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THIRTY-FIRST PUBLICATION

OF THE

OSWEGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1970

The Phoenix Press
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Phoenix, N.Y.

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Dorothy J. Mott

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DEDICATION

Among families identified with the Oswego County Historical Society, none has been more active through the seventy-five years of its existence than the Motts.

Colonel John T. Mott and his brother, Elliott B. Mott, were charter members of the Society in 1896. The former, a banker, civic leader, was an early vice president, and the latter, also a banker as well as yachting enthusiast, served as its first treasurer and for forty-three years as its curator.

Luther Wright Mott, son of John T. and Alice Wright Mott, joined the Society shortly after his graduation from Harvard in 1896, and during his career as banker and Congressman for thirteen years (and until his death in 1923) was one of its active supporters. His son, in turn, Luther W. Mott, II, when a child manned the halyards at the dedication of the Fort George Monument in Montcalm Park in 1913 and witnessed Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt's dedicatory address. He would later become the treasurer of the Society.

Mrs. Luther W. Mott, Sr. (Ruth Johnson Mott), who served as postmistress of Oswego from 1924-1933, was Chairman of the Committee on Costumes at the colorful bi-centennial celebration of the birth of George Washington in Oswego on February 22, 1932, and appeared in a period gown of blue taffeta "the full skirt being gathered to a tight bodice, which had a bertha of cream lace."

Miss Dorothy J. Mott, daughter of Luther W. and Ruth Johnson Mott, attended local schools and graduated from Antioch College. During World War II she was a Major in the Women's Marine Corps and after completing her graduate work at Columbia University became a member of the college faculty at Oswego. She was later named as Dean of Women and subsequently as Director of Admissions.

She was President of the Oswego County Historical Society during 1966-1967 and has continued to serve as a Vice President. Her tenure was marked by a number of improvements to Headquarters House, including the restoration of furnishings, papering and wiring and by substantial additions to the Society's collections.

In recognition of countless contributions to the work of the society through three generations of activities the Board of Directors dedicates this volume to the Mott family.

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President's Report

The function of a modern historical society is to collect, preserve, to advance, and to disseminate knowledge and information leading to an understanding of the events, trends, personalities, and conditions of life in the past. This role is not performed in a vacuum -- an effective historical organization also must be an educational institution serving its locality through a wide spectrum of activities.

The Oswego County Historical Society has come to grips with a variety of challenges within the past year. The Board of Managers has defined and adopted a comprehensive statement of policies to govern the nature and use of museum collections, a vital and significant step toward inaugurating a practical program for collections management. The appointment of Marjory Allen as the Society's registrar and her subsequent efforts to organize the Society's collections processing procedures and to attack the accumulated backlog of collections materials has accomplished a great deal and yet has only revealed the vast further amount of work to be done in this area.

The general membership has approved a fundamental change in the Society's membership base and dues structures that now provides for business and organized group participation and increased financial support. We face the need for further constitutional revisions to improve our internal administrative and operational structure and study of this challenge is now underway.

The Society has been particularly fortunate in the selection of Douglas and Gretchen Hicks as resident directors. Their efforts in areas of membership processing, mailings, acquisition and recording of contributions, physical maintenance, museum operation, and response to informational inquiries already are notable and we look forward to continued accomplishments in the future.

The periodic publication of mimeographed newsletter is proving an effective means of stimulating membership interest and maintaining contact between meetings. An excellent series of monthly programs arranged by Charles M. Snyder is playing a key role in furthering the scholarly purposes of the Society as well as providing entertaining meetings of wide public appeal. The publication of this Yearbook contain-

ing the papers presented annually before the Society places the organization in the fore of most New York State historical groups.

Volunteer effort evidenced, for example, by Katherine Carter and Mary Snyder together with the gracious ladies of their House Committee enables the Society to add social conviviality to its meetings. Terry Aldrich ably keeps records of the Society's actions while Donald Voorhies adeptly meets the necessities of managing the Society's financies. Frank Sayer, Jr., responds as cheerfully as possible to emergency calls posed by leaking skylights and balky heating systems.

A great debt is owed to each of the other officers and Board members as well as particularly to the Society's past presidents for their counsel, advice, and individual assistance. In the later category Seward W. Salisbury, Dorothy Mott, John C. Birdlebough, Charles M. Snyder, and Anthony M. Slosek deserve special mention.

The long-range needs as well as the day-to-day imperatives of program operation will require additional volunteers and a redoubling of effort to hire a full-time, professionally trained historical society administrator. We also look forward to securing an editor and expanding our publications efforts, striving to improve our museum exhibits and other interpretative services, collecting more of the rapidly disappearing sources that will be needed by future researchers, and undertaking a more active community relations effort throughout Oswego County.

An "on the move" historical society is just as strong as its general membership. The Oswego County Historical Society, along with other leading historical agencies throughout the country, seeks to be a viable force exerting positive influence on our cultural environment. We believe that as America searches for a redefinition of national goals and objectives it is essential the past be used to add perspective to the present and to assist in planning for the future.

With your continued participation and active support the Society will have a firm foothold in that future.

Respectfully submitted,

WALLACE F. WORKMASTER
President

Pontiac:
His Life, His War
And
How It Ended In Oswego

If you can, let your mind travel back almost two hundred years, before this nation was born, to two men sitting under a canopy talking about peace. The two men: Pontiac and Sir William Johnson. They are exchanging wampum belts and short speeches. Then wonder, if you will, how these two so very different men arrived here. I will answer that question by telling you the story of Pontiac and his war.

Before relating to you the annals of the war, we should explore first the conditions present before the outbreak of the war as well as the character of Pontiac. Probably the foremost reason for Pontiac's initiation of this conflict was the bungling of Indian affairs by Sir Jeffrey Amherst. Amherst was a good soldier but he did not understand the Indian mentality.[1] During the rule of the French in North America, presents such as guns, clothing, and food were given to the Indians by them to secure their good will. An alliance with the tribes was not important to the victorious English, however; therefore all gifts were stopped. Many Indian deaths resulted since they had no food or a means of procuring it. This aroused the Indians. The English fur traders were not as benevolent as their French counterparts and often cheated the Indians. Needless to say, the Indians were not altogether happy with them. The last really important reason for discontent among the Indians was the intrusion of settlers who took not only their land but also their best hunting grounds. Small attempts to drive out the English sprang up in the summers of 1761 and 1762, but they were nipped in the bud. Pontiac's resistance in 1763 was the major uprising of that time. The Indian motives can be condensed into three reasons: "first, an amity for the French; second, hostility towards the English;

and third, the hope of plunder."[2] "Truly the mighty Pontiac had well chosen this time for inflaming the tribes to take part in his great conspiracy."[3]

We would be lost if we did not examine the character of the "Red Napoleon." When one studies his personal traits, one does not know where to begin. "Among all the tribes of the continent, personal merit is indispensible to gaining and preserving dignity. Courage, resolution, wisdom, address and eloquence are sure passports to distinction. With all these Pontiac was preeminently endowed and it was chiefly to them urged to their highest activity by vehement ambition that he owed his greatness."[4] In many instances he showed these traits, especially courage and wisdom. Take for example the time he was in the house of his supposed friend, Jacques Baby. "One night at an early point of the siege, Pontiac entered the house of Baby and seated himself at the fire, looking for some time at the embers. At length, he said he had heard that the English had offered the Canadian a bushel of silver for the scalp of his friend. Baby declared that the story was false and assured him that he would never betray him. Pontiac studied his features keenly for a moment and replied, 'My brother has spoken the truth and I will show him I believe him.' So saying, he wrapped his blanket around him and lay like a warrior taking his rest until morning."

There is also an incident concerning the great ranger Robert Rogers. "Rogers from within the stockage of Detroit, sent to his erstwhile comrade of the trail a bottle of brandy. The other Indians warned Pontiac of poison, no white man was to be trusted by any Indian. Pontiac had no such fears. 'It is not possible for this man,' said Pontiac, 'who knows my love for him and who is also sensible of the great favors I have done for him, can think of taking away my life.' And he drank the brandy."[6] Also unlike most Indians he could think in terms of long range strategy and could think and act decisively for a distant goal as well as for the present time.[7] It is said that Pontiac had the definite air of a commander of men. Daring and shrewdness were concrete parts of his personality. To sum up, the faults of this mighty leader were the faults of his people, but his virtues those of the best minds of the white race.

All the factors which were mentioned beforehand set the stage for the war. I will now try to outline the plan and course of the war initiated by Pontiac in 1763. Pontiac's plan was a

simple one. He sent messengers to all the tribes of the areas surrounding the forts of the frontier with war belts and speeches given to them by himself. Pontiac would concentrate most of his forces on Detroit for it held the key to the west and if it fell, the frontier settlements would also collapse. The English might have been overconfident but they also knew the value of Detroit. There, they stationed their best men and officers. All the wilderness forts would be attacked on the same day. Their destruction was to be completed within a given amount of time. Each tribe was to capture the fort nearest them. This avoided the jealousies that often accompanied intertribal activity.

Pontiac himself was to conduct the siege of Detroit. He planned that on May 2nd he would enter the fort with a few chiefs and dance the calumet dance, a token of peace. While there, he would survey the strength of the garrison. The great chief would then ask for another council at which the Indians would attend in force. Under their blankets would be hidden short guns, knives, hatchets, and other weapons. Upon a prearranged signal the Indians would attack and slaughter the garrison. This plan might have succeeded except for two factors. First, it was Major Gladwyn who commanded the post, not Captain Campbell, its previous commander. Gladwyn did not trust the Indians whereas Campbell thought they were his friends. Second, Gladwyn found out about the attack from some unknown source. Unfortunately for Pontiac, the English were not as stupid as he had hoped.

On May 2nd, as planned, Pontiac went to the garrison but found it at arms. As arranged he requested and received his council for the next day, but since the post was ready for a fight, his plan could not be followed through. Instead, Pontiac talked of peace and love in an attempt to allay any fears the British might have of attack from himself. On the next day, May 4th, Pontiac again went to the gates of the fort but was refused admittance. Pontiac threw off the mask of peace and the siege was now on. Surprise, the Indians' biggest weapon in the war, failed to accomplish its work. There was no surprise at Fort Detroit. That day the Indians fired from behind trees, large rocks, and other objects for a full six hours, but to no avail. This was an indication of what was to be expected in the long months ahead.

The fort had easy access to the river and reinforcements came in due time. On July 29th troops came in relief of the fort under the command of Captain Dalzell. Much to the dismay of Major Gladwyn, Dalzell regarded himself as the savior of the besieged garrison. He insisted upon attacking the Indians immediately. So on July 31st at night he launched an attack against the Indians. The Indians, not to be fooled however, ambushed him and his men as they clanked noisily along the road to the bridge at Parents Creek. The Indians slaughtered the raw troops. There are conflicting reports as to how many of Dalzell's men were killed. Some accounts have as many as one hundred dead and some as few as twenty. A more practical number and probably closer to both accounts would state between sixty and seventy killed and forty wounded.[8] The bridge at Parents Creek, after that battle, was renamed Bloody Bridge.

If the war was going slowly at Detroit, elsewhere along the front it was moving along quite nicely. Fort Sandusky fell on May 16th, the commander was captured and the garrison was slaughtered. Fort Miami and Fort St. Joseph shared the same fate as Sandusky the next week. Outanon, Indiana, near the present site of LaFayette, fell on June the 1st. When Presqu'Isle where Erie, Pennsylvania, stands today surrendered, the forts at LeBoeuf and Venango collapsed. At Michillimackinac at the upper end of Lake Michigan, the garrison was captured in a most peculiar way. The fort, second in importance only to Detroit, was celebrating the birthday of King George. The Indians staged a game of baggatoway or lacrosse outside the fort. The officers and men were lounging about outside taking interest in the sport. No one noticed when the game drifted towards the stockade. Over the wall went the ball and in went the Indians. Once inside, the cries of the sport changed to vicious war whoops. Under the blankets of the squaws who were standing nearby were concealed guns, knives, and other weapons. The bloody work was soon finished. Fifteen were killed and a like number captured including the commander, Captain Etherington. Pontiac's master plan was succeeding. If only he could take Detroit.

It is always interesting to note special incidents when writing about such a long war, such as the one which occurred on May 31st. On that day, tiny specks appeared on the horizon. As they drew closer, the people inside the fort

recognized the banner of St. George. The order was given for a salute of welcome to be sounded out. Every ear was strained to catch the reply. But instead of a cannon booming out being heard, there was in its place a war cry. Their worst fears were confirmed. As the convoy drew nearer it was plain to see that it was in the hands of the Indians! The long-awaited provisions and men were to be denied the besieged garrison. One boat did succeed in escaping however and did bring some relief to the fort.

Time was running short for Pontiac. On August 12th, the chief of the Missisaugas, a tribe part of the Ojibway nation, quit the battle. They came late and quit early; typical Indian fighters. Still, Pontiac held the rest of the tribes to the siege for six months. Soon others followed the suit of the Missisaugas. At the end, of the Algonquin, Deleware, Ojibway, Shawnes, Pottowattamie, Miami, and Ottowa nations he began with, only his own Ottowas remained. He made a desperate last appeal to Neon, the ex-French governor in Illinois for help, but he was refused. Since Neon was no longer in power, (the French had signed a formal peace treaty with England), he could not help Pontiac. It is said that if the Iroquois nation had joined Pontiac, he would have won the war and the line from Albany to Oswego would have been cut.[9] It is important to note that it was the waywardness of the Indians that beat him in the end, not the white men. He made however, the greatest contribution to Indian warfare; system and continuity. "There was no wild and unordered conflagration, no flaring up in sporadic and unrelated raids and burnings without controlled purpose."[10] Pontiac's war had ended.

Formal peace negotiations were to be held at Fort Ontario, Oswego. George Croghan, an Irish trader and Indian agent for the British sent Hugh Crawford to Fort Detroit to escort the western chiefs safely to Fort Ontario. Pontiac arrived early in June 1766 at Detroit and waited until the party was ready to sail. The chief became involved in a fight with an Illinois chief and killed him. Perhaps this incident had some bearing on his death three years later. Crawford, Lieut. Jehu Hay, newly appointed commissary for Indian affairs at Detroit, Ellepole Chesne, interpreter, Pontiac, and forty other chiefs comprised the party which left Detroit on or about June 20th.[11] They arrived at Fort Erie on June 27th. The party went by way

of Fort Niagara reaching Fort Ontario on July 18th. Sir William Johnson arrived on July 24th at Oswego.[12]

The congress opened on Thursday morning, July 23rd, 1766. An arbor to keep out the sun was constructed. Along with Johnson, the British representation from the fort included Captain Robert Rogers. Facing them were Pontiac and the Indian chiefs. Johnson opened the proceedings with a speech begging them to be attentive and open-minded. He consoled the Hurons for the death of their chief, Aughstagregi, and symbolically covered his grave with a belt of black wampum. After the formalities the meeting was adjourned.[13]

As in every modern convention, the real diplomacy was done in private meetings with the various chiefs. No record of these meetings, however, was kept. Johnson, at the conferences, deliberately played up to Pontiac with the motive stated by George Croghan to be the undermining of his authority with the western tribes by stirring their jealousies. The next day's meeting was opened by Johnson with more speeches. He exorted them to hold fast the chain of peace and friendship. Pontiac acknowledged with a short speech. Wampam belts and brief speeches were exchanged and Pontiac was submissive in everything to the English. At the next meeting Johnson wound it all up with another speech carrying a theme similar to those of his previous oratories. Pontiac had the honor of the valedictory speech in which he asserted his supreme authority for the last time. Gifts were given to the Indian chiefs including a silver medal on which was written: "A pledge of peace and friendship with Great Britain confirmed in 1766."[14] Johnson left Oswego on July 31st. Here at Oswego Pontiac had spoken in the position of a leader; the king's agent had sought his friendship. This was his last role of consequence. After Oswego he was to lose his influence steadily.

During the years after this great conference, Pontiac passed out of the minds of the English completely. Three years later he turned up in the French village of Cahokia on the east side of the Mississippi River opposite St. Louis. On April 20th, 1769, he was struck down in the street by his assassin, a Peoria Indian.[15] He was murdered by an unexpected assassin as three great men were, almost two hundred years later; President John F. Kennedy, Reverend Martin Luther King, and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Do I dare compare these three great leaders with an uncivilized

savage? Yes, I must, because they all stood up for their ideals and the aspirations of their people even though their specific ideals were different. For them the end came swiftly, yet they are not erased from our memories and what Pontiac did two hundred years ago against the mighty British Empire still lives with us.

In concluding my work on Pontiac I would like to state the reasons why I wrote about this man and this very distant war. To many the answer might be clear. Although the war he started ended at Oswego; it affected not only this area but the whole thirteen colonies of the British domain in America. In order to do this I must tell the causes of this war and the man who brought it about. It would be a great wrong to deny Pontiac his rightful place in the history of the city and county of Oswego.

Footnotes

1 Josephy, Alvin, The Patriot Chiefs. (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), p. 97.
2 Marquis, Thomas, The War Chief of the Ottowas. (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook, and Company, 1915), p. 16.
3 Sweetser, Kate, Book of Indian Braves. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1913), p. 161.
4 Wood, Norman, Lives of Famous Indian Chiefs. (Aurora: American Indian Historical Publishing Company, 1906), p. 122.
5 Ibid., p. 153
6 Britt, Albert, Great Indian Chiefs. (New York: Whittesey House, 1938), p. 97.
7 Josephy, op. cit., p. 99
8 This figure (Seventy killed, forty wounded), was taken from Wood's Lives of Famous Indian Chiefs and represents a more accurate account of the men killed and wounded.
9 Marquis, op. cit., p. 10.
10 Britt, op. cit., p. 101.
11 Peckham, Howard, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 288.
12 History of Oswego County, New York. (L.H. Everets and Company, 1877), p. 37.
13 Peckham, op. cit., p. 290.
14 Marquis, op. cit., p. 134.
15 The Peorias are part of the Illinois Confederation.

William Duer Of Oswego

Whig Promise And The Union, 1848 - 1850

William Duer, who concerns us in this paper, owes much of his later personality and character to his family background. During the Cromwellian Wars, a Cavalier by the name of DeVere left England and sought refuge in Antigua, West Indies, and changed his name to Duer. His son, John, returned to England but still operated the family estates in Antigua.

John's son, William, joined the military and was sent as an aide-de-camp to Lord Clive in India. Because of ill health he left the Army, returned to England and with a modest fortune from his father he entered business. Needing to provide lumber to fulfill a contract for spars and masts with the British Navy he came to New York in 1768. Through William Alexander, self proclaimed Lord Stirling, he met Philip Schuyler and purchased land on the upper Hudson. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War he became an American and eventually became a Deputy Adjutant General of New York troops with the rank of Colonel. In 1779, he married Catherine Alexander, daughter of Lord Stirling. After the war, he became a land speculator and associated with Alexander Hamilton as his assistant on the Treasury Board.[1]

This William's sons, John Alexander and William Alexander, both became lawyers. William Alexander went to New Orleans and established a law practice there. John Alexander Duer entered the law in New York and thru the old ties with Alexander Hamilton became involved in land speculation in Oswego. He specialized in Marine Insurance

Law and was a jurist of some international recognition. He organized the Oswego law firm of Duer and Babcock and married Anna Bunner of Oswego.[2]

John Alexander Duer possessed land in the Hamilton Gore in Oswego. The gore was a triangle which included all land on the east side of the Oswego River south of East Bridge Street to the city line. The apex of the triangle extended into the present town of Scriba. Through inheritance and purchase John and later his son, William, had large holdings in the gore.[3]

William Duer was born in New York City, May 25, 1805, the son of Anna Bunner and John Alexander Duer. Little is known about his early life but he did study at Columbia graduating in 1824. He was admitted to the bar in the same year and began practice in New York City. In 1832, he moved to New Orleans to join his uncle, William Alexander, in practice. Besides the many legal and business opportunities, William enjoyed strong social connections with many important families in New Orleans. His aunt had married Beverly Chew, President of the Brand Bank of the United States at New Orleans, and William subsequently married his cousin, Lucy Chew.[4]

In 1835, Duer came to Oswego to take over management of the family land holdings. He also succeeded his father in the firm of Duer and Babcock. This was at a time of land boom in Oswego and property values had advanced 50% to 75% at this time.[5] Politics beckoned to the young man.

The Whigs were the party of property and talents. In the North under Daniel Webster they carried on the nationalist tradition of Alexander Hamilton. The manufacturing interests, merchants and bankers went Whig. The anti-Masons, the nativist and the anti-slavery followers were also absorbed. A large number of Westerners were attracted by Henry Clay and the hope of doing something about the public lands. In the South, the Whigs were the party of gentility and property, cotton and sugar planters, owning over two-thirds of all the slaves. Only in America could a party of such diversity have been formed and here William Duer found his political home.

In 1839, Duer was elected village trustee along with John B. Edwards, Gerrit Smith's Oswego agent.

During the campaign of 1840, the Whig party committed itself only in opposition to the Democrats. Duer was

among the Whig leaders locally and won election to the State Assembly. While he only served one term there, he was known for his many orations and his astuteness in debate. While in Albany, his friendship with Thurlow Weed was strengthened, but this was not to last long.[6]

In 1844, Duer served as a delegate to the Whig National Convention and in 1845 was appointed district attorney for Oswego County.

In 1846, Duer was one of twenty three Whig representatives elected to Congress. Duer condemned President Polk for the Mexican War feeling that he had "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally" precipitated the conflict.[7] He felt that Congress could regulate slavery in the territories, but was not anxious for any acquisition on Mexican territory.

At this point it might be wise to pause briefly and examine what was occurring in the rest of the world and in the rest of this country. On the European scene the Irish were experiencing rebellion and there were great appeals made to the Irish already in this country for aid to those back home. The Italians were in controversy with the Pope and had succeeded in imprisoning the Pope within the Vatican. Queen Victoria sat upon the British throne with all its power and majesty.

Back home, the North-South controversy simmered. President Polk following on the heels of President Tyler had engaged the country in the Mexican War, a war brought about primarily by Southern interests in the annexation of Texas. This in turn would promote the question of the extension of slavery into new territories.

In the midst of all this the National parties were doing their best to remain national. The Nativists and the Abolitionists were weak and had found it necessary to unite with others if they were to win anything at all. The Democrats were almost hopelessly split into two factions, the Hunkers and the Barnburners, over the extension of slavery. The Whigs, despite remarkable leadership, had never quite managed to make the transition to a totally effective party. They never seemed to find a single compelling purpose that would unite the Eastern capitalists, the prosperous Western farmers, and the great Southern planters. The Whig party found its most positive purpose in the dogma of the preservation of the Union and it is probably no exaggeration that the party died because it produced the Compro-

mise of 1850 in order to defeat the mid-century secession movement.[8]

Locally, the Whigs were in control of the city offices and the party was well situated under the leadership of Henry Fitzhugh. Dewitt C. Littlejohn was beginning his ascendency in politics and was in fact to be elected mayor of the city in 1849. Prosperity flourished here and throughout the county. William Duer's position was very strong both with the party and the people and even though it cannot be determined with any certainty where he lived or whether his family came here with him, his own personal popularity cannot be underestimated. And so I would like to pick up the thread of Duer's story in so far as I have discovered it here at the election of 1848.

Congress adjourned late in August in 1848 and the politicians hurried to their homes to prepare for the upcoming election campaign. The national Whig Convention had already been held and had selected Zachary Taylor, recent hero of the Mexican War, as their Presidential nominee and Millard Fillmore of New York as the Vice Presidential nominee. Across the country Rough and Ready Clubs sprung into existence to aid the cause and indeed Duer was a founding member of the first one in Alexandria, Virginia.[9]

Duer returned to his district in early September speaking to the Utica Rough and Ready Club on September 7 exhorting them to support Taylor[10] and then on to Oswego where on September 12 he spoke to the largest rally ever convened in the Market House. His oratorical ability was unsurpassed. In his speech Duer demonstrated to the satisfaction of all that Taylor was a Whig in all ways. The nominee had pledged himself to support either the Wilmot Proviso or the Ordnance of 1787 should Congress so desire and so the only question for all Whigs to consider was this - was Taylor an honest man? - "and this can be demonstrated and is universally conceded by all who knew him." Duer spoke for two hours and received tremendous applause throughout.[11]

For reasons known only to himself Duer at this time announced his decision not to seek re-election. Actually he had made the decision earlier and had let it be known to his friends and supporters who paid no attention to it and continued promoting him for a second term.[12] It was Madison County's turn to select the nominee and perhaps he was

merely making it easier for them to do so. Whatever the purpose when the Whig Convention of the 23rd District met in Syracuse it nominated Duer despite his public wish not to run again. In fact it was the Madison County Whigs who asked the unanimous nomination proclaiming as they did so "the high confidence in which Mr. Duer is held" because of the able manner he had demonstrated during the past term.[13]

Much of this expressed confidence in Duer was due to the work he had done on behalf of the Reciprocal Trade Bill between Canada and the United States, but the campaign he waged in 1848 touched little on this subject. His own election was relatively secure and so he stumped mainly for Taylor.

In Washington, Duer had already addressed the House on the problem of the extension of slavery. He was opposed to it, and felt that Congress could legislate on this matter.[14] And so Duer devoted his energies to ensuring the election of Taylor by demonstrating Taylor's pledges and statements on the slavery issue - no easy matter since Taylor was a Southerner and a slaveholder. It is interesting to examine the wording of a Duer election notice.

> Remember that all that has been done for freedom and free soil has been done by the Whig Party, against the party now calling itself the free soil party.
>
> Remember that Wm. Duer made an able speech in the House of Representatives in favor of the Bill to prohibit slavery in the newly acquired territories.
>
> He has already done as much as Judge Nye (his opponent for Congress) promises to do.
>
> Our candidate is a gentleman, a scholar, an able and experienced legislator, a man whose private character is above reproach.
>
> Such a one is our nominee for Congress.[15]

And come election day the Taylor-Fillmore ticket found victory as did the Hon. William Duer who returned to Washington for his second term.

On March 5, 1849, Zachary Taylor was inauguarated as President of the United States. He came into office with one major problem on the horizon. The treaty ending the Mexican War had left the United States in possession of new territories in the southwest. Was slavery going to be allowed in this area and how was the growing problem going

to be solved? In April of 1849, Taylor sent Thomas Butler King to San Francisco to start the ball rolling toward California statehood. In August, in a speech he made in Mercer, Pennsylvania, while on a junket through Pennsylvania and New York, Taylor had clearly stated that he opposed the extension of slavery in the West. By November, the President was encouraging New Mexico to apply for statehood and sent George A. McCall as his agent to aid in the preparation of the constitution.[16]

The culmination of all these efforts came in the annual message delivered in December to the Congress. In it, Taylor proposed his two point plan for the newly acquired territories. Point one was the admission of California to statehood. Point two was the consideration of the New Mexican territory to statehood. The situation of the extension of slavery was to be left to the people of the territories when they wrote their state constitutions. This would mean that the Wilmot Proviso would not need to be discussed any further leaving the way open to the North and the South to preserve the Union. The strategy was that since it was known that California definitely and New Mexico probably would exclude slavery, the plan would appeal to the anti-slavery men of the North and since the South would not be called upon to swallow the Proviso the "National" Whigs and Democrats would favor passage to preserve the Union.[17] Taylor had not anticipated the ferocious reaction his plan would meet in both the North and the South.

In another matter, that of political patronage particularly as it affected New York State, Taylor had proceeded quite innocently to follow the wishes of Thurlow Weed, the Whig party boss who had helped engineer his nomination, and William H. Seward, the outspoken anti-slavery advocate, former New York Governor, and newly elected Senator. Taylor's vice president Millard Fillmore of New York, received scarcely a nod in this direction.

Fillmore was deeply angered by this but realized that the blame lay not with Taylor but with Weed. By the fall of 1849 Fillmore was busy setting his house in order. He surrounded himself with a group of young men who held his views on national problems. These men represented most districts of the state and aided greatly in putting together a coalition of upstate Whigs, the Whig Central Committee of New York City, and the concerned New York City merchants. With this group Fillmore was able to strengthen

his position.[18]

William Duer was one of the young men recruited by Fillmore. Duer remained relatively quiet during 1849. The death of his four year old daughter in December of 1848 had caused him great sorrow and this plus his own illness early in 1849 had caused him to miss sessions of the House in which the Wilmot Proviso was debated and critical votes taken. Congress adjourned in March and the new session, the 31st, convened in November. Duer spent most of the year at his Georgetown residence. There is no record of his returning to Oswego.

The clouds of opposition to Taylor's proposal gathered increasingly in the first half of 1850. It was evident that there was little hope of passage and the Union would surely be split. Many Northerners insisted that the Wilmot Proviso had to be included in the plan and this just made the whole plan even more repulsive to the South.

In May, Henry Clay brought forth his Compromise. It consisted of five parts, the admission of California as a free state, territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, settlement of the Texas border dispute, the abolition of the slavery trade in the District of Columbia, and the fugitive slave bill. A light spread slowly on the whole problem for here was a possibility to provide for the new territories and still preserve the Union.

In January of 1850, Duer's attitude toward slavery had been described in this manner.

> In its firmness and in its kindness also, it deserves the respect of his constituents and the imitation of all his Northern colleagues who, while they love freedom, regard as the apple of their eye, the Union of these States.[19]

Later in the month Duer wrote at length concerning his views on the territorial problem. In his words all the Northern Whigs wanted was for the new territory to be free with no extension of slavery. There need be no agitation of the slavery issue in Congress since the people of the territories should decide their own fate.

> Standing upon the platform of Freedom, the mission of the Whig Party is charged with the preservation of this Union, in which is bound up the dearests interests, and the most cherished hopeof humanity.[20]

This letter attracted much publicity and was printed in Weed's Albany Evening Journal.

In April, Duer spoke at length in the House on the territorial question. In this speech he agreed with the President's policy to allow the people of the territories to decide the question of slavery in their own constitutions. In fact Duer felt that this method was demanded by the spirit of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Mexico had excluded slavery from these territories. How could this country do less? This speech was well received and attracted much editorial comment in the Northern and Border states.[21]

During the month of June, Duer brought his own bill to the House as a measure to be considered if the bills in the Senate failed. Simply stated Duer proposed three items: first, the settlement of the Texas boundary, second, authorize the people of New Mexico and Utah to set up state governments and write their own constitutions and, third, admit New Mexico to statehood immediately and Utah when the population was sufficient. California was not included in his measures since it should be considered before all else. In no way was this to be considered support of Clay's Compromise since he still stood firm on Taylor's policy.[22]

It is difficult to come to terms here with Duer's position since he apparently associated himself with Fillmore on the importance of preserving the Union and yet stands so strongly for Taylor's measures, the very thing which seemed about to tear that Union apart. Was he playing both sides? Frankly, he hardly seems the type. Be that as it may by July of 1850 Duer stood firm on Taylor's policy.

By July 9, 1850, however, Zachary Taylor was dead and Millard Fillmore stood in his place. After a brief recess in respect for the dead Taylor Congress returned to work. Taylor's policy was as dead as he since Fillmore had made it known that he favored Clay's Compromise.

Duer was ill the better part of July causing him to be absent a good deal from the House. It is therefore difficult to know when he switched his support to the Compromise but it must be assumed that Fillmore's appeal for unity in the Whig party in order to preserve the Union struck home.

In any event by August 17, 1850, all but one section of the Compromise Bill had passed the Senate and that section passed the following week. In the House Duer spoke in defense of Fillmore saying that the President's messages concerning the Compromise were well timed and wise in their

application; they could only produce harmony and strengthen the bonds of the Union.[23]

The Compromise measures passed the House and Duer wrote to his constituents concerning its passage. He favored its passage and voted for all the parts except Utah. No one could undo this work and hope to attach the Wilmot Proviso to it anymore; he argued, but there should be no concern over this since the area was not conducive to slavery.

> It is time there should be peace. The question is settled, let it rest. The wounds are not yet deep;... Let us return to our nationality; and laying aside the cries of the North and the South, rally one and for all the Union and our common country.[24]

In the same letter Duer says. "...the close of my present term must terminate my connection with you as your Representative in Congress", and this time he meant it.

But before he lay down the task there would be one final burden. The Whig State Convention was to be held in Syracuse on September 26 and across the nation it was looked upon as a test of Fillmore's strength now that the Compromise had passed. The New York legislators had split evenly on the Compromise. Now would Fillmore be able to heal wounds and contain the Weed-Seward faction that had run rampant during the Taylor days. They, of course, were determined to cross Fillmore if they had the opportunity. Hopes were high, however, that Fillmore would be successful.

> ...and we look to their wise and prudent counsels for moderation and harmonious proceedings in the nomination of unexceptional candidates and the erection of a platform wide enough for the whole Whig party, without requiring from any branch of the party, humiliating concessions or abandonment of principle,...[25]

Duer arrived directly from Washington where he had spent much time with Fillmore drawing up the set of resolutions which would become the party platform. He and the other Fillmore men had been directed by the President to maintain good relations with Weed and Seward and the convention should say or do nothing offensive to any faction. If, however, Weed refused to cooperate the convention must assure the nation that New York Whigs did not stand for the "higher law" doctrine.[26]

The Convention opened on the appointed day and by

afternoon Francis Granger had been named permanent chairman of the convention. On taking the chair he referred to the 1848 campaign and to their dead leader. He admitted that there were differences of opinion but that the Whig party could be sustained only by the adherence to Whig principles, to the principles which governed the Whig party of the state and the nation. These statements were met with loud cheering and all seemed to be going well.[27]

The group adjourned to reconvene that evening. Duer reported for the Resolutions Committee. The platform appeared to be met with utmost equanimity while it was being read. But then the fireworks began. Immediately, as Duer finished reading, a motion was made to table the resolutions and proceed with the nominations. Duer attempted to argue for passage of the resolutions first, stating that they were compromise resolutions, "and if those resolutions are disturbed, we are at large, and no one can tell where we shall land."[28] There was no much confusion by now in the Hall that the Convention adjourned for the day taking no action either on the platform or the nominations.

The next morning Duer still met with no success and so the platform was tabled while Washington Hunt was nominated for governor and William J. Cornwell, of Cayuga County, for lieutenant governor.

Immediately thereafter the platform was taken up and read again. At this point, Mr. Cornwell, the new nominee for lieutenant governor and a Seward man, proposed a set of three substitute resolutions. The one of greatest offense gave thanks of the Whig Party to William Seward for representing the views of New York so well in Congress.[29] This was a most devisive action. Duer's resolutions had gone overboard to not offend, and here it was - all for naught.

It proved impossible to unite the factions and when the final vote was taken Weed and Seward won their gamble. Granger then remarked that the convention business was ended and laying down his gavel he strode from the hall followed by the administration supporters.[30]

Unity was shattered and though Granger's action was a mere tingling of glass it laid portent to the future, for in ten short years the Whig party would be dead and the Union struck asunder. The great Whig promise embodied by men such as Fillmore and Duer managed for the moment to hold the Union together, but in the long run events were removed from their hands and all their work comes to naught when

secession finally occurs.

After the break in the Whig party Duer became the focal point locally for attacks upon the Fugitive Slave Act. He did not seek re-election to Congress and Fillmore subsequently sent him as United States minister to Chile where he served for two years, returning to San Francisco in 1854, and to Oswego in 1859 where he now joined the Constitutional Union Party and supported John Bell of Tennessee in the 1860 election. He campaigned in the county for the Fusion ticket taking a great deal of abuse. In his speeches he pleaded for harmony, warning that votes for the Republican party would be votes for war.

After the 1860 election Duer retired from politics although he did use his oratorical abilities to help recruit volunteers from the county for the war effort.[31]

In 1863 or 1864, Duer left Oswego for a life of retirement at New Brighton, Richmond County, New York, the original family home where he died suddenly in 1879.

By his ties to the New York City merchants, the Northern land holders, and the Southern aristocracy, Duer would have found it difficult to be other than a Nationalist Whig. While he opposed the spread of slavery his legal training required him to do everything possible to avert the destruction of the Union. He would have considered any compromise in order to maintain party and national unity. And so in this vein the politician from Oswego became one of Fillmore's right hand men in the Major issue of his day.

Footnotes

1 Joyce. "William Duer of Oswego." pp. 91-93.
2 Ibid, p. 93.
3 Ibid, p. 96.
4 Ibid, p. 94.
5 Ibid, p. 96.
6 Ibid, p. 98.
7 Snyder, Oswego From Buckskin to Bustles. p. 127
8 Binkley. American Political Parties. pp. 172-180
9 Oswego Commercial Times. July 3, 1848
10 Ibid, September 7, 1848.
11 Ibid, September 13, 1848.
12 Ibid, September 28, 1848.
13 Ibid, October 4, 1848.
14 Ibid, August 25, 1848.

15 Ibid, October 30, 1848.
16 Hamilton. Zachary Taylor. pp. 203-228.
17 Ibid, pp. 254-259.
18 Rayback. Millard Fillmore. P. 211.
19 Oswego Commercial Times. January 8, 1850.
20 Ibid, January 21, 1850.
21 Ibid, April 16, 1850.
22 Ibid, June 15, 1850 and June 21, 1850.
23 Ibid, August 19, 1850.
24 Ibid, September 16, 1850.
25 Ibid, September 26, 1850.
26 Rayback. Millard Fillmore. pp. 258-259.
27 Oswego Commercial Times. September 27, 1850.
28 Ibid, September 30, 1850.
29 Rayback, Millard Fillmore. p. 260
also Oswego Commercial Times. Sept. 30, 1850.
30 Rayback, Millard Fillmore. p. 260.
also Oswego Commercial Times. Sept. 30, 1850.
31 Churchill, Landmarks of Oswego County. p. 176.

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State University College at Oswego. Unpublished Collection of Fillmore Papers.

Old Post Offices In Oswego County

Oswego County's postal history begins officially with the erection of the county March 1, 1816, and at that time there were in operation six post offices. These offices were Constantia, Mexico, Oswego, Oswego Falls, Scriba, and West Mexico. The local postal system was of course part of the U.S. Post Office Department and this system had its beginnings much earlier.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first British Colonial postal service was created in Boston by a resolution of the Massachusetts General Court on November 5, 1639, for the purpose of transmitting overseas letters. This first postal action occurred at the house of Richard Fairbanks. Posts for carrying letters in and between the several colonies developed later. It was on January 1, 1673 that the first inter-colonial post was inaugurated between Massachuetts, New York and Connecticut. In 1692 the British Crown granted to Thomas Neale in England a patent for postal service in all the North American colonies. At the request of Andrew Hamilton, Neale's deputy in America, the American Colonial and Provincial Legislatures of New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania passed acts between Nov. 11, 1692, and May 10, 1694, establishing posts which ran from Portsmouth (or Piscataqua) in New Hampshire to the James River in Virginia. In 1707 the Crown repurchased the Neale patent and operated the posts in the colonies as a branch of The British Post Office until these posts were

closed during the Revolution.

American Continental Congress and Confederation Period

1774 - As the struggle for independence approached, a new post was organized by William Goddard of Baltimore with funds donated by "Friends of Freedom" and operated under their patronage. This was an independent operation.

1775 - The Second Continental Congress passed a postal act on July 26. Benjamin Franklin, who had served as Associate Deputy Postmaster General for the British North American colonies from 1753 to 1774, was appointed Postmaster General by the Congress. The offices and routes established gradually superceded those of the British postal service, until the Tory influence was no longer in control of civil post offices.

1778 - The posts were operated under the Articles of Confederation adopted by the thirteen colonies on July 9.

1783 - The Treaty of Peace was signed and by this agreement all British operations were to cease. The British troops however did not leave Oswego until 1796. The only correspondence emanating from the "FORT" would have been military mail and it is unlikely that postal markings or handstamps were used.

Oswego County's first post offices.

Constantia: This office was established as Rotterdam on January 1, 1798. John Meyer was appointed first postmaster and was succeeded by John Wirth the following year. Both these men were in the employ of George Scriba. Mr. Burnet Dundas was the postmaster when the name was changed to Constantia. The approximate spot where the original building stood is very near the present location and still on Scriba lands.

Mexico: This office as was Constantia, was formerly in the County of Oneida. Calvin Tiffany was the first postmaster when it was established on July 1, 1813, and at that time his friend John Dundas was the postmaster at Constantia.

Oswego: Mr. Joel Burt was appointed the first postmaster as well as customs collector, when this office was established October 7, 1806. Records of the National Archives indicate Oswego as an office in Oneida County (erected Mar. 15, 1798) however, local literature has the post office in the post hamlet of Oswego and on the West side of the river. In as much as the present Town of Oswego, and the "west side" were at that time (1806) in the Military Tract, in environs of the mouth of Oswego River, the future village appears to have been considered in Oneida County. County history mentions an Indian runner who carried the mail to Syracuse (Salina) about three times a week. Correspondence of Postmaster Burt in 1811 indicated a two-week delay of mails from Salina. It seems our Post Office Department was already busy with 'postal improvement'.

Oswego Falls: This post office was established June 2, 1810 and the first postmaster was Noah A. Whitney.

Scriba: This office was established July 1, 1812, with the first appointment to Jeheil Stone. The post office was closed September 30, 1900.

West Mexico: This office was established January 19, 1813, with Joseph Bailey the first Postmaster. The office was renamed to "New Haven" officially on Christmas - Dec. 25, 1819.

Redfield: This post office also was originally in Oneida County. It was established March 22, 1807.

These are the post offices present when the County of Oswego was erected. The first was at Constantia, then Oswego followed in the next year by Redfield. Oswego was the largest and became the county seat; political influence causing Pulaski to share this honor although Pulaski did not have a post office until 1853.

COST:

Receiving a letter in the early nineteenth century at times was costly as the recipient often paid the postage. Compulsory prepayment of postage was not required until 1855 and the rate was determined by the number of pieces of paper until 1845. The minimum charge was 6¢ from 1792 to 1845 for each piece, if it wasn't carried more than 30 miles, then the rate went up. The British influence affected the

letter rate as it was not at all unusual to trade in shillings - the 25¢ rate (one shilling) was required for 'over 450 miles' and this was prorated down so that one half shilling or 12½¢ paid the 100-150 miles. The War of 1812 was costly as are all wars and the postal rates were increased 50% from 2/1/1815 until 3/31/1816, when the former rate was reestablished.

Discontinued Post offices in the County:

Amboy Post Office was established 10/20/1832, Julian Carter was the first postmaster. The named was changed to Cartersville 12/12/1850.

Amboy Centre, established 12/10/1849, Johnathan Randall first postmaster; named changed to Amboy Center Dec. 1893 and discontinued August 15, 1910. George Sergeant last postmaster.

Arthur, established 8/31/1880, Bryon Meyers, first postmaster, service discontinued 8/12/1904.

Bowens Corners, established 1/10/1859, discontinued 10/31/1906.

Boylston, established 3/18/1852. Luke Wells first postmaster, discontinued 12/18/1867.

Boylston Centre, established 2/4/1869, first postmaster was Abraham Snyder, discontinued 6/30/1903 and Ann Snyder was the final postmaster.

Brook, established 5/4/1894, Grover L. Miller first postmaster. Office discontinued 6/15/1904.

Bundy's Crossing, established 3/20/1871, first postmaster was E.B.McCulloch, discontinued July 14, 1906.

Butterfly, established 1/31/1828, first postmaster was John Parsons, discontinued 6/15/1904.

Cartersville, established 12/12/1850 and discontinued on July 5, 1865. The first postmaster was Robert G. Carter.

Catfish, established 7/9/1877 and discontinued 10/15/1903. The first postmaster was Harry A. Wyant.

Checkered House, established 7/19/1850, first postmaster was Samuel Crosby. The name was changed to Kasoag 12/30/1850.

Clifford, established 1/26/1883, first postmaster was Allen Merriam. Office discontinued 2/15/1908.

Colosse, established 12/3/1821, first postmaster was Rufus Tiffany. (This p. o. was formerly Four Corners.) The Colosse post office closed 4/30/1938.

Constantia Centre, established 10/2/1849, Homer Hays was first postmaster, closed 6/30/1902.

Daysville, established 4/8/1868, first postmaster was Isaac Schermerhorn, post office closed 9/30/1907.

Demster, established 7/13/1883, Olcott Woodworth was first postmaster, office closed 12/31/1942.

Dexterville, opened 4/29/1875, first postmaster was Lester C. Wright, post office closed 7/14/1906.

Dugway, this post office opened 10/12/1850, first postmaster was John Kellogg, closed office 6/30/1903.

East Boylston, opened 8/12/1869, the first postmaster was Horace A. Barker, the office was closed 8/7/1882.

East Oswego. This office according to postal records was opened on 12/26/1828 and closed on 12/29/1828! It is very possible that the postmaster appointed, William S. Maynard, never took office. There was a ferry to cross the river, Oswego had a growing population, but she had officially received the name "Oswego," and to be so called forever by state law. The first bridge was built at this time and this too may have helped determine the end to East Oswego.

East Palermo, opened 4/25/1862, first postmaster was J. Campbell, office closed 2/15/1908.

East Parish, opened 2/10/1851, first postmaster was Guy B. Comstock, office closed 3/16/1854.

East Sandy Creek, opened 3/3/1865, first postmaster was Julius S. Robbins, discontinued under this name 9/12/1870 and changed to Lacona.

Fairdale, opened 4/13/1893, first postmaster John Forsyth, closed 2/21/1900.

Four Corners, opened 3/26/1817, first postmaster Joseph Torrey, discontinued under this name 12/3/1821, and changed to Colosse.

Fernwood, opened 7/26/1899, first postmaster Fred B. Rich. changed from South Richland ('69).

Fraicheur, opened 5/24/1892, first postmaster Juliette Phillips, discontinued 9/30/1902.

Fruit Valley, opened 7/7/1879, first postmaster N. K. Hammond, discontinued 6/15/1905.

Gayville, opened 6/21/1880, first postmaster D. Lamereaxx, discontinued 11/14/1903.

Gilberts Mills, opened 4/12/1847, first postmaster Andrus Gilbert, discontinued 6/15/1904.

Granby, opened 3/6/1882, first postmaster Peter Schenck, discontinued 2/18/1841.

Granby Center, opened 11/5/1851, first postmaster W. F. Ensign, discontinued 7/14/1906.

Greenboro, opened 3/2/1892, first postmaster D. J. Thorpe, closed 9/15/1908.

Greenborough, opened 12/5/1843, first postmaster John Corey, on 3/22/1892 changed to Greenboro.

Hannibal Center, opened 7/14/1849, first postmaster was A. Hulett, closed from 7/11/1893 to 7/14/1906.

Hastings Centre, opened 4/15/1851, first postmaster was J. G. Parkhurst, closed 2/29/1908.

Hinmansville, opened 9/28/1843, first postmaster N. Coburn, closed 2/15/1908.

Howardville, opened 6/21/1875, first postmaster Sheldon Boorn, closed 12/15/1902.

Hulls Corners, opened 7/2/1836, first postmaster Burr Hull, named changed to So. Hannibal.

Ingalls Crossing, opened 3/16/1870, first postmaster W. F. Ingall, closed 6/30/1903.

Jerry, opened 2/2/1885, first postmaster Harvey A. Smith, closed 5/28/1904.

Kasoag, opened 12/30/1850, first postmaster Richard Dodge, closed 4/30/1904.

Kinney 4 Corners, opened 12/23/1826, first postmaster James Martin, Jr., closed 11/30/1904.

Lansing, opened 9/15/1871, Amasa Jones first postmaster, office closed 7/14/1906.

Learneds, opened 5/9/1826, first postmaster C. H. Learned, closed 12/18/1833

Lindseyville, opened 8/30/1839, first postmaster W. F. Hudson, office closed 9/9/1843.

Little France, opened 2/7/1876, first postmaster was C.W. Pattet, closed 6/15/1904.

Loomis Corners, opened 5/16/1821, first postmaster was Hastings Curtis, discontinued 12/7/1822. (C.S.)

Maple Hill, opened 8/22/1864, first postmaster was Ezra Thompson, discontinued 7/23/1874.

Molino, opened 12/20/1853, first postmaster Eli Strong, discontinued 5/19/1887.

Morse, opened 5/14/1891, first postmaster James Jones, discontinued 3/31/1894.

Mount Pleasant, opened 7/14/1871, first postmaster Joel Wright, closed 6/30/1903.

Murray, opened 3/1/1822, first postmaster G. Woodworth. (The National Archive records have most likely erred here.)

New Centerville, opened 1/24/1852, first postmaster was Uri Salisbury, closed 3/15/1914.

North Boylston, opened 6/8/1901, first postmaster Geo. W. Rudd, closed 6/30/1903.

North Constantia, opened 1/17/1878, Orris Harrington was first postmaster, closed 11/14/03.

North Hannibal, opened 8/7/1867, first postmaster was Rufus Day, closed 5/10/1907.

North Scriba, opened 7/22/1856, first postmaster was Henry D. Dubois, closed 8/15/1906.

North Volney, opened 1/25/1859, first postmaster was John Campbell, office closed 7/14/1906.

Oswego Centre, opened 8/7/1867, first postmaster Andrew Fisk, discontinued 4/30/1913.

Oswego Falls, opened 6/2/1810, first postmaster Noah A. Whitney, closed 2/26/19 ?

Palermo, opened 1/7/1828, Lovewell Johnson, first postmaster, closed 3/31/1910.

Pine Ridge, opened 9/13/1837, Calvin Seeley first postmaster, office closed 2/7/1840.

Port Ontario, opened 8/21/1837, first postmaster was Robert Nichols, office discontinued 6/30/1902.

Prattham, opened 4/19/1878, Wm. F. Everts first postmaster, office closed 11/29/1902.

Rickard, opened 2/15/1886, Josiah Rickard first postmaster, office closed 6/15/1904.

Roosevelt, opened 9/14/1831, first postmaster was John Curtis, Jr., office closed 8/16/1851.

Sala, opened 5/5/1893, Jesse Bracy was first postmaster, office discontinued 5/31/1904.

Salmon River, opened 4/3/1839, A.R. Angell was first postmaster, office closed 6/30/1903.

Sand Bank, opened 6/28/1825, Wm. Abbott was the first postmaster. Name was changed to Altmar on 4/16/1895.

Scriba, opened 7/1/1812 with Neil Stone first postmaster. Office closed 9/30/1900.

Seneca Hill, opened 9/15/1855, Almon C. Clark was first postmaster. Office closed 9/1/1859.

Six Mile Creek, opened 7/2/1836 with John Hall as the first postmaster. Changed to Hinmansville in 1843.

Smartville, opened 11/14/1893, first postmaster was Theophols Leanor. Office closed 6/30/1903.

South Albion, opened 7/29/1845, Richard Robinson was first postmaster. Office closed 9/30/1902.

South Granby, opened 12/4/1849, Emma H. Turner first postmaster, closed 1/31/1920.

South Hannibal, opened 7/24/1855, Ransford Case first postmaster, closed 7/14/1906.

South New Haven, opened 3/13/1877, Geo. H. Patten was first postmaster, closed 8/31/1904.

South Richland, opened 2/13/1844, Stephen Tinker first postmaster, office closed 7/26/1899.

South Scriba, opened 10/26/1869, Henry H. Jones was first postmaster, office closed 7/14/1906.

South West Oswego, opened 8/17/1850, Simon G. Place was first postmaster, office closed 1/31/1905.

Spruce, opened 8/2/1837 with Henry Jones as first postmaster and office closed 1/25/1844.

Spruse, opened 5/20/1891, Geo. W. Rudd was first postmaster. Changed to No. Boylston in 1891.

Texas, opened 4/16/1839, first postmaster was Valentine Parker. Office closed 5/15/1905.

Union Settlement, opened 6/7/1844 with Silas Penoyer as first postmaster. Office closed 3/24/1865.

Union Square, opened 12/18/1823, Avery Skinner as first postmaster. Office closed 2/9/1907.

Vermillion, opened 5/25/1843 with John A. Ash as first postmaster. Office closed 2/10/1908.

Volney, opened 12/21/1825, John Bristol was first postmaster. Office closed 2/15/1908.

Walker, opened 4/11/1898, Raymond H. Walker as first postmaster. Office closed 8/29/1899.

Wellwood, opened 2/17/1890, Mrs. Myrta Remington first postmaster, office closed 3/31/1904.

West Amboy, opened 3/8/1847, Henry Garber as first postmaster. Office closed 4/30/1938.

West Granby, opened 11/24/1831, Alfred Huggins as first postmaster. Office closed 11/27/1833.

West Mexico, opened 1/19/1813, Jos. Bailey as first postmaster. Office closed 12/25/1819.

West Williamstown, opened 8/19/1843, Samuel Freeman as first postmaster. Office closed 6/22/1848.

Wrightson, opened 7/7/1886, with Richard Hakes as first postmaster. Office discontinued 11/30/1904.

Rural Free Delivery

R. F. D. Mail started as a pilot project by the U. S. Post Office Department in parts of Virginia, and then Maine. The

experiment was a success and in the following years increased rapidly. A large number of "R. F. D." routes were started in Oswego County between 1900 and 1905. The patrons along a route of about 25 miles would file a petition and then a Postal Inspector would eventually make an on the spot investigation. Rural Mail Delivery and pick up service was a blessing to non-urban dwellers, but what the United States Post Office Department liked about it, the revenue made an immediate upswing. Farmers were now enabled to purchase by "mail order" catalogue and could have larger items shipped to the farm than were permitted to city addressees. But, the postmaster who operated a country store took a beating; sales fell off with the closing of the Post Office; the rural letter carriers were helpful but could not be expected to deliver goods. Some store keepers began their own delivery peddling. No longer was the grass-roots politically appointed politician able to carry on the cracker barrel gossip as before. Many stories could be told of the good deeds of postmen who did more than get the mail through in stormy weather.

An example is the efforts of young Roscoe Riker, first rural letter carrier of R. F. D. 4, Altmar. His service began in winter snow, cold winds and pneumonia and then his life was over. R. F. D. men originally cancelled all their mail. The Department furnished a hand canceller until 1905, after that it was make it last or get your own. Today, cancellation collectors seek envelopes and cards with this elusive marking.

The New York, Ontario And Western: A Noble But Fleeting Chapter In Railroading

The New York & Oswego Midland Railroad, under the leadership of Dewitt C. Littlejohn of Oswego, was chartered by the laws of New York in 1866. Littlejohn was aided in the executive department by Elisha Wheeler, vice president, B. Berry, secretary, W.M. Conkey, treasurer, and Henry Low, attorney. This line was to be one of the major north-south transportation links in the state. The original plans called for a "Westward Extension" to run approximately from Norwich "...to the shores of the Erie." but it was never completed. This line had many troubles and its methods concerning the acquisition of right-of-way greatly led to the road's final demise. The Midland's officers were very one-sided in their attitudes toward towns and villages that didn't quite see things their way. If the village would not bond itself for a specified amount of money, they would simply change the route through one that would. Thus was the case with Syracuse and Hamilton. These tactics, proferred by Littlejohn, led to a bitter feud with another large stockholder, Gerrit Smith, also with interests in Oswego. Smith realized, it is argued by some, that such anger-inspired moves only meant eventual ruin for the company. When the move from Syracuse to the Oneida Lake routing was made, Smith even tried to bribe the Oswego fathers into refusing to put up the money to allow the line into the city. However, this effort failed because of the dynamic personality of Littlejohn and his local reputation. The

profit, he thought, would come from the coastal shipping which would normally go to Buffalo if the Niagara Canal was completed. This hope was never realized. Conceivably, if some of these major towns were included instead of running through nowhere, the railroad might not have collapsed.

Construction was begun in 1868. The line was not built from one terminus to the other, but in sections, to get the line built faster. One of the major construction problems was the Shawangunk Tunnel bear Bloomingburg. It was begun in November, 1868, and not finished until September, 1871. The first train ran through the five-thousand foot tunnel in January, 1872. All along the route, rivers and ravines left wide gaps to be bridged or filled. The largest of these was the Lyon Brook bridge near Oxford, south of Norwich. It was 820 feet long and 168 feet high. The first bridge, which looked as if it were made with matchsticks and frightened a number of travellers to hysteria, was replaced by the stronger one in 1894. Other types of combined wood trestles and fill were used in many places where shallow but long gaps had to be bridged. The trestle at Harp's Pit near Pratts Hollow is typical of the wooden trestles with fill being added. The line from Oswego to Norwich was completed with the driving of the last spike at Seneca Hill on November 1, 1869. The next morning, the locomotives Oswego, Orange and Fulton steamed into Oswego to the end of track which, until 1876, was at the depot at East Third and Bridge Streets. The complete mainline from Oswego to Jersey City was opened in 1873.

One of the many branches of the Midland was a westward extension of tract from Norwich which was planned to go to Lake Erie. This branch had many names: the Westward Extension; the DeRuyter Line and more commonly, the Auburn Branch. The first surveys for this branch were made in December, 1868. The planned route went up to DeRuyter then on around Skaneateles Lake and into Auburn. By 1869, the grading crews had reached DeRuyter. Then, due to lack of funds to pay for construction, all work was stopped on the Auburn Branch. Finally, in July, 1871, the line was opened to DeRuyter. The route was then changed and the line turned southward toward Cortland. The Midland leased the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira trackage from Cortland to Freeville. From there, it paralleled the

Southern Central northward toward Auburn. In 1872, the construction stopped just north of Scipio Centre or Merrifield. It was never to go farther. The line was built quickly and not too well. There were many wooden trestles which bridged large gaps too wide for filling with dirt at the time. One of the more famous trestles, the Rainbow Trestle near Otselic Center, was "...the longest (250 ties) and highest (95 feet) of these."

When the Midland became the Ontario & Western, little construction was done. The line from Middletown south through New Jersey was abandoned and, under the North River Construction Company, the mainline was extended to Cornwall and trackage rights obtained from the West Shore to Weehawken.

The Midland hauled its first train in April, 1869, and the first passenger train was hauled from Oneida to West Monroe in September. The first through train from Oswego to Jersey City was run on July 10, 1873. Freight service on the Auburn Branch was instituted as far as Scipio Centre in 1871. The first train carrying passengers arrived in Scipio Centre on December 16, 1872. The number of passengers using the branch was disappointing. When the winter of 1878 came, the line was snowed under and all operations ceased. This hard winter brought the end of service on the Auburn Branch. In 1882, the rails and telegraph lines were removed for use on the mainline. In September, 1882, however, the rails were still in from Norwich to DeRuyter.

The Midland hit bad times right from the start. The staggering cost of construction and the length of time needed for it was too great to be outweighed quickly by the few short years of operation before bonds came due. Undoubtedly the Midland had its share of corruption, as was the case with most railroads of the day. Probably a good example was Littlejohn's salary as president. No amount had been specified until January, 1873, at which time he was given $150,000 for back salary. No mention was ever made of anything being paid from 1866 to 1873 but it seems unlikely he worked for platitudes. When a syndicate bought out control later in 1873, he resigned as president but still worked for completion of the Auburn Branch. Later that year, the Midland went into receivership.

The Midland trudged on in receivership until it was bought and reincorporated as the New York, Ontario &

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Western Railway on January 21, 1880. Conrad Jordan became president of the new company, and Theodore Houston was secretary and treasurer. The term Railway indicated the increased interest of foreign investors in the line. New hopes for the line were realized with the new mainlines to Cornwall and Weehawken and the completion of a branch into the Pennsylvania coal fields, which led to the construction of coal trestles at Oswego and Cornwall. Also, emigrants were assigned by the government on a quota basis, and travelled up to Oswego and then westward via the RW & O and the Wabash.

The Oswego Midland used many American and mogul type locomotives. Most of these locomotives were sold after the bankruptcy. Some of the old locos were repaired and renumbered by the Ontario and Western. Oswego Midland #33, the Franklin, was built in 1871 and lettered New York Midland, the proposed name for a merger of the Oswego Midland and the down-state partner, the New Jersey Midland. This engine was renumbered 54 on the O&W roster and remained until 1907. In 1895, Cooke Locomotive Works delivered the first Mother Hubbard, or Camelback locomotive, to the O&W. This type of engine has the cab moved halfway up the boiler due to the larger firebox needed to burn the road's own anthracite coal. Engine #1, seen at Sidney in 1914, was typical of the early camelbacks. These Mother Hubbards outnumbered the conventional single cab engines 135 to 119, exclusive of Midland engines, on the all time roster.

Most of the Ontario & Western's passenger equipment consisted of wooden, standard cars. Most of these cars, including the luxurious parlor cars, were built by one of three manufacturers: Ohio Falls Car Company, American Car & Foundry, and Harlan & Hollingsworth Car Company. Pullman cars were also run but to what extent is not exactly clear.

Because of company-owned coal mines in Pennsylvania, the major part of their freight cars consisted of hoppers and gondolas. When coal dropped from wide use and other types of freight were more profitable, they were left with hundreds of hoppers and only fifty-eight old, wooden boxcars not fit for interchange service. This shortage of closed cars was deeply felt when the line was converted into a bridge route to New England by sending traffic from

Scranton up to the New Haven interchange at Maybrook. Foreign cars piled up per diem charges against the line and lack of cars in interchange earned none in return .

When the bottom dropped out of the coal and passenger business, the Ontario & Western had to fight for its life. As early as the twenties, when most industries were still riding high on the wave of prosperity, the death knells were sounding. The following excerpt is from a letter sent to all agents in 1929.

December 31, 1929

To All Agents

The year 1929 was not a good one for the New York, Ontario & Western Railway, as we show decreases in revenue in a number of departments, and in our business as a whole, against the year 1928.

In some particulars, the losses were beyond the control of officers, agents or others, but in a number of instances, a substantially better showing might have been made were everyone alert. This not only applies to competitive stations, but at non-competitive points as well. For instance, long after the change was made, we found that business that previously moved over the railroad for distant destinations, was being transported via trucks.

. . . . . .

Although our showing this year has been poor, it is quite possible to work a decided improvement, but also quite necessary that each employe do his particular part towards the accomplishment of that end, and I hope we can count upon you to do your share.

In conclusion, let me wish you a very Happy and Prosperous New Year, and express the hope that 1930 will also be a prosperous year for the New York, Ontario & Western Railway.

Yours very truly,

C. B. McManus
Traffic Manager

Even with these bad times after the crash and the continually dwindling business, the majority of the employees felt a confidence not elsewhere known; some even being able to report a good showing, as in this response of the agent at Oriskany Falls on the Utica Division.

January 7, 1930

It is quite a source of satisfaction to me to be able to make this showing to you and I am sure it will be a pleasure for you to see these figures.

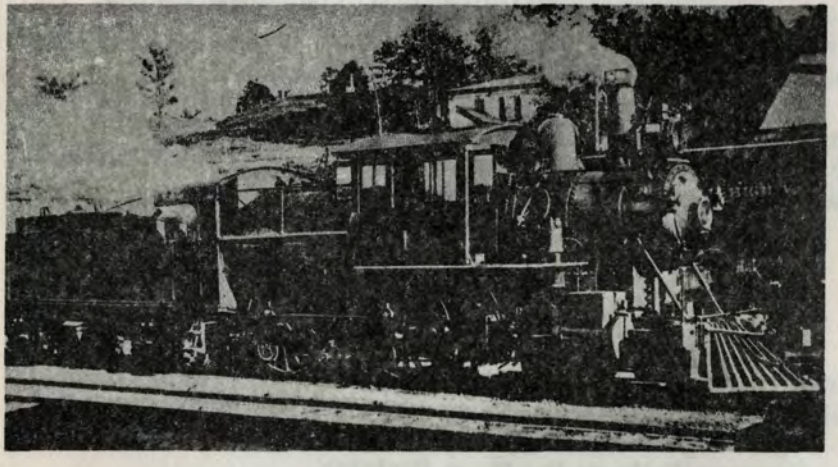
. . . . . .

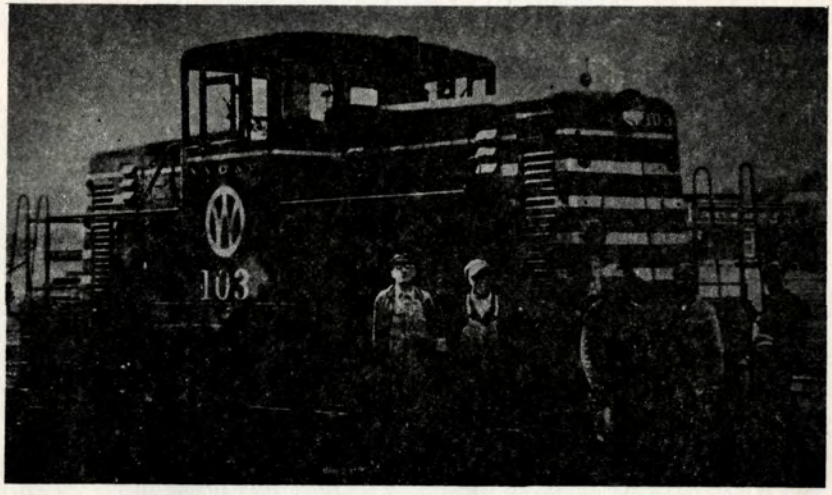
A Happy New Year to you sir and I hope we get out of the red in 1930 and stay out.

Very truly,

F. D. Curtis
Agent

The cost of maintenance and fueling the steamers seemed rectifiable by the purchase of Diesel locomotives. Steam started losing its control of the work with the purchase of five General Electric - Alco 44 ton Diesel switchers in 1945. In 1947, however, a sudden surge of traffic saved five engines from the torch and another was purchased from the Delaware and Hudson. By June, 1948, though, the snorting, belching iron monsters were never again to speed along the Old & Weary. Nine years later, on Mar. 29, 1957, the O & W died amidst mounting tax bills, back wages and operating bills.

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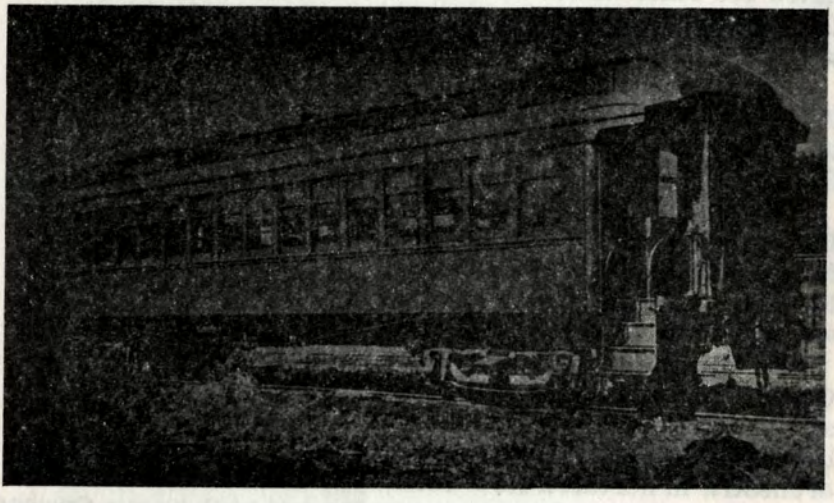

Blacks In Oswego Few In Number; They Have Remained Briefly

Due to the interest and generosity of a few Oswegonians, many fugitive slaves, through the "Underground Railroad," reached Oswego in the 1850's. The Negro civilian population reached its peak about 1855. The census that year listed 189 black males and 179 black females in Oswego County, of which 73 males and 67 females residing in the city of Oswego.

Hard times and the competition of cheap Irish labor made it difficult for blacks to obtain employment with the result that they soon left Oswego. There were very few blacks in Oswego at the time of the War Between the States.

My first memories of black people in Oswego, when my family moved to West Fourth Street in 1894, were coachmen for the Bond and Ames families, and the Benton family, who lived just one block from our home. These eight Negroes were the only ones of their race living here at the time.

Mr. Benton was the respected sexton of the Episcopal Church. I was a classmate of Mabel, one of his daughters, an attractive, popular girl. In later years her younger brother, Jay Benton was the leader of the outstanding dance orchestra in northern New York. All members of his orchestra were white. Jay was a popular and well-known Oswego

citizen. He played on the champion Oswego basketball team which had won national honors. Shortly after I left Oswego in 1910, a banquet in honor of this team, which had brought prestige to Oswego, was held at the Pontiac Hotel. And Jay Benton, one of the basketball heroes was not served at this dinner because he was a Negro. Although I was no longer living in Oswego, I never forgave the other members of the team for not leaving the Pontiac as a protest to this most unfair racial discrimination.

On March 26, 1908, the 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry, a Negro regiment with a splendid record going back to 1821, arrived at Fort Ontario from their services in the Philippines. This Battalion consisted of Companies E, F, G, & H and was under the command of Major Elmore F. Taggart, whom I came to know very well many years later, when he, as a retired Colonel, was Mayor of the City of Baguio in the Philippines. On November 28, 1911, the Battalion was ordered from Fort Ontario to serve again in the Philippines.

Naturally a number of black families and black camp followers came to Oswego to be with the men of the 2nd Battalion. There were mixed feelings about this influx of blacks in Oswego as can be seen from the following article quoted from the Oswego Daily Palladium of December 21, 1911, shortly after the departure of the 2nd Battalion from our city.

> "Oswego is fast losing the population which, for the past two years and a half, lent a touch of color to the throngs on the streets, and before another month has passed the colored soldiers and their friends who remained after the 24th Infantry from Fort Ontario will have gone. Hardly a day goes by but one or more leaves the city for more congenial climes and people and, with them and the departure of the troops, the "Black Belt" goes out of existence after two years of flourishing prosperity.
>
> The "Black Belt", as it was named by the police, was that portion of the Second Ward near the Post which, by common consent, appeared to be set apart for houses where dwelt colored people, the followers of the troops, houses which were not in very good repair were taken over at high rental in that vicinity and for a time the place took on new life. The establishment of a settlement there made many of the

older inhabitants move into other wards.

They were not much trouble to the police, these inhabitants of the "Belt," but whenever there was trouble in the city, it was generally in that locality. It was the scene of one murder, when Private Benny Lee murdered his sweetheart, and of numerous other stabbing affrays, many of which were never investigated by the police.

It must be said, however, that the inmates kept well to themselves and resented the intrusions of white people looking for trouble, and there was more than one row which had the neighbors talking for weeks.

They are leaving now, for the last of this month will see the leases on many of the houses expire.

It has been estimated that when the colored battalion was at Fort Ontario there were over 100 colored women in this city and they were certainly gorgeous dressers. Violet bonnets and flaming dresses are in the minority now and the merchants in retail business miss them, for both soldiers and the others were good spenders and bought only the best."

In a very short time after the 2nd Battalion was ordered away from Fort Ontario, the black population of Oswego almost disappeared. There were less than a dozen blacks in Oswego during the following thirty years.

Many years passed and a much larger Negro military unit, the 309th Coast Artillery National Guard Regiment from Harlem, New York City, was stationed at Fort Ontario. They arrived in January, 1941, and were ordered to Camp Edwards in Massachusetts in September of the same year. All the personnel of this regiment, including the officers, were black, quite a change from the 2nd Battalion at Fort Ontario thirty years before, when all the enlisted men were black and all the officers were white.

In 1898 when I was ten years old, a Negro incident, not important to Oswego but of decided significance to the Bullis family, was the visit to Oswego of Booker T. Washington, the distinguished founder of Tuskeegee Institute in Alabama, which has played a most important part in the destiny of blacks in our country.

My father, George E. Bullis, a graduate of Oswego High School and Oswego Normal School, was superintendent of schools in Oswego and much interested in the Tuskeegee

experiment. At that time Booker T. Washington had not written his classic, Up From Slavery. My father invited Mr. Washington to come to Oswego and deliver a benefit lecture for Tuskeegee at the old First Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Washington came and brought with him a black quartet from the Institute. The program was well received and of financial benefit to Tuskeegee. My father introduced Mr. Washington to the Oswego audience.

Booker T. Washington had dinner and stayed overnight with the Bullis family, the first time and perhaps the only time, a national celebrity had ever been entertained in our home.

I was to have dinner with Mr. Washington, my mother and father, and was warned only to talk in answering questions. Mr. Washington put me at my ease by enquiring about my progress in school.

My mother, wishing to enter the dinner table discussion said, Mr. Washington, I have read in the newspapers that a number of your students have left the Institute and enlisted in the army to fight our enemy, Spain. I hope they may make a splendid record for themselves and for Tuskeegee. Seventy two years have elapsed; however, I can distinctly remember Booker T. Washington as he said, "Madame Bullis, I note that you are a splendid home maker. On the second floor of your home I notice a sewing machine. Undoubtedly you have a knowledge of fabrics and you have learned that 'Fast Black Never Runs.' I can assure you Madam Bullis, that these Tuskeegee students in the Army are fast black. They will never run."

Many years later a souvenir Booker T. Washington half-dollar was minted by our government. For many years, I carried, as a good luck piece, one of these Booker T. Washington half-dollars. I was proud to carry a coin depicting the face of some one I personally knew.

Oswego has never had integration problems in its schools. There have been very few black children in Oswego for well over twenty years. During the past school year there were no black pupils or black teachers in our public schools. However, on the Oswego campus of New York State University there were about 100 black students and three faculty members. This year, there are about 500 black students enrolled on the Oswego campus.

In the great migration of Southern blacks to the North after World Wars I and II, few if any blacks selected Oswego as their destination. This was logical for there were almost no blacks living in Oswego; there were relatively few job opportunities; wages were comparable low as compared with wages paid in Detroit and other large industrial cities; Oswego welfare funds were not liberally distributed to newcomers from the South; also the cold and snowy Oswego winters were not eagerly sought after by Southern blacks.

Pioneer Families Of Oswego

So far as I am able to learn, the first white man who actually settled in Oswego was Neil McMullen, a Scotchman who came across the lake from Kingston in 1792, bringing with him the material prepared for erection of a home. This was the first frame dwelling house in this locality. I know of only two children; the elder was a daughter, Maria, born Jan. 8, 1795,- the first white native of Oswego,- who was married to Hunter Crane, for many years a leading and much respected merchant. She attained to a good old age, much beloved by her family and friends, and highly esteemed by all who knew her. They had a large family, among whom was Cassandra, who became the wife of Oscar N. Hastings, Esq., and the mother of Mrs. Florence H. Grant; so that Mrs. Grant's daughters are the great-grandchildren of the first white child born in Oswego.

Rankin McMullen was the son of Neil and brother of Mrs. Crane. I remember him as a man long past middle life, and his two sons were large boys at school when I was a youngster. Richard, the younger son, became a midshipman in the United States Navy and was lost at sea. I cannot say where this first house was originally placed, but I knew it in my boyhood as the rear part of the residence of Henry M. Willis on West Second Street near Mohawk, where Mrs. Fairchild now lives.

I am unable to learn who was the next settler, but there were some who came before 1800. Asa Rice, the

grandfather of Arvin Rice, Esq., of Fulton, came in 1797, locating at the mouth of the creek at western end of the Boulevard (Fruit Valley).

Henry Clarke, a brother of Dr. Deodatus Clarke, came about the same time to occupy a tract of 640 acres, of which the Johnson farm is now a part. He lived here only a short time.

Capt. Fairfield and Capt. Jasper Eadus (who was made a character in Cooper's Pathfinder) and a few others.

In 1802 came Capt. Edward Connor, retired from the army (in which he accompanied Col. Willett in his attempt to capture Oswego near the close of the Revolutionary War) who is described as a gentlemanly, scholarly man; had three daughters, the oldest, Cecilia, unmarried; Catherine who married John H. Lord, the founder of the Oswego Palladium (90 years ago) died in 1874; and Mary who became in 1816 the wife of the Hon. Alvin Bronson, and died in 1870.

In 1802 came also Joel Burt, then about 30 years of age. He was the first Collector of Customs for the Port of Oswego and also the first Postmaster of this place, appointed by President Jefferson, and held the office of Collector eight or nine years, when he was superceded by Nathan Sage. Mr. Burt married 1806 Almira Brace, daughter of Elizur Brace who came here in 1805, and to them were born ten children, the youngest of whom Phebe Ann, now Mrs. Thompkins, is still living in Oswego and possibly the oldest native resident.

In the same year, 1802, Daniel Burt, Sr., the father of Joel, came from Warwick in Orange County, accompanied by several children, many descendants from whom are now living in Oswego and vicinity: among them Geo. N. Burt, Esq., son of Bradley B.; Charles and Harriet, children of Erastus P., and Mrs. Dowd and Mrs. Todt, Mrs. Himes, Mrs. Hamilton, and others.

In 1807 there were seventeen families resident here. Daniel Burt., Sr., lived in the only house on the east side of the river, standing on the river bank very near the corner of Taurus (now Seneca) and 1st streets. In West Oswego lived Neil McMullen, Capt. Edward Connor, Matthew McNair, Dr. Deodatus Clarke, Thos. H. Wentworth, Joel Burt, Capt. Augustus Ford, Peter Sharpe, John Masters, Nathan Nelson, Wm. Powell, Samuel Jacks,

Capt. Montgomery, Capt. James Goodwin, Daniel Hugunin, Mr. Kelley. All the dwelling houses were in that lower part of the hamlet afterwards called "Pea Soup Flats" probably north of Seneca Street. Of these families I know of only five from whom there are descendants now living here, - McMullen, Burt, Connor, Clarke and Hugunin. There were also resident, - without families, - Capt. Eadus, Capt. Archibald Fairfield, Mr. Vaughn, Robert Young, and Mr. Rassmusson.

Theophilus Baldwin came about 1801, living east of the village near the lake (Baldwin's Bay): some descendants are living here now.

Asahel Bush settled in 1801 near Minetto, and there were a very few others in these earliest days between Minetto and Oswego Falls and west of Oswego, but none between Oswego and Mexico, where one Calvin Tiffany lived.

It is reported that during these earliest years, the rigors and dangers and isolation in winter were such to lead the most of the families to remove to Salt Point (all there was at that time of the present city of Syracuse) for the worst months.

Before the first civil settlement, the waterways were utilized by the Aborigines, explorers, warriors and traders in their various activities. Their canoes, batteaux, and other craft traversed the Great Lake in all directions and passed up and down the river when then unmarred by any artificiality must have been very beautiful. An old memorandum records the arrival in one season, 1725, of 57 batteaux from Schenectady with merchandise and their return loaded with 738 bales of beaver, deer and other skins. And after the actual settlement by whites, about the beginning of the last century, commerce was regularly established, and from small beginnings made rapid growth until its importance and volume became very large. The first schooner owned here before 1800 was called the "Flat-bottom", capacity 100 barrels, Capt. Archibald Fairfield. The first one built at this port was the Fair American. In 1802 Capt. Fairfield owned two schooners; the "Oneida" and "Sally": and Capt. Eadus owned the "Lady Johnson" which was lost on Garrison Point in 1803.

One of the most prominent of the oldest residents was Matthew McNair. He was a native of Paisley, Scotland; came early to America, resided a short time in New York,

and started thence with a peddler's pack to seek his fortune; arrived at Oswego in 1802, and for more than 50 years thereafter was in active business, - merchant, shipbuilder and owner, forwarder, contractor, etc., always enjoying the utmost confidence, esteem and respect of the entire community. After the ending of his busy life, he resided here an honored gentleman till his death in 1864. No citizen of Oswego was ever more beloved and venerated, or more sincerely and universally mourned in his departure. In 1805 Mr. McNair married Linda Reed: there were eight children, the eldest, John, born in 1806, became prominent as a civil engineer and in the surveys and construction of some important railroads. He died here in 1868. Three daughters of Matthew McNair, Sarah, Mary and Helen, very highly respected maiden ladies, are well remembered by our older citizens. They moved to California about 1868 and all died there.

The next, - in point of time and importance, - to settle here was Daniel Hugunin, who came here in 1804, himself 48 years of age, accompanied by ten children, - one other, Nancy, who became the wife of Horatio N. Goodell, was born here in 1806, died in 1891 (at the Old Ladies' Home.) This family was remarkable for longevity and for individuality, a certain strength and ruggedness in character which exercised decided influence upon the young town. Mr. Hugunin was among the earliest purchasers of land in both West and East Oswego. He represented this District in Congress in 1824. The oldest son, Peter D., married Sally Reed in 1805; was one of the earliest Judges in this County; had four sons who were quite prominent so long as they lived here: John Clarke, the oldest, died in 1864: Abraham D., the second son, born in 1787, had a family of eight children, three of whom, - Letitia who married Henry Chase; Maria, unmarried, and Elinor - Mrs. Gordon - are doubtless well remembered by many of those present; one son, Col. George, was an officer and won much distinction for bravery during the Civil War. Catherine, born 1793, married Joseph Davis and was the mother of Henry L. Davis, well remembered as a good citizen during his long life here, -and the grandmother of Mrs. Chas. Ward, now of New York. Mary, the next daughter, born 1795, died here in 1888, married the Hon. John Grant, Jr., a large man in stature and in all his personality and for some years from 1822 a Judge of the County

Court. Her only descendants now living here are the son and grand-daughter of the late Westen Bunker, Esq.

At the capture of Oswego by the British, May 6, 1814, Mr. Abraham D. Hugunin was made a prisoner and carried to Kingston, but after a few weeks was released and sent home. Daniel Hugunin, Jr., born 1790, married Clarissa VanHorne, died 1850. Elizabeth, the tenth child, born in 1800, died here in 1872, unmarried, always called "Betsey" is well remembered by the older residents. She was a bright woman, possessed of a full share of the firmness and decision which characterized the family. I can well believe the statements often heard, that she was an exceptionally handsome and attractive young woman and in early days quite a belle.

In June, 1833, Judge Peter D. Hugunin, with his brothers, Capts. Hiram and Leonard, sailed from Oswego on the sloop "Westward, Ho!" and arrived at Chicago in the latter part of August. Claim is made that this was the first vessel that ever entered the port of Chicago. They employed eight yoke of oxen to draw the craft over the bar at the mouth of Chicago River (they called it a horned breeze). Robert became a midshipman in the Navy; Daniel became a Lieutenant in the Army.

In 1805 Elizur Brace came here with a family of ten children,- one son, Deacon Stephen Brace, married a daughter of Asa Rice and became quite prominent later as a merchant and an active and dominant member of the First Presbyterian Church. One daughter married Dr. Walter Colton; and another as before mentioned, Joel Burt, Esq.

Thomas H. Wentworth came to reside here in 1806: he died in 1849. He lived for a time, I believe, at St. Johns, New Brunswick, was an artist and portrait painter, brought the first camera and made the first daguerreotypes in this part of the state. One son, Thomas H., Jr., married Miss Julia Card, and his youngest daughter, Hannah, became in 1843 the wife of Aaron B. Merriam who was for a long time a successful merchant and much respected citizen. He built and lived in the house on West Fifth Street, now occupied by Mr. Mollison, and later resided in the Neil Gray house at Fifth and Bridge: two sons, Charles and Alfred, are successful business men in New York.

In 1809 came one whose active life was quite potent in

Oswego for about half a century,- Henry Eagle was a native of the city of Memel in Prussia, came here in the service of the United States to superintend the building, under Henry Eckford, of New York, of the U.S. Brig Oneida, in 1810: and also through the War of 1812 at Sacketts Harbor in the construction of the big warship New Orleans (which was never launched). After the war, he lived here until his death in 1858,- first as a builder of vessels and subsequently as a merchant; always a genial, friendly, public-spirited gentleman, and a good valued citizen.

His residence, built in 1817, and grounds occupied the north two thirds of the block between Second and Third Streets, south of Schuyler. In 1816 he married Charlotte Morgan, daughter of Major Theophilus Morgan. Seven of their ten children lived to maturity and were prominent in the social life of the place. William married Rosette Winter of Toledo; Henry, a Miss Dennison, Cornelia, the Rev. Mr. Carmichael of Brooklyn; Catherine, Mr. Thomas Lyon of Perth, Canada: Charlotte, Mr. J. B. Gallie of Savannah, Ga.; Frederick and Charles (the latter a very bright and attractive friend of my youth) died unmarried. I do not know of any of this large family now living except a granddaughter, Miss Catherine E. Lyon, who is well-remembered by many here where she lived a few years while pursuing her studies at the Normal School.

Col. Theophilus Sherman Morgan came to Oswego in 1809. He was born in 1789, (a son of Major Theophilus Morgan who became a resident later, in 1822): He was a brother of Mrs. Eagle and half-brother of Capt. Wm. Morgan who is remembered by many of us. He married in 1814, Harriet Reed and they were the parents of one daughter and three sons, all of whom became somewhat distinguished,- the daughter, Charlotte, married Daniel MacMartin and moved to Perth, Canada; TheophilusCharles was married twice. He was a warm personal friend in early life of Mr. Samuel B. Johnson. His daughter, child of his later years, I have heard of through "Sister Helen", as "Happy Morgan" a most attractive character. Robert Chaffee, we remember here as "Col. Bob," was in service during the Mexican War, and with the Government in civilian capacity much of his life thereafter. His home here was the James Lyon house, now occupied by Mr. Karl Kellogg. The youngest son, George Elliott, was a lieutenant in the

U. S. Navy, unmarried, died in 1856. Col. Morgan was the first member of the Legislature for this county, appointed in 1820 and elected in 1822. His wife died in 1830 and in 1838 he married Mary E. Lyon, daughter of James Lyon and sister of our honored townsman, the late John E. Lyon. Their only child, James Sherman, was an officer in the army and lost his life during the Civil War. The Morgan home was on the upper side of West Second Street, the third north of Seneca, the house with pillars and a gallery, now standing, and though more than seventy-five years old, a good house yet.

In 1810 and immediately thereafter, there was a considerable accession to the population of the village. Perhaps the one who stamped his individuality upon the town more prominently and beneficially than any other, was Alvin Bronson, then 27 years of age. For thirty years he virtually controlled the commercial activity of this port and for many years later was a leading figure therein! Indeed until the completion of the Erie and Oswego canals and construction of the Welland canal, he had no serious competition in transportation. As no other point on the water route from the East was so important as Oswego, so was no name as well known between Albany and Detroit or the Upper St. Lawrence as that of Mr. Bronson. Not only were all goods consigned to him or his firm here, but he was a partner with Mr. Porter in carrying them around the Falls of Niagara and forwarding to destination.

During the War of 1812, Mr. Bronson was the receiver and custodian of military stores, and upon the capture of Oswego in May, 1814, by Sir James Yeo, he was taken prisoner and carried off to Canada. Not only in business was Mr. Bronson prominent, but in public affairs. He was the first Senator from the District, elected in 1823 and reelected until 1833, the first president of the village in 1828, was for many years a valued Counsellor in State affairs, was closely intimate with President Van Buren and other men of public consequence in early days. In 1816 Mr. Bronson was married to Mary, the third daughter of Capt. Edward Connor. Their children were Edwin T., who died unmarried at the age of 67; Ellen who was married to the Hon. Leander Babcock; and Cecilia, who became the wife of John Lawrence McWhorter. Mr. Bronson's personality was singularly attractive; his fine, frank face, charming dignity, graceful manner, were all typical

of the old-school gentleman. Associated with him in business for some time, was his brother Edward who left one son, Malcolm, a man of generous, kindly, impulsive nature, who became something of a hero because of a brave and daring life-saving act, remembered by many of our older citizens. Mr. Bronson built the fine stone mansion corner of Fifth and Cayuga Streets soon after 1830 and occupied it until his death in 1881 at the ripe age of 98.

Col.Eli Parsons was a man of much individuality and character, who came to Oswego in 1810 then 62 years old. He was a native of Massachusetts and was a Captain in the Massachusetts line in the War of the Revolution, afterwards involved as second in command in Daniel Shays Rebellion. He was excepted in the first amnesty when Shays and Parsons fled to Canada. After two years of exile, both were amnestied. He gained his miltary title of "Colonel" in the Shays affair; afterward was always loyal. He was a talented, intelligent gentleman, somewhat waggish, never blessed with much property; his later life was made comfortable by a Government pension of $240; was totally blind for some years before his death in 1830 at 83 years of age. His daughters married prominent men here: one, Dr. W.S. Tompkins; another, Samuel B. Beach, Esq., and a third, Dr. Benjamin Coe. His son, Portius F. Parsons, was a much respected citizen until his death in 1856, age 63. His grand-daughter, Miss Mary Parsons, a valued teacher in our school, and Mrs. Florence Wilcox, are the only descendants that I know of now living here,(they are, of course, great grand-daughters of the Revolution.)

I have noticed the prominence of the Reed family,but have no knowledge of the pater. Mrs. Millicent Reed came to Oswego in 1805 with daughters who must have been fine, strong characters, for they married the best men of that early day. Linda married Matthew McNair, Sally, Peter D. Hugunin, Harriet, Theophilus S. Morgan, and Hannah became the wife of Moses P. Hatch. The only son, Ephraim, was disabled in middle life, died in 1859: some of our older citizens remember him.

Eli Stevens came in 1810. He had several children. The only one whose history I am able to trace is Mary Adeline, who in 1855 married James E. Murdock. She died a few years ago leaving two daughters who were well known here.

His younger brother, Philo Stevens, (always called the Governor) came a little later and was for many years prominent in business and socially, - a man noted for his geniality, good humor and love of things good to eat. He was engaged for many years in flour milling in partnership at different times with Moses P. Hatch, Thomas H. Bond and Dudley Irwin. He married in Nantucket about 1830, Caroline, daughter of Seth F. Swift, a Unitarian minister, who soon after came here to live and became a merchant dealing in whale oils and other Nantucket goods and was one of the most estimable citizens. Mrs. Stevens' life was prolonged till recent years and she is pleasantly remembered by all who knew her.

Mrs. Abilgail Perry, the mother of Eli and Philo Stevens, died here in 1837, aged 80 years.

Mr. Eli S. Parks was one who came in 1810, was born in Plainfield, Conn., was a merchant and warehouseman; his dock was where the Northwestern elevator now stands at the foot of West Schuyler Street. His family was a large one, - a round dozen of children. I remember only three of them, - Sarah, who married a Mr. Sanford in 1846; Asa, the leading jeweler and silversmith for many years married in 1858 Anna A. Paddock who still resides here; and George who married and moved hence.

I think Mr. William Dolloway came here about 1810, though I find no special record of it, except that he was a purchaser from the State in March, 1811, of several lots which he afterwards occupied for business and residence. He was a sturdy, energetic Scotchman, positive but warm-hearted and genial and had the respect and confidence of the community during a busy and useful life. Of his descendants, there are living here only the children of his daughter, Mrs. James B. Farwell.

Major Hiel (Jehiel) Stone settled in the adjoining town of Scriba in 1804. He had a large family, many descendants from whom are now living in the town. One of the younger daughters, Polly, married in 1837 Simeon Bates, long a prominent figure in the business and public affairs of the city, a man of gigantic stature, and a character for integrity, formed in the same generous mould. His grandchildren now living here are Mrs. Frederick Collins, Mrs. Norish, and Mrs. Norman L. Bates.

Capt. Samuel Morrow came very early, was a sailor, and later, a farmer, had a family of ten children, the

oldest three of whom were lost in the burning of his dwelling in 1811. He lived to be an old man, and I think there are some descendants living here or in this vicinity.

Mr. Milton Harman, born in 1798, became a resident in very early days, - I have not learned just when or whence he came. He was well and pleasantly known during a long life in business and politics, was somewhat famed for exceptional politeness. Of his large family I know of only one now living here, a grand-daughter, Mrs. St. John, a successful teacher in our public schools.

David Harmon came from the East when about 25 years of age to the Town of Redfield in 1795. Of his large family, three at least became residents of this place: David, Jr. born in 1802, died here a few years ago after a busy, blameless life; some descendants here yet. Orville Joel, born in 1811, a graduate from Union College, became a prominent lawyer and was Recorder of the city for many years. His daughters are still residents of Oswego: Mary married Mr. Norman K. Whitney, an old resident here: they moved to Chicago. The Hon. Judson Harmon, of Cincinnati, who was so prominent that he has been seriously named as a possible candidate for President, is a scion of this family.

Jacob Raynor came to Oswego in 1812 when about 40 years of age, a man of good repute and much influence. His seven children were all remarkable for intelligence and strength of character. One daughter married James Burt, another Nathan Farnham, another John White, a much respected merchant; and the youngest was the wife of Alfred H. Hovey, one of the most prominent business men in Oswego and Syracuse during many years, whose daughter, Mrs. Jenne, is still well known here.

Mr. Nathan Farnham came in 1813, an enterprising young man of 21. He settled later in what is now Fruit Valley, where the old homestead is still occupied by his daughter. He was one of the organizers of Christ Church and a member of its first vestry.

Samuel Carter came from Wickford, R.I., in 1814. He was then 45 years old, and brought with him a family of ten children, some of whom became quite prominent here and elsewhere. There are a few descendants living here now: one living in New York, James Tyler, has earned a high reputation as an artist: and one, Mrs. Lockhart Douglas Adam, whose home is in Yokohama, is a writer of some note.

I am not able to say just when Thaddeus Clarke came to Oswego, but he was an early purchaser of land, and he built in 1827 for his residence one of the oldest good houses now standing in the city, - the one facing Franklyn Square on Cayuga Street lately owned and occupied by Dr. Macfarlane. He was a vessel owner and was on board the schooner "Medora" when she was lost with all on board in a great storm in November 1835 in which several other Oswego vessels and crew were lost. Some stanzas written on that occasion by a sympathetic and highly poetical mariner were very popular, widely published, and became almost a classic. It is a tradition that on special occasions Mr. Edwin Bronson recited the poem with much manner and to great effect. If the sadness and pathos of the subject will not make it too depressing, I shall be glad to read it, though I am not able to do it justice.

THE SCHOONER "MEDORA"
Story of her loss with all on board -
Composed by Royal M. L. Heath
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Come, all kind husbands, now behold
A scene that makes my blood run cold;
All loving wives may now appear;
In solemn mourning drop a tear.

Come let us weep for those who weep
For their lost friends plung'd in the deep,
And let us now all take some part
In grief which breaks the tender heart.

O, God! who knows the wants of men
Direct my mind, and guide my pen,
That I may bring the truth to light
Of this dread scene, and awful night.

'Tis now these lines I bring to view,
The captain and his vessel crew,
With passengers - two men - no wives,
And how and when they lost their lives.

On Tuesday morning as we did hear,
The Medora from the canal did steer;
'Twas E.N.E. they her did steer,
Bound for Oswego, as we did hear.

They had not sailed long, before
The winds did blow, the sea did rear,
Which caus'd each heart to lament full sore,
And strive to gain some part on shore.

The winds increased all the night
Which did the seamen much affright;
The captain says, "with us 'tis o'er;
We never more can reach the shore."

Thus, one by one on board, was lost;
Till eight poor souls were drown'd at last;
Were drowned - buried in the deep,
Which causes many for to weep.

On Tuesday morning 'twas cold and clear;
The 12th of November as you shall hear;
Twas early at the dawn of light,
When the Medora appeared in sight.

Scarce could one to the Medora go;
The billows over her did flow;
Her people plunged in the deep;
They've lost their lives in silent sleep.

Her masts were broke; her men were gone;
Her hull was left to face the storm;
The people from the country round,
Came flocking to the doleful ground.

The shores were lin'd both far and near,
To see what they could find and hear;
At last some friends they did appear,
Enquiring for their children dear.

Near Little Sandy Creek were found,
These bodies four, which then were drown'd -
Were drowned - buried in the lake
Which causes many a heart to ache.

On Wednesday morning, at break of day,
Two men were found upon the lake,
And from the water we did them take,
And carried them to a solemn place.

Their names, we now would here describe,
One Thaddeus Clark, we can't deny,
There was Mr. Hezekiah Mease,
Who from the water we took first,

The other names you soon shall hear,
'Twas Charles M'Dade it doth appear,
Lay in the Medora all the while,
We search'd upon the shore for miles.

There's one more name for to describe;
'Tis Mr. Doozenbury drown'd;
He was the first that came on shore;
But yet we look'd and searched for more.

And when their bodies we did find,
It was a dreadful solemn time;
To see the people flocking round,
To see the corpses on the ground.

But oh! how dreadful to relate,
There's four men lies in the lake
Lays floating this wide lake all o'er,
Which grieves their parents' hearts full sore.

But oh! how dreadful 'tis to hear
The parents mourning far and near
For their poor children lies in the deep,
Which causes many for to weep.

Although the lines which I've enroll'd
'Tis not one-tenth which can be told,
Who lost their lives all in the gale,
And found at last a watery grave.

Upon our upper lakes we hear
There's many a friend and parent dear,
Was swept into the foaming deep
Which causes many for to weep.

Come, all you seamen far and near,
Come, listen to those lives so dear,
Before with you it is all o'er -
You sink at last to rise no more.

I hope you will in time prepare
To meet your God, where'er you are;
Whether by water or by land,
When he shall give the dread command.

Moses P. Hatch came here early, but I do not know the year. He was named after his ancestor Major Moses Porter, who was engaged under Gen. Benedict Arnold in the Battle of Saratoga. He was one of the leading citizens during a long, busy and honorable life. He married Hannah Reed about 1818. His son, John Porter, was born here in 1822, became a graduate of West Point Military Academy, served with fidelity, gallantry and distinction through the Mexican War, later in hazardous frontier service, and as a General officer throughout the Civil War, retiring in 1886 under the age limit. He died in New York, was buried in the Arlington Cemetery. His wife (who was Adelaide Burckle), daughter Harriet, and son, Mark B., are still living. Gen. Hatch was an honored member of the Aztec Club of '47,- the Foreign War Society, the Army of the Potomac Society, the Loyal Legion, and the Grand Army of the Republic. In the great battle of South Mountain, Sept. '62, commanding a Division he was seriously wounded and sent home, - accompanied by his Aide and devoted friend, Capt. James Lyon, for recuperation. Upon his recovery and readiness to return to the field, he was given a magnificent reception and a service of silver by the citizens of Oswego.

Harriett, a daughter of Moses P. Hatch, long remembered as a most beautiful and attractive young woman, died when about 18 years of age. The only other child, Eliza, died in Chicago a few years ago and was buried here. Mr. Hatch was an exceptionally handsome man, genial and companionable. Except as a Member of the State Legislature, he was not prominent officially.

Elias Trowbridge was one of the best men who came early. I cannot find date of his advent here, but have a record of his building a dwelling house on the corner of West Third and Cayuga Streets, where Mrs. W. B. Phelps now lives, in 1817. He came from New Haven, Conn. I think he went from here for a while and returned about 1840. He was always very highly regarded as a citizen, merchant, and a friend. None of his family has lived here in the last 50 years, but Mrs. Trowbridge's kinfolk, good loyal children of the Revolution, with a rich inheritance from Colonial ancestry, are here represented by Mrs. Miller and her family. (Other sources place the Trowbridge house at the southwest corner of West Third and Schuyler Streets.)

George Fisher headed, I think, the good list of talented lawyers who sought Oswego in its infancy. He was 28 years of age when he came in 1816 from Massachusetts, an alumnus of Brown University and carefully educated in law and literature. He was a member of Congress about 1828; some time later he spent five years in France for the education of his family, and not long after his return was made President of the Northwestern Insurance Company, filling that office successfully until a short time before his removal to New York, where he died four or five years later in 1861. May 12, 1824, Mr. Fisher married Elizabeth Phelps Huntington, of Hadley, Mass. (sister of the later Bishop Huntington.) A noble woman, worth of her heritage of descent in a family which includes one signer of the Declaration of Independence, and one Major Gen. of the army of the Revolution. In that same year, 1824, Mr. Fisher built his residence,- the one now owned by Mrs. H. D. McCaffrey, West Seneca and Third Streets,- he having purchased the southern half of the block from the State some time before. In the grounds within a circle in front of the house may now be seen a tall and thrifty tree which was planted there on the birthday of the sons, Frederick and Francis, twins, May 18, 1828. So the tree is now 80 years old, which is remarkable for the unusually short-lived horse chestnut. There were seven children, all born here. One son died by accident in early youth. The elder daughter, Elizabeth Phelps, married John Sessions, a lawyer, and lived thereafter in New York. Frederick Pitkin, unmarried, died in Chicago in 1886; his twin brother Francis Porter, well remembered here, died in Chicago in 1907, nearly 80 years of age. He married in 1853 Anne Eliza Crane, a daughter of Albert Crane, a prominent and highly respected merchant of Oswego, whose only other daughter became the wife of the late Geo. B. Sloan, of honored name and memory. Geo. Huntington Fisher is a prominent lawyer in New York. Catherine Whiting is the wife of Fisher A. Baker, a noted lawyer and financier in New York; and Edward Thornton is a well known and successful educator in Massachusetts.

Dr. Benjamin Coe, a son-in-law of Colonel Eli Parsons, heretofore mentioned, made Oswego his home in 1810, the second physician to locate here, is mentioned as a bold practioner, skillful, companionable, and generally esteemed: died in 1826 at 42 years of age, was buried near Scriba Corners. His wife was very highly regarded. She brought

up her two sons (always known as "Sage Coe" and "Charlie Coe" to manhood here, and then moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where she died in 1870 in her 80th year. Both sons have died within a few years. An especial friendliness always existed between the mother and sons and honored citizen, the late Mr. Samuel B. Johnson. A sister of Dr. Coe, much beloved, and familiarly known as Aunt Mary (I believe there is an Aunt Mary in almost every good and well appointed family) who lived with them here, died in Cleveland in 1873 at the age of 75 years.

Dr. Walter Colton was the next physician to cure the ills in this growing hamlet, came in 1813, was prominent and popular, had been a Judge in Onondaga County, was a surgeon in the army in 1812 and practiced here to some extent; he had the first regular drug store here. His wife was a daughter of Eliza Brace. The family moved to Ohio, then the far West.

Mr. John Shapley was a much respected resident from 1816 till 1856. His oldest daughter Jane married Daniel Card and became the mother of the late Leverett A. Card, a prominent lawyer and business man for many years, and of Mrs. Thomas H. Wentworth, Jr.

Mr. James Bickford came to Oswego in 1817, married here in 1819 Eliza Walworth, but soon thereafter moved to Belleville, Canada, where all but two of his ten children were born. During the Canadian Rebellion, in which he was in no wise engaged, life there was uncomfortable for all Yankees, and he returned to Oswego where he lived thereafter, a successful merchant and a citizen of high repute. One daughter is still resident here and several grand-children have made homes elsewhere.

Capt. Aaron Bush was a very early settler, was born in 1793, brought into the neighboring town of Scriba in 1803, and in early manhood came into the village. He married Fanny, a daughter of Samuel Carter in 1825; he was a mariner and so skillful and thoroughly reliable that he was employed by the Government as pilot on revenue vessels during the most of his long life. He had the reputation of being the best checker player in the United States, a very genial and popular man.

Edward Morris Tyler appeared in 1805: his oldest child born in 1802 was Capt. Joel F. Tyler, who married in 1823 Mary, a daughter of Samuel Carter. Their children are well remembered here,- the daughter, Caroline, married

Slosson Platt, and later as Mrs. Randall was pleasantly known and highly regarded for her philanthropic activities. A son, Rudolphus, was an effective Chief of Police for many years, and the father of the somewhat famous marine painter, James F. Tyler, of New York.

In early years navigation of the river was interrupted by the Oswego Falls, and it was necessary to transfer all freight from the boats above to boats below the Falls, - or the other way.

Mr. James Lyon came in 1814, then 27 years old, to own and operate this "carry" or portage, and made his residence at the Falls until the completion of the Oswego Canal, after which he lived here until his death in 1861. In 1811 he married Anne Forman, daughter of Judge Joshua Forman the most powerful of the pioneers of Onondaga County, and the acknowledged founder of the City of Syracuse.

Mr. Lyon was a strong man in every way, having an exceptionally genial and tolerant nature, was always held in high regard, and was quietly influential in matters of public welfare.

On the organization of the County in 1816, it was his management that secured the location of the County offices in Oswego instead of Mexico as had been planned.

Mr. Lyon's family of four sons and four daughters (two of the latter dying in infancy) one daughter, Mrs. Margaret A. Noxon, is the only one now living. Though all lived here for a time, the chief recollection is of the second son, John Edward, who died in 1894 at 80 years of age universally honored and greatly beloved.

And "there are others" but I must stop right here without mention of them, or of any of those good people who came "after the lake was dug" and upon the foundations laid by their few predecessors built the framework of the best and most beautiful little city in the Commonwealth.

Country Cooking

Dedicated to preserving a part of
Our American Heritage

Memories of yesteryear -- when
there was a wealth of resource
that created what all the wealth of
today does not -- a reasonable content.

Let us go back in memory to the "Good Old Days" -- and reminisce about life on the old-time farm; activities fading into memory, perhaps never to return.

Let's picture ordinary people -- three generations -- grandmother, grandfather, mama and papa, and young folks of varying ages.

The best cook in the whole wide world! That was Grandma, according to those who tasted her succulent Yankee dishes. At the beginning of the century no one disputed her fame. Grandma's culinary magic had bewitched them all -- from the mailman and man on the peddler's cart to the wandering hobo.

When she put things like johnnycake and dried beef gravy, onion shortcake, Annadama bread (a yeast bread containing corn meal and molasses), applesauce cake, baked cranberry beans, huckleberry slump or Old Connecticut peach pudding on the table, strong men wept -- because they couldn't eat as much as they wanted.

She looked upon store bread as if it had been concocted

by Beezlebub himself. Prepared puddings, cake mixes and other such aids for the city dweller and the woman who works had not appeared on the scene in Grandma's heyday.

Grandma lived at a time when ice came from an ice house. The pieces, cut from the fulling-mill pond the winter before, had been buried deep in sawdust in the double-walled, windowless ice house. There was no running water in the farmhouse, no electricity, gas or central heating, and what couldn't be canned in mason jars had to be kept, if perishable, in a cool root cellar or at the bottom of the well in a bucket, just above water level.

Grandma, with typical Yankee shrewdness, used her kitchen skills to do far more than merely satisfy appetites. Neighborhood life revolved around her wood-paneled country kitchen. On cold, snowy evenings young folks would stop after sledding or skating to stuff themselves with delectable foods. Courting in Grandma's parlor, under the guise of looking at the stereoscope, acquired added pleasure from the platters of Banbury Tarts and Lemon Honey Cookies provided by this understanding chaperone. And as for Grandpa -- well, his affections never strayed far from the tantalizing fragrance wafted from the kitchen.

Her kitchen was old, but clean as a whistle. The stove was rubbed and burnished with liquid that came in a bright yellow tin, and the random-width floor boards were as smooth as satin. There was a smell, compounded of burning birchwood, soup stock, home-ground coffee and spices, and coal oil that was as much a part of her kitchen as the old rocker, the range, the mantel clock and the Currier & Ives pictures on the walls, and, of course, the almanac which contained all sorts of information, and a seed catalog.

Almost obscured by this aromatic kitchen, was another, fainter, more feminine, that was borne in Grandma's bedroom. It was there, with the help of the heavy china pitcher, wash bowl, soap dish and hand-embroidered linen towels, that Grandma "freshened up" with water warmed on the kitchen stove and taken upstairs in a tea kettle, and a cake of transparent Pear's soap. And it was there that the old lady kept her clothes and handkerchiefs stored away in bureau drawers and deep chests, in which packets of hand-picked and home-dried rose petals were added to perfume the garments. Sometimes Grandma took crab apples, stuck them with whole cloves, and hung them

to dry behind the stove. When the last drop of moisture had gone from them forever, she laid them among the blankets, the aprons and the woolen scarves.

Despite the handicaps, Grandma enjoyed life to the hilt and knew the pleasure of well-deserved leisure. She went to quilting parties and husking bees, played croquet ardently, and never said "no" to a picnic, or a strawberry supper or a stereopticon slide evening at the church.

Grandma had the pleasure of cooking in a day of hearty appetites. No one held back. It was before the day when young women wanted to be so thin they wouldn't cast a shadow at high noon. Men, too, paid no mind to calories; they were even a bit eager to build up a prosperous paunch upon which to wear a heavy gold watch chain and charm. So men, women and children alike ate industriously, took second helpings and then went back for more ice cream and berries.

The so-called good old days were days of good eating -- yet they spent very little for food. The quality of their table depended partly on the produce from the farm, but more on the skill with which mother and grandmother blended and arranged their ingredients. They used what they had, and made everything count. They ate cheaply, the food seemed to be touched by genius in the kitchen.

No one was ever known to go hungry at Grandma's, nor was it ever necessary to make a flying trip to the store!

Unexpected company was not only made to feel welcome but quickly well fed with chicken, biscuits and gravy.

The pioneer looked for a spring and built his cabin near it, for he had no time nor equipment to dig a well. As he prospered he replaced his cabin with a better house, but the spring continued to quench his thirst and that of his animals, and supplied the only refrigeration known to generations. He built a stone trough and ran the cold, slow-flowing water through it.

With stone from the fields he built a house over the spring and planted a tree by the door.

The housewife placed her earthenware crocks of milk almost neck deep in the cold shallow stream, skimming off the cream for buttermaking. Dishes of food and leftovers were set there for keeping.

It was always cool in the springhouse, even on the hottest summer day. A gourd dipper hung from the wall

and the men, coming from the hot fields, stopped first in the springhouse for a draft of the cold water. The dog quenched his thirst from the overflow at the back of the spring house. Watercress grew in the shallows.

The family cow, as she was known down through the years, was a symbol of family life, the hub around which the little world of the small town and the farm revolved. Those who cared for her, and subjected themselves to the iron discipline of milking and feeding her and bedding her twice a day, 365 days a year, knew that they got something from her besides the milk and butter and curds that came from her free-flowing udder. The family cow made men out of small boys.

They had a little bench-type separator and Mother made cottage cheese and creamed it and it was eaten by the ton, mixed with home-made grape jelly.

Butter was made from the cream. Father had all the buttermilk he wanted and he loved the stuff. The whey, of course, was taken to the barn for the hogs.

Modern dairymen would scoff at the cow eating leftovers from the table. However, the mixed diet didn't seem to offset the flavor of the milk much. They used the milk raw, but used it very quickly. Milk was kept scrupulously clean, not by modern standards but by mother's. She said she could see germs with the naked eye. She poured the warm milk through a cheesecloth strainer, and, of course, did get out pieces of dust and a fly or so. But it looked clean and tasted fine.

The huckster wagon, which at one time linked American farms to the crossroads store, has passed into limbo along with the buggy, the buffalo robe, and the bustle. In its heyday, during the century preceding the early 1900's it was indispensable. While it brought the goods of the general store to isolated farms, and was run for profit by the storekeeper, it was more than that to the lonely housewife tucked away among the endless fields.

When the wagon turned in at the end of the lane, the housewife put on a clean apron, slicked up her hair, and went out to the barnyard to meet it; the children appeared out of nowhere, the dogs barked, and father tied his team to the fence at the end of the corn row and walked to the house.

The peddler was usually a talkative and gregarious

man. As he wrapped the reins around the whip and climbed down from his seat, he began a discourse on the state of the crops on the other side of the county, the health of the neighbors up and down the line, the arrival of new babies, national and local politics, and what to do in case of sunstroke in the hayfield. He passed along the gossip he had collected along his route. He was in a hurry to cover his route, but he knew that if he didn't throw in a bonus of gossip his customers would be disappointed.

He weighed the week's butter, loaded the egg crates, and stuffed a half-dozen culled hens into the crate beneath the tail gate. He dove into the dark recess of the wagon and filled the grocery order, drew a gallon of kerosene from the tank beneath the seat, and made a memo of next week's wants. As a parting gesture he gave each of the kids a stick of candy, climbed into the seat, and clucked his ponies into a trot, the wagon disappearing down the road in a cloud of dust.

His bookkeeping was important, for most of his customers paid their bills just twice a year -- when the hogs were sold in the spring and when harvesting was over in the fall.

It was surprising how many of the day-by-day wants the peddler's wagon held within its crowded interior: the staples - sugar, coffee, flour, spices, salt; drugs such as Castoria, Epsom salts, cough syrup, castor oil, camphor, liniment for man and beast; small items of hardware, nails, hinges, buckles, scythe blades, horse collars; dry beans, rice, corn meal, breakfast oats; overalls, candy, bolts of muslin and calico, clothespins, a bucket of salt mackerel, a jug of turpentine, machine oil, straw hats in season, oranges at Christmastime, plug tobacco and cheese.

His books show that 50 years ago he got 10 to 12¢ a dozen for eggs and 20¢ for an old rooster; fryers were 7¢ a pound, butter was 15¢. He sold sugar for 5¢ a pound, salmon for 10¢ a can, and calico for 5¢ a yard. Bologna and salt mackerel were 10¢ a pound.

A great deal of the trade was barter. When the hens were laying well and the cows freshened, the housewife paid for the supplies with chickens, eggs and butter and had some change left over to drop into an old sugar bowl on the top shelf of the pie cupboard. The huckster was the sole channel through which country produce moved from the farm to the city markets. Refrigeration being what it was 50

years ago and before, city people had only a vague notion what fresh country butter was actually like, and their eggs had often lost the bloom of youth.

A fellow needed to be husky to work in a country store in an era when produce came mainly in barrels or hundred pound bales. Clerks had to maneuver these without the sissy's aid of moving belts or rubber-tired trucks -- muscle did it.

Barrels of flour, barrels of red McIntoshes, barrels of "West Indy" molasses -- or, on occasion, huge hogsheads of dark syrup. Barrels of potatoes from backhill farms; of pickles, salt pork, sugar, and coarse salt. Barrels of flaky, round St. Johnsbury crackers baked in the next town, ready for chips of butter out of some farm wife's firkin. Bales and kegs of dried salt codfish to vary the diet of perch, pickerel and horned pout taken from the pond.

In the fall almost every farmer's order began with, "I'll take a barrel of flour, 100# of sugar, and a bag of salt."

Molasses was a big item in the country store, as well as the country kitchen. In the old days it came to the store in a hogshead , and people would bring in their jugs before it arrived. The jugs were smeared and smooched around the mouths from years of use, and each had a string to the handle with a carrying stick through it. When the hogshead of molasses came in, it would be tapped, and one man would draw until all the jugs were full. The next day everyone would have new molasses for receipts that are, today, pretty much forgotten.

Mothers nowadays complain a good deal about the trouble they have getting children to eat. In the earlier days of our country, the big thing was to keep kids from eating the family into the poorhouse. Was the food better then? Was it the ingredients, or was it the cooking?

In those happy days breakfast was a meal and not just a hurdle on the way to work. Fully dressed and ready to start the day, the whole family sat down together. Papa asked the blessing. It was short, because Papa said the Lord meant hot food to be eaten hot. There was little trouble in getting the children out of bed in the morning, because breakfast was waiting, and the warm kitchen stove.

There was fruit to begin with. There were blackberries, dewberries or strawberries. The berries were washed and sugared the night before and by morning there were tiny crusts of sugar crystals clinging around the edges of the top

layer. With the fruit there was cream that flowed lazily out of the blue pitcher.

In full summer there were "muskmellons" -- long before we heard they were cantaloupes. Mama liked sugar on muskmellons -- but Papa preferred salt and pepper.

In the winter they had prunes, stewed down with lemon juice and sugar. The yellow cream curled through the amber juice. Good, rich cream made a king's dish out of the lowly prune.

After the fruit, came oatmeal, cooked all night in the fireless cooker. Then came the real breakfast. Pinky-brown slices of cured ham that almost floated in red-eye gravy. And little crisp biscuits, made with sour milk and soda.

Of course, there was grits with ham, and the gravy from the platter was spooned onto them. Sometimes there was bacon with a mound of soft scrambled eggs, and in winter there would be country sausage made of lean meat and seasoned with sage and red pepper. That pepper never saw a can. It would have melted a can. It was ground-up pods of long-nosed red peppers, home-grown and dried, and it made all other sausage taste sissy.

Dinner was served at 12 o'clock noon. Everybody ate at home.

For just an ordinary day they might have round steak. It was cut thin and had flour beaten into it with the edge of a cracked saucer. Mama got the grease sizzling hot in the heavy iron skillet and then trailed the limp floury slabs into it. When the mean was brown on both sides she put lids on the skillet and let it cook another ten minutes or so. Then she made the gravy.

There would be mashed potatoes. In summer there would be black-eyed peas cooked with salt pork and a pod of red pepper. There was always a platter of sliced tomatoes in the summer. And fried corn; corn cut from the cob and fried in bacon drippings 'til a brown crust formed over the bottom of the pan. Cream and lots of salt and pepper were added, too.

None of Mama's vegetables tasted like the vegetables of today. Mama's greens, especially turnip greens, were crisp leaves brought straight out of the garden, washed and placed in a big iron pot with a hock of ham. The pot was placed on the back of the stove and allowed to simmer until the greens were tender, and each impregnated with

the heavenly flavor of the ham.

Green beans, too, were a far cry from the tasteless ones we sometimes get in cans now. These, too, were cooked with a piece of ham, and had a little sugar and vinegar added to enhance the natural flavor.

Perhaps the fact that everything came soon and fresh out of the garden, before it had a chance to wilt or lose its flavor, accounted for the flavors that have disappeared forever under the present methods of vegetable marketing. How can spinach, picked in Arizona and cooked in New York a week later, compare with vegetables fresh straight from the garden to the country kitchen. The same was true of corn on the cob. When they had corn, they had little else.

They had desserts. There was a kind of calendar of cobblers. First came the dewberries; then there was a triumphant pause for strawberry shortcake. Then came the peach cobblers. You could smell a peach cobbler all through dinner, and when Mama opened the oven door to take it out, all heaven seemed to open. Cobblers came to the table in long black pans and were put in front of Papa on two asbestos mats. The juice bubbled and oozed through the design in the brown crust. Mama made a very artistic design like a fern frond with the end of a spoon.

The children, of course, walked to and from school and always came home half starved. They could always have tea cookies, big thin cookies that spilled sugar off the top. Mama made them by the thousands. There was a little barrel of ginger snaps on a shelf in the kitchen. They were good when dunked in milk and eaten with the crispness going, but not quite gone.

Supper came about half past five. It was mostly dinner over again -- warmed up, I mean. There would be one new dish added. It might be baked macaroni and cheese. Sharp, crumbly rattrap cheese covered the top of the big, black pan and ran down through the delicate custard. It came to the table hissing and bubbling and just right. Hash, too, was a supper dish. Pure hash, undefiled had nothing in it but beef, potatoes, onions and gravy. Hash was an accomplishment, not a catchall.

Recipes and customs of the country kitchen were passed from generation to generation and neighbor to neighbor -- much as we think of folk music today. The recipes of yester-year were much more general, not as

exacting, and would now give the impression of crediting the cook with much more skill and ability. Another striking discovery to the cook of today is the lack of oven temperatures -- with not more than perhaps a hint of a "warm" oven or a "hot" oven. Some recipes referred to a "brown paper" oven, which would have been about 375°. Many of the recipes used by the farm woman of yester-year would appall the average housewife of today, whether of country or town, in the lavish use of eggs, butter and cream.

Along with sulphur and molasses, dandelion greens were thought to be a sovereign remedy for what ailed folks in the spring. Folks hungered for greens like the farm animals yearned for the first tender grass. The young plants which came up in sheltered spots in early April were regarded as the best. They were cooked with a piece of sowbelly or a ham hock and served with a piece of butter; and some added vinegar. It was quite a job to gather and clean the greens. This usually fell to Grandma, who had the necessary patience -- as well as being well posted on the various kinds of herbs and greens. And speaking of greens -- who could forget cow slip greens! Parsnips and horseradish were also a welcome treat in the spring.

On sultry, hot days there was no delight equal to sipping a tall glass of Raspberry Shrub, which Grandma always kept on hand in the root cellar. Grandma used either the redcaps or the blackcaps, depending on her whim at the time she prepared the concoction, but she always contended that the redcaps made the drink a little more tangy.

During this era folks used what they had and made it do, but they were so clever about it no one ever wanted for anything. They hardly knew what soda pop was. Once in a while, when going to the fair or to see the parade on the Fourth of July, the old lady would splurge and they would have a glass of Moxie apiece. Such an event made it a red-letter day, but the Raspberry Shrub would have tasted just as good if it had come in a bottle.

Grandma sorted and picked over carefully four quarts of the fruit, placing the berries in a large glazed earthenware crock. Then she poured one and a half pints of cider vinegar over them and let them stand for three days in a cool place.

On the fourth day she strained the mixture through a flannel bag, squeezing the cloth a little, but not enough to

force any of the pulp through. Adding two cups of sugar for each pint of juice, she boiled it briskly for 15 minutes in an enamel sausepan. Only Grandma always called it graniteware.

When it was cooled, she poured it into bottles, corked them tightly and set them in the root cellar. On hot days, Grandma would send the boys for the "makings," pour three tablespoons of the juice into a glass of the coldest water, and serve it with sugar cookies.

On a warm summer day a trip was made to rob the bee tree -- they sawed halfway through the log on each side of the hole, then split out the block, exposing an excellent supply of sealed honey and hundreds of bees. Rags were fired to smoke the bees off the honey. Pails were heaped with the blocks of honey, and some left in the log for a new start for the swarm of bees.

Another summer beverage was switchel -- especially in the hot hay fields, for it was said "you'd never be overcome by the heat, if you drank plenty of switchel." This was usually made by added just the right proportions of vinegar, sugar and ginger to cold water.

When the Rhode Island Reds and the Plymouth Rock roosters were beginning to crow and their legs were thick and long, there were chicken suppers at the church and the Ladies Aid Society would have a social to raise money for the church.

The choice ears of sweet corn, left on the stalk to dry, were tied in threes and fours and hung up in the shed to be out of the way of the rats and mice. Later there would be parched corn with butter and salt on winter evenings.

The pumpkins were carried to an unheated room under the eaves where they would last for pies until well into the winter. The prolific Kiefer pear tree was stripped, the fruit wrapped in newspaper and spread out on the attic floor. These, too, would last until after Christmas.

The experienced mushroom hunter knew to look for the mushroom's mate and also to look under the little humped-up mounds of dry leaves for the mushroom playfully hiding there.

Apple-butter making was an event of great importance for the women of the household and one of some complexity. Apple-butter must come after the cider is made, for cider is a very necessary ingredient of good apple butter. Sometimes the peeling was done by hand with a paring knife,

sometimes the family was fortunate to have a mechanical peeler.

Great quantities of apples were peeled, quartered and washed. Then the small boys in the family built a fire under the big copper kettle and the cooking started, with endless stirring and tasting. This was a two-day job and before the last of the butter was ladled into earthen jars for storage in the cellar, the whole family was happy that apple butter was made but once a year.

Salads were usually served at the principal meals at Monticello. Jefferson's foundness for them is reflected in an inventory of his garden -- which included 19 varieties of lettuce alone.

Of the great variety of vegetables Jefferson grew at Monticello, his favorite was the pea. It was customary for the neighboring farmers to compete for the distinction of serving the first green peas. Jefferson took the honors so frequently that one year he told his children not to speak of the peas in his garden so that his friend, George Divers of Farmington, might give the annual dinner.

The invention of Saratoga Chips is usually attributed to George Crum, the chef at Moon's Lake House at New York's fashionable nineteenth century spa, Saratoga Springs. One of the fussier patrons persisted in returning orders of French fried potatoes to the chef, insisting that they were not thin enough. In a rage, Crum disdainfully sliced some potatoes paper-thin, dropped them into boiling fat, and had his triumphant gibe served to the guest (who loved them).

Sweet potatoes (the dark orange variety are often called Yams) have been grown in this country since at least the early 17th century and are associated with southern cooking.

Hominy was adopted from the Indians and became an important basic food for American pioneers. It is, simply, hulled corn -- the pioneers removed the hulls by soaking the grains of corn in a weak wood lye. Washed and boiled until it was tender, hominy was often served in place of potatoes. It was ground, too, into grits -- fragments slightly coarser than corn meal -- which have become closely associated with the South.

Cranberries may have been known at first as "crane berries", since cranes living in the New England bogs ate the berries. They were early recognized as a good prevention of scurvy, and ships putting out to sea from Down East ports always carried casks of this "bogland medicine" in

their stores. John Josselyn, visiting New England in 1663, wrote: "The Indians and English use cranberries much, boyling them with sugar for sauce to eat with their meat, and it is a delicate sauce." In Josselyn's day they were known, too, as "bounce berries", since they were, and still are, tested for ripeness by their ability to bounce.

Indians grew a wide variety of squash long before the first white men reached America. Surely the best-known and most popular American squash is the Hubbard, whose history was revealed in a letter by James H. H. Gregory, written in December, 1857, for the Magazine of Horticulture. "Of the origin of the Hubbard squash we have no certain knowledge. The facts relative to its cultivation in Marblehead are simply these. Upwards of twenty years ago, a single specimen was brought into town, the seed from which was planted in the garden of a lady, now deceased; a specimen from this yield was given to Cap. Knott Martin, of this town, who raised it for family use for a few years, when it was brought to our notice in the year 1842 or 43. We were first informed of its good qualities by Mrs. Hubbard, a very worthy lady, through whom we obtained seed from Capt. Martin. And the squash up to this time had no specific name to designate it from other varieties, my father termed it the "Hubbard Squash."

A delicate spread, familiar to our grandmothers but almost unknown now, was made in October from quinces and applies, diced and boiled in sugar in equal amounts of apples, quinces, and sugar.

Just before the first frost the men of the farm pulled the turnips and cabbage, dug the potatoes and other vegetables and carried them into the root cellar. The root cellar was built partly above, partly beneath the ground. It was walled with brick or stone and earth was heaped around it. A solid roof, sometimes also made of earth, protected the contents from the frost. The proper humidity and temperature were maintained for the perfect preservation of roots until late in the spring. The mixed odors of apples, wet earth, potatoes, and other fragrant roots were inviting and told an eloquent story of the fruitfulness of the rich earth.

There were skimpy meals for the most of two days while the women folk made sauerkraut. The cabbage were brought in from the garden in baskets, trimmed and washed.

Neighbor women sometimes helped, taking turns at cutting and packing in ten-gallon earthen jars. The heavy jars were carried to the cellar where in course of time nature's chemistry would work the change that makes sweet, crisp cabbage leaves into the sour, malodorous delicacy.

The sauerkraut making was often a family project or a neighborhood undertaking with bushels of tender, fresh cabbages sliced on the big kraut cutter -- a long wooden board with one or more sharp blades inserted at an angle in it, adjustable by a thumbscrew, to make thicker or thinner shreds. For every five pounds of cabbage, three and a half tablespoons of salt were added. The cabbage and salt were worked together with the hands. Then the kraut was pounded or pressed down firmly in the big earthen jar. Large plates were laid on the top, and weighted down with nice big clean stone, and the top of the crock carefully covered with a big piece of cloth to keep the dust out while the kraut aged.

Old timers remember how good the cold top layer was in deep winter when they went out to the summer kitchen to fill a bowl from one of the five-gallon stone jars. Beside the kraut was the stone jar of mustard pickles, grape-leaf-covered, and weighted down.

In October the ground under the big walnut tree at the edge of the woods was covered with nuts. The children would fill burlap sacks and bring them to the house to husk on the chopping block in the barnyard. The shell bark hickory nuts would also be falling out of their shells with a quart or more every morning ready for the picking. Grandpa would also bring in baskets of wild grapes and mysteriously disappear in the cellar to make his own brand of tonic.

Husking bees on the barn floor brought forth the cider, baked beans and fried cakes. And, of course, there was the most bashful swain of all who found the red ear, and blushed as he kissed the prettiest girl.

In the back shed was a meal chest -- rye meal in one end, and over the partition,the corn meal. Corn was harvested, traced, and hung to dry on the big beams in the attic of the old farmhouse. Then, when dry enough, taken to the local mill for grinding.

This reminds us of those good Saturday evening meals--warm johnnycake, a big pot of delicious baked beans, and the Indian pudding baked in a tall crock with raisins in it. Boiled dinner was another popular winter meal.

When the air turned crisp and cold, so the meat would keep, the men would carry the butchering tools out of the smokehouse. Long before sunup the fires were crackling under the kettles of water and the big barrel tilted back of the scraping platform. The first fat hog was dragged in from the pen, stuck and plunged into the barrel of boiling water. White and steaming, the hog was hung on the gambrels and the women given the casings to clean for the sausage. The hams and bacon were carried into the smokehouse, where they were given a brisk rubbing with the mixture of salt and sugar and spices that only Grandfather knew how to mix. Sometimes the housewife mixed a pickling solution, sinking the hams and bacon in a large earthen crock for two or three weeks before the hams and bacon were smoked. They also ground the pork sausage, seasoning it as only they knew how.

The first meal after butchering down on the farm was always liver. Then there would be fried tenderloin for supper and sausage and hot cakes for breakfast. The womenfolk would make headcheese and there would be other delicacies of pork and corn meal, and perhaps pickled pigs' feet, pickled heart and tongue for the Sunday evening cold table. Mincemeat and suet pudding were sure to be made after the beef was dressed.

Once a year Grandma cleared everything off the top shelf in the buttery and baked enough mince pies to run from one end of the shelf to the other. Then we knew that Thanksgiving was just over the horizon.

Grandma had to get up early because by tradition the festive board groaned under this assortment of good things to eat: dried corn soup, turkey, stuffing, celery (which stood upright in a tumbler like a vase of flowers), giblet gravy, mashed potatoes, mashed yellow turnips, boiled onions, pan rolls, cranberry sauce, sweet green tomato preserves, mince and squash pies.

She needed a large tom turkey to cope with the appetites her relatives brought with them. She baked the bird--stuffed to overflowing with tasty dressing--with a cloth over it to prevent premature browning. She called the cloth the turkey's diaper and dipped it in hot water and melted butter, wrung it out, and spread it over the fowl, tucking it in around the sides. Every few minutes she basted the bird, keeping the diaper moist until the last 20 minutes. Then the cloth was removed so the turkey would

turn a rich, tawny color no artist this side of Heaven could duplicate.

On Thanksgiving the sole item allowed to precede the servings of the turkey itself was dried corn soup, and only a medium-sized cup at that. Grandma dried the corn herself in the late summer. The night before Thanksgiving she soaked it all night with just a pinch of salt added to the water. In the morning she started it simmering and when the kernels were tender she diced salt pork that had been browned in a skillet, finely chopped onions, and a little pepper. Then a quart of milk for every two cups of corn was stirred in just before time to serve it.

By noontime of Thanksgiving Day the aunts and uncles, the brothers and sisters, the cousins and second cousins began arriving. No one had to be called to dinner.

Grandpa stood up to ask the Lord's blessing and he stayed on his feet to carve -- an accomplishment of which he was mighty proud. Everyone talked at once and Grandma looked across the table so loaded with food that the beautiful linen cloth with the eagle and shield woven into the fabric was hidden from sight, and she nodded in a self-satisfied way.

When we reminisce -- one thing leads to another, and another -- and we could go on and on. But, there are at least a few more which should be mentioned.

The children of yesteryear showed more fascination and interest in the activities in the kitchen -- as the cookies were mixed, tarts were made, fried cakes cut, and, of course, who could forget the bread making -- from the kneeding of the dough, its raising in the warmest place in the kitchen and the first delicious warm slice with good country fresh butter melting on its golden crusts.

They also got a thrill from those fishing and hunting trips and fresh game meat; gathering apples and the annual trip to the cider mill, robbing the bee tree and gathering walnuts, as well as the occasional trip with Dad to the cheese factory and the fresh cheese curd so fresh it squeaked! And who could fail to mention work in the sugar house, jack wax and sugaring off, elderberry wine and sassafras tea, box socials, strawberry festivals and ice cream socials with that good old home-made variety of ice cream cooked, cranked and packed.

Silo filling time and barn raising always brought the neighbors -- both men and women -- together many hands

made light work and, of course, much food was consumed by a hungry group.

The women folks made grape jelly, and there was pickling time and busy days of canning for the long winters, soap making, why, the housewife of yester-year was truly a master of many trades.

It would seem that meals were better then. It couldn't be the ingredients - we can still get most of the same things. It must have been Mama and Grandma who made the difference -- they had a skill accumulated by generations of good cooks, and a great pride in setting a good table.

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