My father owned the land from the school to the postoffice wall, which we used for a playground. He put up a stout picket fence to protect us from the public. The unpaved road on Second Street was so heavy with thick mud after rains that consent was obtained from the Common Council to have a walk of stone flag going across in the middle of the block for the children. Mrs. Allen, a daughter of Captain Dobbie on West Fourth Street, and mother of Grace Allen, was assistant teacher, and a great favorite with the children. I remember well my English History, which was taught like the game of Authors. Every date had to be sure. United States History had scant attention, as Miss Pease felt strongly that English History came first. The children would just get their United States History through living in this country. No one every took more pains to simplify lessons to the children. We learned our spelling and reading from letters mounted on paste board about an inch square and each child had a bountiful supply in a box on her table. Miss Pease had many theories. She did not believe in drilling English grammar. This should be taught by ear--nor did she advocate writing from a copy book. Each child should form his own handwriting. We used the old Sheldon Readers. Mattie Scott, daughter of General Scott,who was stationed at the Fort, afterwards taught the children of the Embassy in Washington and found these books most valuable. Miss Pease had an advanced class in English Literature in the afternoon

at her room in the old Whitney house, on the corner of West Fifth and Schuyler Streets. The garden ran way down to Fourth, and here we read Shakespeare on lovely warm afternoons, with Mrs. Straight of the Normal faculty. Miss Pease always put the best before us. I can still smell the lilacs in that garden, and a riot of other sweet things too -- and I find myself laughing over the many funny things which happened long ago."

The Mrs. Straight of whom Miss Page writes, was Willard Straight's mother. His parents both taught in the State Normal School.

Mr. Jack Downey tells me that he attended three different private schools in Oswego. The first was an East side school on East Second Street, near Mohawk. This school was run by Miss Cropsey and had about 20 pupils, all East Siders. Mr. Downey attended the school from 1880 to 1886, and remembers Mrs. Failing and Will Minor being in his class, also Miss Anna Post, Bertha and Fred Osterhout. At the same time Mr. Downey's older sister attended a school on East Fourth Street run by Miss Burgess. There were about 25 pupils in this school.

Then about 1885 Miss Louise Rowe, whose name I found as a pupil at the Hamilton School, opened a private school in her home on East Third Street, between Albany and Utica Streets. She had 20 pupils, among them Mr. Downey. All three of these schools were contemporary with Miss Pease's school and Hamilton Institute. Private schools seemed to be very much in vogue at that time.

About this same period there was a private summer school opened for one or more seasons in the State Normal School building, known as the Silver School of Music. I have not been able to gather any definite data on this school.

The Hamilton Institute must have closed before 1890, for from 1891 to 1896 a private kindergarten was held in this same building by Miss Parmalee. Among the pupils were Alanson, Ethel and Olive Page, Thomson Kingsford, Elliott Mott, Jr., Kenneth and Katherine McMurrich (now Mrs. Clark Morrison, Jr.) and Isabel Johnson (now Mrs. Stanely Emerick).

In 1895 I attended a private kindergarten held in the parsonage of the Congregational Church by a sister of Mrs. Bacon. Dr. Bacon was then pastor of that church. My only memory of the school was the lovely red circle painted on the floor, and my chagrin at being unable to thread a large tapestry needle with worsted.

Then comes the Oswego Private School, 1893, taught by the late Miss Luella Barnes and Mrs. Louise Craigie. This was held in the Malcolm House, on the corner of West Seventh and Cayuga Street. Madame Grossen taught French and Miss Cynthia Beadle was also on the faculty. Alanson, Ethel and Olive Page, Ruth and Sloan Danenhower, Ethel and Donaldson Sloan, Ruth and Isabel Johnson (Mrs. Luther Mott and Mrs. Stanley Emerick), Elizabeth and Carrington Macfarlane, Kate and Elliott Mott, Jr. (Mrs. Francis Johnson) Katherine and Kenneth McMurrich, Ned Lyon, Nannine Irwin, Virginia and Stanley Emerick, Thomson Kingsford were the pupils. This school burned and then moved for a short time to Christ Church Rectory. It was also held for a season in the McMurrich house where Dr. Wallace now lives. (S.W. corner W. Fifth and Seneca Streets.)

Following this Miss Lida Penfield had a small private school in her home on the corner of West Bridge and Fourth Streets, where Dr. Halsey now lives. She had a class of little girls in the afternoon. This was in 1903 and 1904.

In the fall of 1912 I opened a private kindergarten in the castle. At that time the castle was being used as a summer home for Dr. Stebbins and his family of Rochester, and as a winter home by Dr. Carrington Macfarlane. I had my kindergarten in the same room which the public kindergarten now occupies on the site of The Medical Center facing Montcalm Park. The first year I had 16 pupils; the second 26.

Then Mr. John D. Higgins, who was at the time president of the Board of Education, asked me to open a public kindergarten in the little brown schoolhouse on the corner of West Eighth and Schuyler Streets. The building was at that time very old, housing only the first and second grades, with Miss Minnie Wallace as principal. The rear room was rebuilt to accommodate the kindergarten and proved to be quite ideal. The city bought my equipment and added to it enough more to accommodate the fifty children we had there.

A public kindergarten had been opened a year or two earlier in the Oak Hill School, taught by a Miss Potter. She was not a trained kindergartner and the kindergarten was more of a connecting class. This makes me feel quite justified in stating that the kindergarten in the little old brown school house was the first regular public school kindergarten in Oswego. This little school formed the nucleus of what is now the Castle School.

NECROLOGY 1968

Mrs. M. Helena Heily	May 8	Stroudsburg, Pa.
Grove A. Gilbert	July 12	Fulton
M. Gertrude Johnson		Fulton
Anna Warner Post	August 26	Oswego
J. Elet Milton	December 1	Brewerton
Naomi Ellis