

Story of Afton

by

CARLTON J. H. HAYES



AMERICAN REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL EDITION

Story of Afton

A NEW YORK TOWN ON THE SUSQUEHANNA

by

CARLTON J. H. HAYES

*Former Professor of History at Columbia University
and Lifelong Afton Resident*

UNITED STATES BICENTENNIAL EDITION

With a Biographical Sketch of Dr. Hayes,
A Selection of Old Pictures of the Town,
and an Appendix of Notes and Corrections
By Charles J. Decker, Afton Town Historian

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Hayes and Mrs. William D. Tucker, Children of Dr. Hayes

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Dr. Carlton J.H. Hayes
1882-1964

DR. CARLTON JOSEPH HUNTLEY HAYES

Dr. Carlton J. H. Hayes, author of the "Story of Afton", was a native of the town and proudly called it home. He was born May 16, 1882, the son of Dr. Philetus A. Hayes and Permelia M. Huntley Hayes who had moved from Castle Creek in Broome County to Afton in 1871. The elder Dr. Hayes was a highly regarded physician until his death in the 1920's and was the first mayor of the village when it was incorporated in 1892. Mrs. Dr. Hayes, as she was affectionately called, taught music in the public school, one of the earliest programs of its kind in the area.

The house at the corner of Spring and Academy Streets, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Alton Jenks, was the family home, only a block from the old Afton Union School from which Dr. Carlton J. H. Hayes graduated in 1900. He studied history at Columbia University where his student and teaching days, until his retirement in January of 1950, spanned 50 years.

Dr. Hayes became a Roman Catholic during his student days and was married to Miss Mary Evelyn Carroll in 1920. Their children are Carroll Joseph Hayes of Burdett, New York, and Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. William D. Tucker) of White Plains, New York. At the time of his death on September 3, 1964, he had 12 grandchildren.

Dr. Hayes took a biographical approach to history and was the author or co-author of 27 books, several of which are in the Afton Free Library.

During World War I, he served as a captain of intelligence in the U.S. Army. During World War II he was United States Ambassador to Spain, concerning which his book "Wartime Mission to Spain" made him a center of controversy.

Dr. Hayes received many honorary degrees and awards, including a doctorate of laws from Columbia in 1929, the Laetare Medal from Notre Dame in 1946, the Catholic Action Medal from St. Bonaventure in 1956 and the Cardinal Newman Award from the University of New Hampshire in 1957.

In the 1930's Dr. Hayes bought Jericho Farm on the East Side. To the ordinary farmhouse he added the columned portico and ballroom wing, making it an imposing residence, recently occupied by Mrs. Norman Buchanan. During the college year the family lived at 88 Morningside Drive in New York City.

Dr. Hayes was president of the American Historical Association and was a founder and Catholic co-chairman of the National Association of Christians and Jews. He was influential in the building in 1949 of St. Agnes

Roman Catholic Church, across the street from his boyhood home.

Dr. Hayes, who always considered himself an Aftonian, was the speaker at the Centennial celebration of the Town of Afton in 1957. His booklet, "Story of Afton", was published shortly afterwards, the proceeds going to the Afton Free Library, in which he and his wife had a special interest.

It is fitting that this reprinting be published in 1976, the Bicentennial year of the United States.

Story of Afton

1. INDIAN BACKGROUND: CUNAHUNTA

Afton celebrated its centenary in 1957. It thus appears to be a relatively young township in the State of New York. Yet, actually, it is part of one of the oldest townships of central and western New York and a site of white settlement dating from 1786. And long before then, there had been the Iroquois Indian village of Cunahunta two miles down the Susquehanna from the present Afton village.

A peculiar fact about this region is that it passed directly from Indian to American ownership. No European flag ever flew over it. It never belonged to the Dutch colony or to the French or to the British. The British Colony of New York, before the Revolution of 1776, was confined almost wholly to the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. All central and western New York was then held by native Indians of the celebrated Iroquois Confederacy, comprising the five "nations" of Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, Mohawks, and Oneidas, and eventually a sixth, the Tuscaroras. As early as 1686 an arrangement between the British Governor Dongan and the Indians guaranteed the latter in possession of the upper Susquehanna valley and required every non-Indian visitor to obtain special permission and a passport.

The exact boundary between the Iroquois and the British was ultimately fixed on November 5, 1768, by the treaty of Fort Stanwix (site of the present city of Rome in Oneida County). It ran down the Unadilla River, along the same line which still marks the western boundary of Delaware County, and thence westward across Pennsylvania to a point just north of Pittsburgh. The British paid the Iroquois a sum equivalent to \$50,600 for the latter's surrender of any claim to lands east and south of that boundary, and pledged themselves not to make any settlement to the west and north.

Thus, until the Revolutionary War, while there were white settlements in what are now Otsego and Delaware Counties, there were none in the present Chenango and Broome Counties. Here continued the "forest primeval," the wild animals, the Indian trails and canoes, and an occasional Indian village with plantings of apple trees and corn. And hither the only white men who occasionally penetrated were missionaries or fur-traders. The Dutch

had done some trading with the Indians in the 1600's, and the British increased it in the 1700's. It is probable, too, that the area was visited by one or another of the French Catholic Jesuits in the seventeenth century, most probably by a Father Jacques Bruyas. It is certain that in the following century there were spasmodic Protestant missions from New England, such as those of Elihu Spencer and Gideon Hawley, both of whom were Yale graduates.

The largest Indian village on the upper Susquehanna, and a principal seat of fur-trading and missionary work, was Oghquaga (or Ahquaga, or any of a dozen other spellings) near the site of the present village of Windsor and on a much travelled Indian trail (forerunner of State Highway 17) connecting the Susquehanna with the Delaware at Cohose (or Cohoose, now Deposit). Another and smaller Indian village was farther up the Susquehanna and had access to the Delaware at Cohose by an easier grade (the present State Highway 41). This was the village of Cunahunta (or Conehunto or Gunnegunter—spell it as you will). It was the first established settlement of which we have any knowledge in what was to become the township of Afton. It was an Indian settlement, most likely of Oneidas, and probably of long standing. Too bad that we know so little about it!

When the Revolutionary War came on in 1775, most of the Iroquois sided with their sworn allies, the British and Tories, against the Patriots; and in the famous and well-educated Mohawk chieftain, Joseph Brant, they had an able and determined leader. Bitter and vindictive border warfare ensued throughout central New York, with Indians and Tories raiding Patriot communities and committing atrocities east of the Unadilla, and with Patriots retaliating west of the boundary. In response to a special plea of General Clinton, the revolutionary Governor of New York, a small Patriot army was assembled at Schoharie in August 1778 and dispatched down the Susquehanna against the Indian village of Oghquaga. This village was destroyed, and on the way back, in October 1778, one of the soldiers recorded in his diary that "we marched up the river to another town called Cunahunta, burning some Indian houses and corn on the road. From there we marched very early, leaving it in flames." Thus the Indian phase of Afton enters into recorded history.

Followed, in retaliation, in November 1778, the wild Indian "massacre" of Cherry Valley. Then General Washington agreed with Governor Clinton that the "Indian menace" should be forcefully removed from the New York frontier, and measures were promptly taken accordingly. In June 1779, all was ready. General James Clinton, the Governor's brother, led an expedition of 1,800 men, with three months' provisions and 220 boats, from the Mohawk River to Otsego Lake. Here a dam was built, raising the level of the lake some two feet, and then on August 8th the dam was cut and on the floodwater the descent of the Susquehanna began. On Friday, August 13th, 1779, an officer records that the expedition, leaving Unadilla, "proceeded on to Conehunto, a small Indian town that was, but was destroyed by our detachment last fall. It is 14 (!) miles from Unadilla. A little below this town there are three or four islands in the river where the Indians raised their corn. On one of these islands our troops encamped with the boats and cattle. The light infantry went two miles from Conehunto, where they encamped, a little after 3 o'clock, in the woods. Middle good road today. . . . Apples plenty."

Meanwhile, General John Sullivan, with another and larger force, was proceeding from New Jersey into Pennsylvania, and up the Susquehanna to Tioga Point (Sayre), and an advance guard of it continued on until it met the Clinton force coming down the river at a place called then and long afterwards "Union." Whereupon the combined Sullivan-Clinton expedition went up the Chemung and on August 29th, 1779, overwhelmed the Indians and their Tory allies at "Newtown," near the present Elmira.

With its lands laid waste and its crops destroyed, the "Indian Territory" of the Iroquois Confederacy came to an end. The independent State of New York took possession by right of conquest and nominal purchase. Most of the surviving Iroquois were settled by the British in Canada, though smaller groups were assigned to "reservations" in this State and farther west. The first generation of white settlers occasionally encountered a stray live Indian or half-breed who haunted the great territory which his ancestors had long and proudly held. Nowadays an Indian would be a rare curiosity in Afton. Indeed all that remain of the long Indian sway over the area are some names of rivers—Susquehanna, Unadilla, Che-

nango,—a name for the local D.A.R., and some arrow heads and grindstones which are still uncovered in the vicinity of our old Cunahunta.

As the Revolutionary War neared its end in 1781-1783, with the triumph of the Patriot cause and a general recognition of American independence, the State of New York set out to survey and organize the extensive territory it was acquiring west of the Unadilla. One of the surveyors of special interest to Aftonites was Colonel Robert Harpur. A Scotch-Irishman by birth, he had migrated in 1761 to New York City, where he served as librarian and professor of mathematics in King's (now Columbia) College. Among students of his in the College were such Revolutionary leaders as Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and Robert Livingston.

Harpur himself took a prominent part in the Patriot cause, as member in turn of the State Legislature of 1776, of New York's first Constitutional Convention, and of the State Assembly in 1783; and from 1780 to 1795 he was Deputy Secretary of State of New York. It was in the latter capacity that he did his surveying, and it is claimed that he was responsible for plastering the large "Military Tract" of central New York with classical names, such as Cato, Cincinnatus, Fabius, Homer, Manlius, Pompey, Virgil, etc. At any rate, Col. Harpur received from the State, as a reward for his services, a grant, mainly in what is now Broome County, of 61,360 acres, most of which he disposed of to early settlers. He spent his last years in the community named after him, Afton's neighboring Harpursville. There he died in 1825 at the ripe age of 92. There his grave is marked by a stately old monument bearing an impressive Latin inscription. Descendants of his have resided hereabouts ever since, and recently the State College in Binghamton has been named in his honor. Incidentally, the son of the original Robert Harpur, also a Robert, married in 1816 the daughter of Peter Betts, an early settler of Afton township and the founder of Bettsburg.

2. NEW NAMES AND WHITE SETTLEMENT

What is now the township of Afton has had several different names. Along with present-day Bainbridge and part of Coventry it was dubbed "Clinton" by the original surveyors in honor of the Revolutionary Governor. It was included, moreover, in a huge new county named "Montgomery" in honor of the gallant Patriot General who lost his life in the ill-fated attack on Quebec.

Our county and town names soon changed. In February 1791 our area and other large sections of Montgomery County were cut off and renamed "Tioga County." At the same time Clinton township was enlarged and the name changed to "Jericho." This at first embraced the whole southern half of the present Chenango County. Two years later, however, Norwich and Oxford (the latter with Guilford) were severed from Jericho and made into separate townships. Then, in 1798, when Chenango County was formed from Tioga, the township of Jericho was further reduced by the creation of a new township of Greene (with Coventry and Smithfield). What remained of Jericho was the land in the Susquehanna Valley from present Sidney to Nineveh, including two sections: a North Jericho and a South Jericho.

Mysterious destruction of a church in North Jericho in 1814 caused the Puritan settlers to wonder if the name Jericho for their township had not been ill-chosen. It seemed too reminiscent of the fateful destruction meted out to biblical Jericho by Joshua and his Israelites. Besides, the people of Jericho, being thoroughly patriotic, were thrilled by what they heard of the naval exploits of Commodore William Bainbridge in fighting the Barbary pirates and winning victories over the British in the War of 1812. So it befell that in November 1814 the name of Jericho was changed to Bainbridge, and South Jericho became South Bainbridge. So it remained until 1857, when South Bainbridge adopted still another name, the present Afton. How and why this last occurred, I shall indicate later.

The various historic names of our community are apt to be confusing. The matter may be somewhat clarified if we keep in mind the earliest (Indian) name of Cunahunta or Gunnegunter; and the successive American names of Clinton from 1785 to 1791,

Jericho from 1791 to 1814, Bainbridge from 1814 to 1857, and Afton since 1857.

Among the first white settlers in the original township of Clinton (1786-1791) were "Vermont Sufferers." These were persons who had received titles to land in Vermont when it was supposed to belong to New York but who, by opposing its erection as a separate state, were mobbed and threatened with loss of their land there. In answer to a petition of February 1786 from Timothy Church, William Shattuck, and Henry Evans in behalf of the "Sufferers," the New York Legislature voted to assign to the petitioners and their associates eight miles square in the area newly acquired from the Iroquois; and this was definitely located by the Land Office Commissioners, in May 1786, in Clinton Township.

The first of the "Sufferers" to come to Clinton (soon renamed Jericho) was Hezekiah Stowell with a numerous family, who settled in that year of 1786 on a grant near the destroyed Indian village of Cunahunta. Samuel Bixby came next in 1787; Richard D. Church, son of Timothy, in 1788; Henry Evans in 1789. Others at about the same time were Orlando Bridgman, Artemus Goode-nough, Joseph Peck.

Yet of the 125 Yorkers who proved themselves "Sufferers" and were thus entitled to grants in the Susquehanna valley, only a small minority actually migrated here. The majority remained in Vermont, accepting that state's independence from New York and disposing of their "rights" in Clinton (Jericho) Township to land speculators from whom titles were secured by other settlers. Thus from Connecticut came Elnathan Bush in 1786, with wife and four children, who settled at first on the islands and adjacent west side of the river, but who, four years later, traded this site with Hezekiah Stowell's on the east side. Bush later removed to what has been known as the Beatty or "Harmonie" Farm in present-day Bainbridge. Also in 1786 came, from Massachusetts, Ebenezer Landers with his brother Joseph; and shortly afterwards Nathaniel Benton, Abijah Stevens, Seth Stone, Isaac Meier, Heth Kelsey, and others.

By the time, in 1791, when the township of "Clinton" was merged in that of "Jericho," and what is now Afton was becoming known as South Jericho, the immigration here, to a rapidly increas-

ing extent, was of Connecticut families seeking homes in the newly opened lands of the Susquehanna valley and beyond. Monuments in our East Side cemetery—the oldest hereabouts—reveal many names of pioneering families—for example, in addition to those mentioned above, names of Angell, Atherton, Buck, Bush, Carr, Corbin, Farnsworth, Hyde, Johnston, Medbury, Wicks, Wright, etc., and in the old cemetery in back of the Baptist church rows of Chamberlains, Pollards, Seelys, and Caswells.

Some early immigrants settled here only briefly, and then moved away. One such was a certain Gould Bacon, who appears to have been scared and half-starved into moving. It is related that in 1787, during a flooding of the islands where he, as well as Elnathan Bush, had just settled, he took refuge in the top of a tree and subsisted for three days on a raw pumpkin he managed to catch from the flood. Eventually, of course, he was able to get down, but he had had enough. He moved away to higher ground in the Unadilla valley, and died a bachelor. His tombstone appropriately records in blank verse that

*"He toiled for heirs he knew not whom
And straight was seen no more."*

It is well-nigh impossible for us who live in the 1960's to conceive of the hardships and labors of those early settlers of the 1780's and 1790's. There were then no motor cars or railways or even roads to bring them in. There were only Indian trails and horses and oxen and river canoes, and around all these a veritable jungle of forest and underbrush infested with wild animals and poisonous reptiles. Most of the "Vermont Sufferers" and other immigrants from Massachusetts and the upper Hudson valley made their way, with their families, household goods, tools, and livestock (horses, oxen, sheep, swine, etc.), along trails from the Mohawk to Cooperstown and thence partly by trail and partly by canoe down the Susquehanna.

We happen to have a fairly detailed account of the trek of one of the earliest settlers—Ebenezer Landers. In the spring of 1786 he and his brother Joseph travelled horseback all the way from Lenox, Massachusetts, to the site on the east bank of the Susquehanna, now called "Jericho Farm," in the present village of Afton. Here they staked out a land-claim, made a clearing in the forest,

built a log cabin, and planted a crop of winter wheat. They returned to Lenox in the autumn; and then, early in 1787, before winter was over, Ebenezer, with his wife Olive and three children, and with three brothers (Joseph, Isaiah, John) and needful belongings, made a slow and toilsome journey with oxen and sleds from Lenox to Unadilla. There the men built canoes to float down the Susquehanna as soon as the ice went out in the spring, but becoming impatient they started for their future home on foot and in the snow, Ebenezer carrying a feather bed and household utensils on his back, and Olive bearing in her arms their youngest child, Stephen. They reached the log cabin at the end of March 1787. Apparently frontier living hardened people and prolonged life. Ebenezer lived until he was 87, and Olive until she was 93. And the land on which they settled remained in their family for four generations, through 145 years of Clinton, Jericho, South Bainbridge, and Afton. The present house, built over a century ago by Ebenezer's son, Solomon Landers, occupies the site of the original log cabin.

The village of Unadilla, then known as "Wattle's Ferry," was an important place for our early settlers. Not only was it a stopping and equipment point for Vermont Sufferers and Massachusetts emigrants, but it was a terminus of the route followed by Connecticut emigrants from the Hudson at Catskill to the Susquehanna. At first this was merely an Indian trail, but before long it was widened into a passable wagon road and in 1802 it became an improved toll-paying turnpike with frequent wayside inns. Henceforth, for two or three decades, it must have been traversed every day by a constant procession of horses and oxen and wagons with men, women, children, tools, farm animals, and household goods and supplies. For the white farming population of south-central and western New York, non-existent in 1785, was considerably greater in 1830 than it is now; and the travel did not stop at the western border of New York but continued into Ohio and beyond. Until the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the Catskill turnpike vied with the Mohawk valley road as the chief New York route of western migration.

Once arrived in the Susquehanna lands, what labor the immigrants performed! With no tractors or bulldozers, with only primitive tools, they cut down forests, pulled out stumps, built log cabins

and barns, piled stone fences, planted and cultivated and harvested, and simultaneously constructed roads and boats, saw mills and grist mills and shops. At a Jericho town meeting, held in 1792, a bounty of 40 shillings was voted for killing wolves and panthers; and the next year the bounty was increased to 3 pounds sterling. Also at the town meeting in 1793 it was voted that swine should not be allowed to run at large. It may be added that among seven "pathmasters"—that is, road commissioners—elected at the first town meeting of Jericho in April 1791, two were from our South Jericho: Asa Stowell and Eleazer Church. The first Supervisor of Jericho township was Phineas Bennett, for whom Bennettsville was named.

3. A GROWING COMMUNITY, 1790-1857

In what is now Afton, the east side of the river, with its broad flats, was for some time considerably more peopled and more important than the west side. Here, near the site of the former Indian village of Cunahunta, the first inn, a log-cabin affair, was opened by Asa Stowell in 1788. In 1790, the first school was opened by Nathaniel Church in a log building near the intersection of the present East Main and Maple Streets; and in this school house the first church — a Congregational-Presbyterian — was organized in 1802 by a farmer-clergyman, Rev. Daniel Buck. A store was started on the site of the subsequent Gregory's in 1815 by Sayer and Goodsell. The first cemetery was on the east side on land provided by Ebenezer Landers.

The most flourishing early hamlet in this area was Bettsburg. It took its name from Peter Betts, who arrived from Connecticut in 1802 and opened the first store here in 1805. Here, too, besides the first inn, were a saw mill and a grist mill built by Asa Stowell, a carding shop, a cheese factory, and the office of the first physician, Dr. Nathan Boynton. Bettsburg was the first post-office in the present township. Peter Betts must have been an able citizen. He served as Assemblyman from Chenango County in 1804-5, 1808, and 1811. Eventually he removed to Bainbridge, where he died in 1849, and Bettsburg subsequently passed to Enos M. Johnston.

Bettsburg prospered especially from the transport of lumber to Deposit, whence it was rafted down the Delaware to Philadelphia. Later, when the Erie Railway was built, Bettsburg was a stopping point on the stage route connecting the railway with the Susquehanna valley. The route itself was a "planked" or "corduroy" road in the 1850's.

Other hamlets sprang up at a fairly early date. One, the present North Afton, was originally known as West Jericho, or West Bainbridge, and later as Ayreshire. There was likewise, overlapping the border of Broome County, a community with the biblical but wicked title of "Nineveh" — fit companion to "Jericho." Middlebridge got its name from a covered toll bridge which spanned the river there from about 1830 to 1843, while names of early settlers were applied to Melendy Hill, Church Hollow, Nurss Hollow, Kelsey and Bump Creeks.

Moreover, the settling of some allegedly pilfering families on a back road from South to North Jericho at the time of Commodore Bainbridge's meeting with the Algerine pirates in 1800 gave rise to the popular name of "Algerine Street" for the road — a name it continues to bear to this day. The adjacent charming lake, at first called "Round Pond," was later labeled "Pratt's Pond" in honor of Levi Pratt who died nearby in 1858 aged 92. As Afton Lake it has been the subject of a poem, "The Grave of a Star," which Lu B. Cake wrote in 1888 for little "Charlie Hyde," who incidentally, was an uncle of the Chairman of Afton's 1957 Centennial, Neil D. Hyde.

The village of South Jericho (South Bainbridge) was located first, as I have said, on the east side of the river. Gradually a settlement grew up on the west side, centering in the area of the present North Main and Caswell Streets, near the junction of the Kelsey and Bump Creeks. Most of the land here came into possession of the Kelsey, Pollard, and Caswell families.

Here, too, on a knoll on North Main Street, stands the oldest extant house in the village, built by Heth Kelsey as an inn in 1804, transformed into a two-family house by Silas Fairchild in 1862, "restored" in 1925, and now occupied by the Clifton Cooks. Another old house on the west side (just how old is unknown) is the stately brick residence latterly owned by Chester Bresee and Daniel Grant.

Four houses of sons and daughters of Moses Caswell still stand in a row on the left side of Caswell Street as it starts from Main Street: (1) the house of a daughter who married Edgar Garrett, which has latterly been owned by Mrs. Lynn Farnsworth; (2) the home of a daughter who married William Herkimer, which is now owned by their grandson, Allen Herkimer; (3) the house of Amos Caswell, who in his old age gave us "Caswell Park," our athletic grounds, and which is now occupied by James Blakeslee; and (4) the home of Gilman Caswell, now owned by Marion and Glenn Swart. A third Caswell son was Harrison, whose farm extended up the hill in the vicinity of the present Pleasant Avenue, and whose home is the present Liggett house. The Caswells and Pollards provided sites for the Baptist church and parsonage, and, adjacent to them, for the first burying ground and the first school-house on the west side. Harrison Caswell gave the lot for St. Ann's

Episcopal Church, and Brother-in-Law Garrett the lot for the Union School of 1874.

In 1829, for the first time, the west-side and east-side village settlements were connected by a covered toll bridge which was built by Lord and Bottom at a cost of \$2,400. This was swept away by a flood in the spring of 1848, and the next year a second toll bridge was constructed by Jacob Cass at a cost of \$3,000. Such bridging contributed to building up the west side of the village, and this was quickened by the construction of the railroad in the 1860's along the river's west bank.

A word here about the churches of the vicinity. The first was the Congregational-Presbyterian "church of Cilicia," founded in the present village of Bainbridge in 1793, and the second the Episcopal church of St. Luke's in Harpursville in 1799. In what later became Afton, the first, as I have said above, was a branch of the "church of Cilicia," organized in 1802 and meeting in the school-house on the east side. However, a number of the early settlers revolted against the stern Calvinist creed of their New England ancestors and accepted the more tolerant and optimistic belief in universal salvation; at a meeting in September 1818 in the school-house of the "Kirby district" they constituted a "First Universalist Society of the Town of Bainbridge." The first trustees were James Johnston, Reuben Kirby, Ebenezer Landers, James Davidson, Stephen Stillwell, and James Humphrey. They soon erected the church building still standing, though in a ruinous condition, on the east side of South Bainbridge; and for almost a century they held services in it. It was the earliest church structure in what is now Afton, and incidentally it contained the town's first pipe organ.

In vain the "church of Cilicia" denounced the Universalists as heretics and warned against them. For example its pastor, the Reverend Joel Chapin, on September 25, 1821, addressed to Olive Landers a summons to appear a fortnight hence at the meeting house in Bainbridge to stand trial. He warned her that if her "departure from the faith once embraced" is found to be "damnable heresy, then you, dear sister and not we, must abide the consequences at the Judgment seat of Christ." Then recalling the Christian duty of hospitality, the Pastor added a postscript: "Mrs. Chapin and myself tenderly invite you and Mr. Landers to take

refreshment at our house before and after church meeting, also to tarry with us the night following." There is no record of Olive's obeying the summons, and every indication of her perseverance in "heresy."

Indeed, the Presbyterians of South Bainbridge were so gravely weakened by Universalist secession that they abandoned the idea of building a church of their own and in 1831 transferred their services to Nineveh, beyond the town line, in Broome County. Meanwhile in 1828 a Methodist church was instituted in "West Bainbridge" (the present North Afton) and a building erected for it at a cost of \$1,500.

Next to the Universalist, the oldest church building in the present village of Afton is the Baptist. The society was organized at a meeting at Moses Caswell's on February 17th 1836, and its fifteen members, conspicuous among whom was the Seely family, promptly set out to build a church on a lot given them by Lysander Pollard next to the west-side district schoolhouse. They hewed timber and drew it to the lot, but, unable to pay for other needful building materials, they became discouraged and decided to sell the timber, put aside the sale-price, and wait for better times than the panic year of 1837. But according to a well-attested legend, new enthusiasm was aroused in an unexpected way. Town lads, intent upon playing a prank, piled up a rough block house with the timbers and a make-believe steeple with the rafters; and in the latter they hung a stolen cow bell which they rang all night. Townspeople, as well as the handful of Baptists, were thereby incited to cooperate in raising and enclosing the frame of the church. This was finished, with furnishings and a real church bell, in 1841. In 1849 the members adopted what was known as the New Hampshire Confession of Faith. Between 1836 and 1855 their number grew from 15 to 94, and in 1857 a Sunday school was started.

The next church in South Bainbridge was the Methodist, organized at a meeting in the west-side schoolhouse on November 24th, 1851. Its first trustees were Dorr Stowell, Charles Griswold, Samuel Bump, Luman Pollard, and Isaac Furgason. In 1852 a lot was purchased on Spring Street for \$150, and a building, costing \$1,500, was dedicated in September of that year by Rev. William Reddy.

No other church buildings were erected prior to Afton's separation from Bainbridge in 1857. In 1840 and again in 1842 the Rt. Rev. W. N. DeLancy, first Episcopal Bishop of Western New York, visited South Bainbridge and conducted afternoon services for his few co-religionists here, the first time in the Baptist Church, and the second time in the Universalist. An attempt at holding regular Episcopalian services was made by the Rector of St. Peter's (in Bainbridge village) from 1849 to 1852 in the west-side schoolhouse of South Bainbridge. In view of the use of public schools for starting and housing most of Afton's early churches — Presbyterian, Universalist, Methodist, and Episcopalian — it appears that there was then less rigidity than now about separation of church and state.

Despite considerable local opposition to Freemasonry in the wake of the national Anti-Masonic movement of the 1830's, and despite an outright ban by some of the churches, a number of South Bainbridge residents joined the lodge F. and A. M. which was chartered at Nineveh in January 1855, and also the chapter of Royal Arch Masons which was established at Vallonia Springs in December 1856. Both were moved shortly afterwards to Afton.

Honorable mention should here be made of certain families that followed the very first settlers (named above) and, with them, contributed in no small way to the upbuilding and welfare of South Bainbridge and early Afton. Elder among them were the Medburys, the Corbins, the Pollards, the Farnsworths, the Barrs, the Carpenters, the Carrs, the Caswells, the Chamberlains, the Fishers, the Hinmans, the Hydcs, the Johnstons, the Partridges, the Pecks, the Pooles, the Seelys, the Tarbells, the Wicks. A bit later came the Mudges, the Bresees, the Doolittles, the Duttons, the Guys, the Halls, the LeSuers, the Loomises, the Lords, the Morgans, etc. Among these I am proud to include my own family, which descends on both sides from 17th-century Connecticut ancestors through Revolutionary veterans who "went west" in the 1790's, the one to the Greene section of Jericho, the other to the "military tract" of adjacent Cortland County. My parents settled in Afton nearly a century ago, and I was born here seventy-nine years ago.

4. MORMON INTERLUDE

Afton forefathers of the 1820's had a real celebrity in their midst, though at the time they didn't recognize him as such. Indeed, one of the most curious episodes of Afton's history in the period of its being South Bainbridge (1814-1857) was its connection with Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon "Church of Latter-Day Saints." This has given rise to many stories and a vast deal of local folk-lore. The facts in the matter can be briefly summarized.

In the late summer of 1825, Josiah Stowell, a prosperous elderly farmer of the pioneer family living two miles below the village, journeyed to Palmyra, New York, to visit a cousin (Simpson Stowell). Through the latter, Josiah met a tall, strapping 19-year-old youth named Joseph Smith, Junior, and became fascinated by his stories about a "seer stone" with which he could detect buried treasure. Josiah was quite sure that money must be hidden in hills along the Susquehanna — he had been told that great quantities of it had been buried there by fleeing "Spaniards" — and young Joseph seemed to be just the person to spot it. So in November 1825 Josiah took Junior back home with him, and the Senior Joe Smith, a roving character, went along for the ride. They travelled a little out of their way in order that Stowell might exhibit his promising Smiths to his good friend, Isaac Hale, who lived at Harmony (present Oakland) just over the Pennsylvania border. After trying out Junior, with no financial success, Hale became suspicious and contemptuous of him. On the other hand, Junior was quite smitten by Hale's 21-year old daughter, Emma. He must have felt he had found an authentic treasure in her.

While the elder Smith returned to Palmyra, the younger, retaining the confidence of Stowell, went on with him to his home in South Bainbridge. Here during the winter of 1825-26, Joe did farm chores for a monthly wage of \$14 with room and board. He attended district school and spent leisure time digging for treasure in hill and gully and riding down the Susquehanna to see Emma Hale.

In March 1826 Peter Bridgman, a neighbor of Stowell's, member of another pioneer family, and stern Presbyterian, swore out a warrant for the arrest of young Smith for being "a disorderly person and an imposter." The trial was held at South Bainbridge

before Justice of the Peace Neely, and though Joe was found guilty, there is no record of any penalty having been imposed. He continued to enjoy the favor of Josiah Stowell and the disfavor of Emma Hale's father. At length, in January 1827, he and Emma eloped and were married by "Squire" Thomas Tarbell, a justice of the peace in South Bainbridge, in the house that until recently stood on the present Fair Grounds on the East Side.

Junior was then 21 years old, and, being unwelcome at his father-in-law's, he left with his wife for Palmyra. There, through divine revelation, according to his later account, he dug out of the "Hill Cumorah" an ancient book of golden plates, together with special eyeglasses ("Urim and Thummin") to enable him to decipher and translate the strange writing on the plates. Then, becoming partly reconciled with his father-in-law, and obtaining the use of a tenant house of Isaac Hale's at Harmony, he brought hither his wife and a box containing what he claimed were the golden plates. He worked on the farm, but most of the time he spent in the house dictating from behind a curtain to a scribe outside a supposed translation of the plates. It turned out to be the elaborate Book of Mormon, which was completed in July 1829, when Joseph Smith was twenty-three, and which was published the next year at Palmyra thanks to an advance of \$3,000 by an enchanted farmer by the name of Martin Harris.

Already in 1829 Joseph Smith was preaching the new Mormon gospel and working dubious miracles in Harpursville and South Bainbridge. One was his feat of walking on the river, which, story has it, was abruptly terminated when a group of skeptical jokesters removed the boardwalk that he had built a foot or so below the surface. Nevertheless, he did win some converts hereabouts, including Joseph and Newell Knight, Reed Peck, Edward Partridge, and his old patron the ever trustful Josiah Stowell.

Against the "prophet," however, there was strong opposition led by Dr. Boynton of Bettsburg and two associates, Benton and McMaster by name. In June 1830 he was arrested and tried for the second time in South Bainbridge. This time the trial was before Justice Joseph P. Chamberlain, with the Knights and Stowell testifying they had seen young Smith "cast out devils," and it resulted in his acquittal. Whereupon he was promptly rearrested, retried,—

and found guilty — in less merciful Harpursville. This practically drove the Founder of Mormonism from the neighborhood. In August 1830, with a group of disciples, he finally left South Bainbridge and in the following January headed the Mormon trek into the West. Reed Peck eventually grew disillusioned and returned to a long and honorable life in Afton. The very valuable diary which Peck kept of his Mormon days was published by Lu B. Cake in 1899.

5. SECESSION FROM BAINBRIDGE

We now jump from one stirring event here, the expulsion of Joe Smith and his Mormons in 1830, to another, the break with Bainbridge in 1857 and the creation of the new township of Afton. For this, there were several predisposing factors. At the time, the township of Bainbridge was the largest in Chenango County, reaching from Sidney to Nineveh and from Church Hollow to Bennettsville, and its population totalled over 3,000. The half or more of this number who resided in the southern part of the town had difficulty in doing business or exercising influence at Bainbridge village, the town's chief seat, located in the north. There was no connecting bus or telephone and it took hours to ride back and forth on horseback or with sleigh or buggy. Moreover, the village of South Bainbridge was growing, and developing a trade rivalry with Bainbridge proper; its citizens came to dislike the name "South Bainbridge" as implying a secondary and inferior place. They would be free and equal. They would break the shackles that bound them to Bainbridge.

Particularly important, and a bit mercenary, was South Bainbridge's complaint that it was being deprived of its fair share of public offices because the town meetings and elections were held in Bainbridge village. To meet the complaint and allay the developing bitterness, it was agreed in the early 1850's to hold town elections alternately in the two villages, giving all the offices to citizens of South Bainbridge when the elections were held here. This eased the situation only temporarily. Resentment grew as people in North Bainbridge assumed a superior air and took to making fun of South Bainbridge for its horse-traders and horse-races, and nicknaming it "Jockeyport." Secession was openly advocated.

The leading secessionist in South Bainbridge was Joseph Polard Chamberlain, son of an early settler and justice of the peace at the second trial of Joseph Smith in 1830. He was well-to-do, public-spirited, and politically minded. He had been County Sheriff from 1843 to 1846, a member of the State Legislature in 1834 and again in 1852, and was deemed a potential candidate for State Governor or United States Senator. In his home village he built a colonial-style house on the knoll on South Main Street, and gave land and

building for an Academy on Spring Street. By his wife, Margaret Carpenter, he had a son, John Clark Chamberlain (1828-1903), who replaced the family house with the big double "Nickerson" house still standing.

In the secession movement, J. P. Chamberlain had several energetic associates. One was Daniel A. Carpenter, who, after attending the Oxford Academy and spending some time in Kentucky and Louisiana, became in the 1850's a successful lumberman and merchant in South Bainbridge. He built the brick structure now used as the Town Hall, and also the spacious next-door dwelling. Another was Jonathan Farnsworth, the younger (1823-1900), grandfather of Lynn Farnsworth and Eva Holleran. He lived on the farm on upper Caswell Street and held a variety of public offices.

A third active secessionist was Devillo Corbin Church, who had been brought up in the family homestead and schooled at the Franklin Institute. He followed the gold rush to California, where he made money, and then, after serving briefly as a civil engineer in Iowa, he came back home in 1855. Next year he married Augusta Landers and until they moved to the village in 1866 he engaged in farming and lumbering.

A fourth was Albert C. Hyde, son of an early settler in Ayre-shire (North Afton), who came to South Bainbridge village as a store clerk, living at first in the "Sand Bank" house. He later bought out and operated the drug store which in time passed to his son, Burt Hyde, and is now known as the Afton Pharmacy. The son of Burt Hyde and his wife, Mary Dutton, is the engineer and returned resident of Afton, Neil D. Hyde. Still another active secessionist was Dr. James B. Cook, a graduate of Albany Medical Institute in 1841, and a popular practicing physician here for forty-six years afterwards. There was also Joseph Bennett Chaffee, who, after returning in the early 1850's from the California "gold rush," became a partner of his merchant stepfather, Merlin Jackson.

The foregoing are not the only "founding fathers" of Afton. They are only conspicuous among many who in the middle 1850's favored a movement for independence from Bainbridge.

The final impetus to secession came, strangely enough, from the heavens. It came in the form of an amazing snow storm on

April 20th, 1857, which blanketed this part of New York State to a depth of over four feet, completely isolating most of the farmers, and rendering it extremely difficult for them to obtain food, or to salvage cattle and sheep which had been turned out to pasture. The southerners in the township complained most bitterly that the town facilities were entirely devoted to the relief of farmers around Bainbridge village while those around South Bainbridge were the "forgotten ones," totally neglected.

The result was a climax of ill-feeling, and of firm resolve in South Bainbridge to separate from Bainbridge. The latter reluctantly but fortunately consented, so that any open fighting and possible bloodshed were avoided, and separation was consummated by legal creation of the township of Afton on November 18th, 1857. A committee of three, consisting of Joseph P. Chamberlain, Daniel A. Carpenter, and Joseph Bennett Chaffee, was responsible for the name. Carpenter and Chaffee first proposed to honor their colleague and most distinguished citizen by naming the new township "Chamberlaintown" or "Chamberlainville," but he definitely refused the honor. Then, as a second choice, Chaffee proposed the romantic name "Afton," and the committee unanimously and enthusiastically agreed to it. It seemed quite fitting. Through the town the Susquehanna, like the Scottish stream immortalized by Bobby Burns, did "flow gently, disturbing no dreams." And Afton, as a name, had the important and avenging advantage of always preceding Bainbridge in any alphabetical list of the towns of Chenango County.

The first election of Afton officials was held on March 2nd, 1858. Chamberlain would undoubtedly have been chosen Supervisor, if he had not died shortly before the election. As it was, Afton's first Supervisor was Daniel A. Carpenter, with Edgar Garrett as Clerk. Other choices included: Morris J. Mudge Sr. and Hiram Willey as Justices of the Peace; John Carr, Robert Littlefield and Jackson Poole as Assessors; Eli M. Shay as Collector; Albert Pratt as Commissioner of Highways; George F. Hard and Thomas Yale as Overseers of the Poor; James Poole as Inspector of Election; and, as Commissioners for an as yet unbuilt railroad, William Corbin, Luman C. Pollard, and (again) James Poole. It may be added that among Afton's Supervisors succeeding Car-

penter during the next twenty years were Jonathan Farnsworth, James B. Cook, Edgar Garrett, Erastus Fisher, Preston R. Peck, Robert M. Littlefield, John C. Chamberlain, and Eli M. Shay.

A special census taken in 1858 affords us some interesting information. Domestic animals then in the township numbered 580 horses, 2,110 working oxen, 1,640 cows, 4,410 sheep; and produce during the preceding year included 62,500 bushels of grain, 21,300 bushels of potatoes, 26,000 bushels of apples, 182,000 pounds of butter, 10,200 pounds of cheese, 4,300 yards of cloth. The federal census of 1860 showed that while Bainbridge village was a third larger than Afton village, Bainbridge township was less populous than Afton township — the former numbering 1,588, and the latter 1,770. Ten years later the same discrepancy is recorded: 1,931 in Afton; 1,793 in Bainbridge.

6. AFTON'S FIRST THIRTY YEARS, 1857-1887

For some years after 1857 relations between Afton and Bainbridge were strained, and as if to justify the contemptuous nickname of "Jockeyport" which Bainbridgites had leveled at their southern neighbor, an "Afton Agricultural Society," organized in 1858, held a series of annual Fairs during the next ten years, in which horse racing was the star attraction. The grounds were along East Main Street opposite the Universalist Church and next to the old east-side schoolhouse. The last Fair here was in 1868, but the site continued to be used during the 1870's and 1880's for occasional races, and also for baseball games for which Afton produced teams famous throughout south-central New York.

In 1889 a renewal of Fairs and regular horse racing was projected by a newly organized society, entitled The Afton Driving Park and Agricultural Society, with J. B. Pierce president, Mark D. Lane vice-president, Devillo C. Church treasurer, and George A. Haven secretary, and with a board comprising such other representative Aftonites as Rush Church, D. A. Hyde, Charles Landers, Robert Littlefield, James H. Nickerson, and H. C. Partridge. A farm, containing appropriately enough the house in which the eloping Joe Smith and Emma Hale had been married sixty-two years previously, was purchased and on it a fine half-mile race track was laid out and grandstand and exhibition buildings erected. Here the first of the new series of Fairs was held in 1890 and they have continued to flourish ever since, the 70th being held in 1959. They had the expert and devoted management of Harry G. Horton in 1915-1916 and from 1920 to 1947. And happily in later years they have come to symbolize friendly co-operation between daughter-Afton and mother-Bainbridge, for citizens of the latter are now prominent in conduct of the Afton Fair and obviously glad to share in the sport of "Jockeyport." The old quarrel has long since been forgiven—and, except for the historically minded, forgotten.

Afton was only four years old when the American Civil War began its tragic course. If Aftonites had been bent on seceding from Bainbridge, they were fully determined that no State should be suffered to secede from the Union. After all, secession in the one case was regarded as assuring local freedom and self-respect, and in the



House built by Solomon Landers and later remodeled with a columned portico as Jericho Farm by Dr. Carlton J.H. Hayes.

Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.



The Nickerson House, built by John Clark Chamberlin on South Main Street. It was razed in the 1960's to make way for a Victory Market which was never built.

Courtesy of Charles J. Decker



House where Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon religion, and Emma Hale were married by Justice of the Peace, Squire Tarbell on January 18, 1827.

Courtesy of Mrs. Raymon Birdsall.



The Afton Union School and Academy, built in 1875 and torn down after the building of the brick High School in 1908.

Courtesy of Jericho Historical Society.



The paving of Main Street in 1914.
Courtesy of Jericho Historical Society.



Main Street as it looked in 1909. The Village Hall, then the Valley House, was torn down in 1971 to make way for construction of the Harris Foodliner.
Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.



The bandstand, first planned at meetings in 1876 and torn down in 1941. It has been reconstructed on Caswell Park as a Bicentennial project in 1976.
Courtesy of Jericho Historical Society.



The Afton Citizen's Band at the Afton Fair. They also played in the old bandstand.
Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.



The Afton Fair with the Universalist Church in the background with the original tower.
Courtesy of Jericho Historical Society.



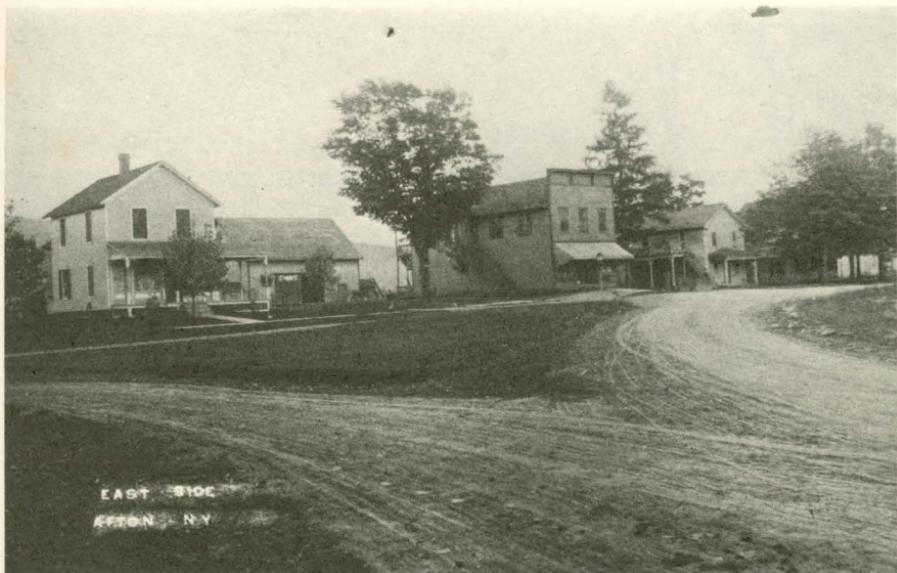
Crossing guard Vito Martin by the present Agway before the building of the underpass. The tall building is Lockup Hall still in use in 1929.
Courtesy of Jericho Historical Society.



Hauling ice from Afton Lake for next summer's iceboxes.
Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.

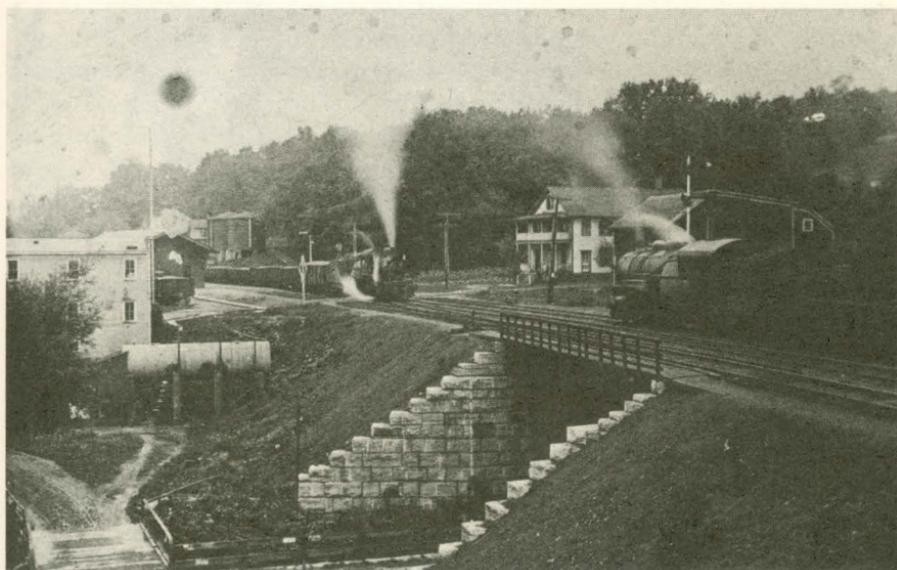


The suspension bridge built in 1868 and replaced by a steel bridge in 1904.
Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.



The East Side intersection, showing Gregory's Store and the Dr. Legg house which was removed for the Interstate 88 interchange. In several items of the 1880's, the East Side is referred to as Canada.

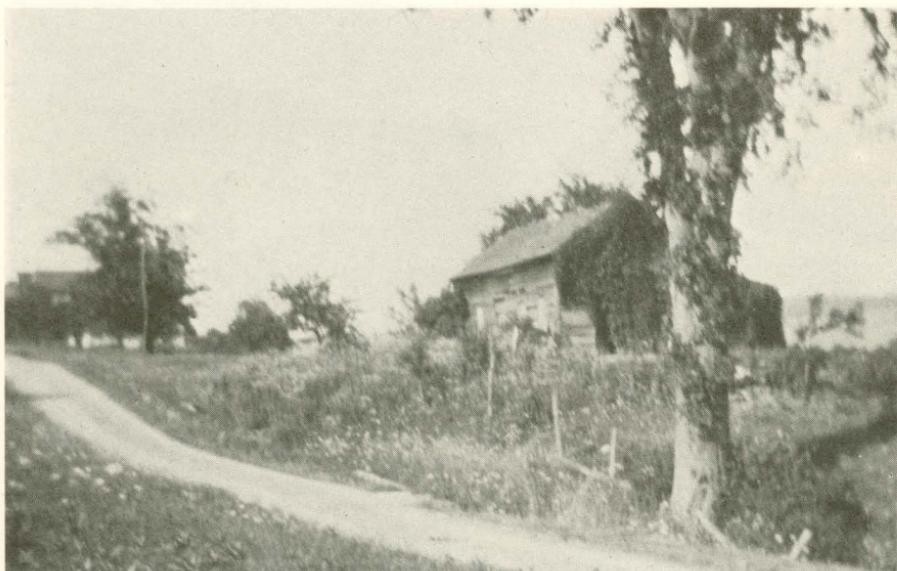
Courtesy of Jericho Historical Society.



Nineveh Junction with the Central Hotel at right center.
Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.



Bettsburg Corner showing the mansard-roofed house built by Enos Johnston about 1876 and other buildings which once housed a store, cheese factory and post office.
Courtesy of Charles J. Decker.



House built by William Bateman, Captain in the Revolutionary War. The house stood across the road from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Valent Baciuska in North Afton.
Courtesy of Mrs. Valent Baciuska.

other as a selfish and wicked effort to maintain slavery. To the Union cause Afton furnished 156 soldiers, the majority of them to the 5th New York Artillery, Company G of the 114th New York Volunteers, and Company G of the 70th New York Infantry. Only two of the total were drafted; the rest volunteered.

Most of the Afton boys joining the army went by wagon-load to Norwich, the county seat, where they were mustered in, and thence were transported by boat down the Chenango Canal to Binghamton from which there was rail connection for Washington and the Southern battlefields. A goodly number never returned. Yet in 1878—thirteen years after the war's end—there were 98 veterans here to form Vanderburg Post Number 12 of the Grand Army of the Republic, State of New York. Now these have all passed away, but their memory, with that of earlier and later service men, continues to be cherished and kept green every Decoration Day by Afton's veterans of the present century's World Wars and kindred patriotic organizations: American Legion and Auxiliary, D.A.R., W.R.C., Boy and Girl Scouts.

There was no railroad through Afton until after the Civil War. The Erie had previously been constructed, beginning at Deposit as early as 1836, and being completed in 1851, when President Millard Fillmore and his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, braved riding on it all the way from New York to Dunkirk. Early in 1852 a "Bainbridge Steamboat Navigation Company" was organized, with a capital of \$20,000, to provide river transportation between the town and the Erie railway station at Lanesboro. A steamboat was built, costing \$6,000. It was a flat-bottomed stern-wheel boat, 120 feet long, with an 80-horsepower engine, and, launched near the bridge at Bainbridge, it was christened with the breaking of a bottle of liquor over its prow by "a beautiful and queenly lady." The shallows in the river, however, were less beautiful and to clear a channel through them would have been very costly, even if practicable. Besides, plans were already afoot to put a railroad through the Susquehanna valley. In the circumstances the navigation project was abandoned, and the steamboat sold to a Pennsylvania group who ran it for a while between Athens and Towanda.

In 1851 the "Albany and Susquehanna Railroad" was organized, and towns along its proposed route helped to raise money

for it. The united township of Bainbridge bonded itself for \$60,000, of which \$30,000 was taken over by Afton when it became independent. Actual construction of the railroad encountered troublesome delays, and it was not until 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, that it was started at Albany and not until November 11th, 1867, that it reached Afton. Even then, it took two more years to get it into Binghamton. The Erie Railroad wanted to control it as a link to New England, and so did the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company as a rail outlet for its Pennsylvania coal mines. The rivals went so far as to hire bands of thugs who waged a battle with each other at the Tunnel. The D. and H. won out, and in 1870 obtained a 150-year lease of the Albany and Susquehanna; two years later it built the connecting line from the coal mines up to Nineveh Junction in Afton township. The first railroad ticket agent at Afton was Edgar Garrett, and the chief local "railroad commissioner" in the 1860's was Albert C. Hyde.

The railroad proved a boon to Afton. It lessened the valley's isolation by stimulating and speeding up travel and trade. For years, four daily passenger trains each way stopped at Afton, and over the rails went out carloads of potatoes and cabbages and lumber, milk and eggs and (in season) strawberries, while in came a hitherto unimagined assortment of groceries and dry goods and novel farm machinery. For years the depot was the busiest place in town.

Almost simultaneous with the construction of the railroad was the building of a new bridge across the river at Afton. The private company which owned the covered toll bridge that was swept away by a tornado in May, 1866, employed a man by the name of Skinner to build another. He did so that autumn for a price of \$3,250, and the owners found themselves quite literally "skinned." The bridge was rickety and unsafe; it lasted only eighteen months. The impoverished company would not undertake the construction of still another bridge, and no new company could be formed. Consequently the town obtained authorization from the State to purchase the franchise from the private company at a nominal price and to build a bridge itself. The result was the construction, in 1869, of an open suspension bridge, beautifully designed and well built; and, most notably, it was owned by the town and free to everybody. The

town commissioners in charge of its planning and building were Albert C. Hyde, Thomas Landers, and Harrison R. Caswell. It cost \$15,000, and lasted until the automobile age, when, in 1908, during the supervision of Fred Church, it was replaced, at a cost of \$25,000, by a less handsome but heavier iron bridge.

By the 1870's thanks to railroad and bridge, the west side of Afton village definitely outstripped the east side in size and business importance. On the west side, too, developed the principal school. Here, in December 1870, an Academy (equivalent of the later "High School") opened, with E. M. Rogers as Principal and Annie A. Greene as Preceptress, in a small building (the house recently owned by Harold Medbury) on Spring Street, under a Board of Education consisting of Devillo C. Church, R. M. Gallup, and Daniel A. Carpenter. Then in 1874 the district school (Number 5) on the east side, which had existed since 1790, was merged with the district school (Number 12) on the west side, and the Academy added, to constitute the "Afton Union School and Academy."

The first trustees of the union, elected in October 1874, were Edgar Garrett, Thomas Covert, and G. M. Champlain. The school building on the east side was sold at public auction the following January to Harvey Church for \$280, and in the summer of 1875 a new building for the Union School was erected on the site of the present Central School. It stood back from the street, and, as I knew it in the late 1880's, it was a graceful two-story white frame structure, with simple columns in front and neatly balanced wings on either side. It looked like a bird which might fly away at any moment, and doubtless some of the pupils wished it would. It didn't, however, for thirty-three years, until 1908. Three rooms on the ground floor were occupied by two grades each, and upstairs were grades seven to twelve, together with library and laboratory.

In 1876-1877, in addition to the Union School District, there were thirteen "common" school districts wholly or partly in Afton township. For all of them, seventeen licensed teachers were employed at a cost which nowadays seems incredibly small. Total receipts from local taxes, State aid, and tuition fees amounted to \$4,968.81, while expenditures were \$4,184.58 for wages, \$742 for maintenance, and 67 cents for library! There were no organized athletics, and the majority of children did not attend school beyond

the sixth grade. In the case of the Union School, the upper grades were maintained through an influx of older children from outside, some of whom boarded in the village, and others travelled every schoolday by rail from as far away as Osborne Hollow (Sanitaria Springs) and back. From the outset this Union School, though small in numbers, was outstanding in quality and achievement. It has had remarkably devoted trustees, and remarkably able teachers and alumni.

The railroad not only brought children to school. It brought "commercial travelers"—the "drummers" and salesmen—and these boomed the local hotel business. Though Heth Kelsey's Tavern of 1804 went out of business in the 1860's, it was already outmoded by a hotel which had originally been built in 1823 in the middle of Main Street by the brothers Alpheus and Josiah Wright (the former had married Heth Kelsey's daughter Rhoda), and which became known in 1869 as the "Sullivan House" from a new proprietor, Erastus Sullivan. Following a fire in 1877, it was rebuilt with a ball-room long used for concerts, theatricals, and dances. In the 1890's it passed to Phelps and Poyer and bore successively the names of "Phelps Hotel" and "Central House." After another fire in May 1898, it was again rebuilt, with George Jay as architect, in its present "colonial" form, and without the ball-room. Rechristened the "Afton Inn," it was occupied in the 1920's by Marshall Hill and then sold, in 1941, to David Daly.

Another hotel, the Musson House, was built in 1841 on Main Street, near the present Horton hardware store; burned down in 1881, it was not rebuilt. A third hotel, the Valley House, constructed in 1875, was burned down in the great fire of 1884, but it was rebuilt and operated by W. E. Hunt, and an extension added in 1887; it is now the Village Hall. There was also the St. James, opened in 1878, next to the Valley House, by Nathaniel Cook in connection with a saloon he had been keeping since 1872. This likewise was rebuilt after the great fire, and has latterly come to house a meat market, at present Frank Page's. Finally, there was Leonard's on the east side, more a saloon than a hotel, catering especially to thirsty attendants at the Fair and at horse races, and there was a hotel at Nineveh Junction. In the 1890's hotel bars in Afton township vied in number with the churches. Not until the age of

motor cars and prohibition in the 1920's did hotel business fall away.

To the earlier existing churches—Universalist, Baptist, and Methodist—two new ones were added not long after the establishment of Afton township. Previously, as I have already said, services had been spasmodically held for the few local Episcopalians. Then in 1858, under the leadership of Harrison Caswell, who had left the Baptists because of their ban on Freemasonry and had turned Episcopalian, the upper storey of the west-side district schoolhouse was fitted up as a chapel, and here the first regular service was conducted on November 21st by the Rev. W. A. Johnson of Bainbridge. St. Ann's Church was formally organized in 1860, with building erected in 1868, and, after a fire, re-erected in 1891.

The other new church was the Presbyterian. It was inaugurated by the pastor of the Nineveh church, Rev. William H. Sawtelle, who in 1875 began preaching every Sunday afternoon to local Presbyterians in the Baptist Church. Early next year the "First Presbyterian Church of the Town of Afton" was legally constituted, with Henry Doolittle, George P. Smith, and Robert Yale as trustees. A lot was purchased from Edgar Garrett for \$500, and the church building, erected at a cost of \$3,000, was dedicated on June 1st, 1877.

Two other significant developments occurred in the 1870's. One was in local publishing. In February 1875, a weekly newspaper, the *Afton Eagle*, was started by G. E. Bradt, from whom Jacob B. Kirkhuff purchased it in November but got out only one issue. A new weekly, *The Home Sentinel*, was begun in April 1876 by John F. Seman; two years later, with a circulation of about 1200 copies, it became an exponent of the Greenback Party and suffered a rapid decline. It was followed by the *Afton Enterprise* which has had a continuous existence from 1878 to the present, with such notable editors as Nelson Barton, J. H. Crain, F. M. Spooner, Charles D. Pendell, and, from 1936 to 1959, Howard Adamy; it is now ably edited by Theodore Tracy.

The other significant development of the time was in banking. A Bainbridge firm, Carver and Crassus, started a private bank in 1875 in an office in an Afton hotel, but it was of brief duration. On

January 1st, 1876, Enos M. Johnston with Devillo C. Church opened another private bank in the Willey Block under the title of E. M. Johnston & Co. It was subsequently reorganized as the Church and Hill Bank with Marshall Hill, who, with his father, had conducted a successful grocery since 1868, as president and Devillo Church's sons, Fred and George, as vice-president and cashier respectively. For many years it was a solid institution, serving well the community. Unfortunately it failed to weather a general financial depression after the First World War and had to close its doors, though eventually Church and Hill reimbursed their depositors. Under the leadership of Morris J. Mudge, Jr., the private bank was succeeded in 1920 by the present First National Bank of Afton.

A flourishing business in Afton during the decades from 1870 to 1890 was a sash-and-blind factory, occupying the present site of the Briggs Lumber Company. It was started in 1869 by Addison Brewer and W. A. Wright. J. B. Pierce joined them in 1871, Brewer dropped out in 1873, and in 1875 Harvey Hinman became a partner. The factory burned in May 1892 and was not rebuilt.

Afton has been afflicted with costly and destructive fires. There were, for example, the hotel fire of 1868, the burning of the Pollard Mansion in 1876, the destruction of the "Yale block" and the Musson House in July 1881. Then came, on August 2, 1884, the "great fire." For three days it raged and smoldered, burning to the ground the whole row of wooden shops and stores along Main Street. But the disaster proved a blessing in disguise. For the merchants spent little time mourning their losses. In the American spirit of progress, they promptly cleared away the extensive debris and rebuilt in brick with stone and marble trim, thus endowing the village with the unusually neat and attractive business section it has since had.

In the 1880's, it may be interesting to note, Afton village had a busy railway station, a bank, a grist mill, a saw mill, a sash-and-blind factory, a creamery, a factory for making butter tubs and firkins, two wagon shops, three blacksmith shops, a harness shop, a shoe shop, and thirteen stores. It also had two lawyers, three physicians, a dentist, four hotels, and five churches.

At the same time, Afton, for its size, gained an enviable reputation alike in sports and in music. Its baseball teams, particularly

the star team of 1885, were famed throughout south-central New York, and so was its town band. The Afton Union School was the first in the area to have, in Mrs. Philetus A. Hayes, a regular music teacher and to make music a part of the curriculum. Adult singing schools were held every winter, concerts were given frequently in Sullivan Hall, reading clubs met weekly in village homes.

7. AFTON'S NEXT THIRTY YEARS, 1887-1917

By the 1890's an almost revolutionary change was becoming evident in the basic agriculture of Afton township. Previously it had been markedly diversified, with most farmers growing a considerable variety of grains and vegetables and quantities of apples, maple syrup, and strawberries. Now, however, thanks to rapidly extending and improving railroad transportation, they were finding themselves disadvantaged in competition with grain brought in from the Middle West and with apples and potatoes imported from faraway Oregon or Idaho, although at the same time they were advantaged by their relative nearness by rail to the New York City market. Hence they were turning more and more to dairying. They were increasing their herds, while neglecting their orchards and berry patches, and were raising hay and grain only for their own cattle. Sheep grazing continued for a while, but the lowering of the tariff on wool in the 1890's, combined with the competition of Western as well as foreign wool, served to restrict and halt it in this area. In other words, agriculture here was becoming specialized, and the farm much less self-sufficing. Afton was far more dependent on the West for its grain, and on New York City for income from dairy products.

One result of this change was the development of local milk-stations close to the railway tracks where farmers brought the milk, where it was bottled or put in big cans, and whence it was loaded on the daily "milk train" going over the D. & H. to Albany and over the New York Central to New York. The returning milk-train disgorged the empty cans or bottles at the local stations. One of the first of these was erected in the vicinity of the river-bridge road. A larger and more "up-to-date" station was put up by Borden's in 1905 off South Main Street on the river bank. A third was Crowley's, still functioning. Nowadays, of course, the milk is transported not in bottles or cans by train, but in bulk by motor truck, which indicates that change, once begun, continues.

An accompanying result was a marked decline in the local production of butter and cheese. Factories for these no longer exist in the township, and only very rarely is any butter or cheese (even

any "dutch cheese") made at home. These articles, instead of being exported, have become imports.

Another result was the rise of a new and very needful kind of tradesman in the community, that of grain-dealer, a person who would buy from wholesalers the Western grains and seed, have them shipped by rail to his plant here, and thence sold retail to his farmer-customers. Such a grain-dealer in the 1880's and early 1890's was Joseph A. Decker, the father-in-law of Randolph Guy and uncle of George and Frank Decker. A successor, who founded in 1895 and built up the biggest grain business in the area, was Morris J. Mudge Jr., and this has been ably carried on and expanded by his son, Alden A. Mudge Sr. and, since the latter's recent untimely death, by a third generation, the brothers Alden Jr. and George Mudge.

In the 1890's, leadership in Afton was passing from such men as Devillo Corbin Church, Daniel A. Carpenter, Albert C. Hyde, Enos M. Johnston, Lysander Pollard, Edgar Garrett, and Amos and Harrison Caswell to a group of younger men. Among these (space prevents mention of but a few) were: (1) Morris J. Mudge, son of the Town Justice of 1858, took over in 1889 the general store formerly owned by Joseph Decker and six years later started the grain business which has since been so successfully operated by son and grandsons. (2) Philetus A. Hayes, the present writer's father, born in 1848, and educated at the Greene Academy, Hobart College, and the Geneva Medical School, came to Afton in 1871, settling on the corner of Spring and Academy Streets in a house built a little earlier by E. A. Wright and now owned by Alton Jenks. Here he carried on the practice of medicine from 1871 until shortly before his death in 1929. He founded a Susquehanna Valley Medical Society and was active in the County and State Societies.

(3) George A. Haven came to Afton in 1878, after having been a youthful soldier in the Civil War, including imprisonment at Andersonville, and subsequently having studied and graduated from the Albany Law School. He practiced law here for many years. His home and office were in the house now owned by Clarence and Flora Eldred. (4) Charles Seeley, descendant of early settlers, conducted grocery stores, first on the east side, and later in partnership on the west side successively with Harrison Caswell and Harrison

Briggs. For thirty years he had a national reputation as a poultry breeder, specializing in white crested black Polish. He was village clerk for eight years, and left two daughters of whom Afton may well be proud: Isabel Jennings and Linda Carpenter.

(5) Zenas Tarbell, born in 1844, grandson of the Thomas Tarbell who as Justice of the Peace back in 1827 had married Joseph Smith and Emma Hale at his home on the east side, was an ardent Republican and Mason. He lived on South Main Street and was Sheriff of Chenango County from 1898 to 1901. (6) Henry G. Carr, also born in 1844 and descendant of an Afton pioneer family (as was his wife, Mary Grover), opened a drug store in 1877, which, after the great fire of 1884, was located on the ground floor of the Masonic building (subsequently the location of Clarence Eldred's clothing store). Here, night after night for many years, a group of Republican politicians were wont to assemble around "Uncle Henry's" pot-bellied stove and gossip, just as the stove in the Hyde drugstore was the magnet for Democratic politicians.

(7) Clark L. Horton, an enterprising Coventry farmer, born in 1847, moved to Afton in 1894. He built and operated on Main Street the large hardware store which eventually passed to his competent son, Harrison—or Harry as he was popularly called. Everybody coming into the village over the highway from Bainbridge is greeted by a big sign, in capital letters, on the Horton store: "THIS IS AFTON." (8) Marshall G. Hill, born in 1854, and educated at the Afton School, took over from his father, Charles, in 1891, sole ownership of what was then the village's chief grocery store. In 1894 he bought out Enos M. Johnston's share in the local bank and reorganized it under the name of Church and Hill, with himself as president. He was also a discriminating collector of antiques, and a devoted member of the Democratic party. (9) Will Hall, belonging to a many-branched Afton family, was a farmer and milk-dealer, who had graduated from the Afton Academy in 1880 and lived on West Hill overlooking the "Glen." He was a very public-spirited citizen.

Still others should at least be mentioned here: the Church brothers, Fred and George Landers Church; Bert Benton Hyde, druggist and stamp collector, son of A. C. and father of Neil; Dr. Eugene Goodsell, a graduate of Afton Academy, who practiced

medicine from 1891 until his sudden untimely death in 1902; and his successor, the likable Dr. W. Lee Dodge, who moved in from Coventry and had two physician sons, Dr. Ben and Dr. Lynn; and Bert Lord, who entered state and national politics, being elected, in turn, to the Assembly at Albany and to the House of Representatives at Washington. Mention might likewise be made of certain interesting clergymen who presided over various churches here in the 1890's: Rev. Henry T. Hill of the Baptists, Welshman and excellent preacher; Rev. N. B. Ripley of the Methodists, almost as fond of fast horses as of good people; Rev. George Adams, scholarly and skeptical, almost the last of the Universalist ministers; and, especially noteworthy, Rev. Walter E. Bentley of the Episcopalians, who later became famous in New York City as rector, actor, and playwright.

No wonder that progress took a renewed spirit in that decade. In 1890 was inaugurated the new series of Afton Fairs, with exhibits of all manner of farm products, from cattle and swine and poultry to vegetables, bakestuffs, and fancy work, with merry-go-round and an array of other diversions, with balloon ascents, vaudeville acts, fireworks, and, above all, horse-racing on the half-mile track.

In 1892 the village of Afton was formally incorporated, and Dr. Philetus A. Hayes was elected its first "president" or mayor, serving without pay. Two years later, mainly through his efforts and those of his friend, Morris J. Mudge, a public water system for the village was authorized and bonds in the amount of \$20,000 were sold for it. Construction was carried on in the summer of 1895 by a hundred imported Italians who dug the ditches for a dollar a day. The villagers had always spoken of "going down" to Vallonia Springs, the source of supply, three and a half miles away, and, despite assurances of the surveyors to the contrary, some natives were belligerently skeptical about the water flowing "uphill" to Afton. One loudly proclaimed from the hotel porch that he would "drink every drop that flowed from Vallonia Springs."

There came, nevertheless, in the fall of 1895 a bountiful supply of pure spring water, enabling Aftonites to get rid of smelly and pestiferous outhouses, to install running water and modern bath-

rooms in their homes, and to have increased protection against fires. Hayes and Mudge, in promoting the water system, might have followed the example of hustling promoters of the time in most other villages of the region and made it a private enterprise redounding to their personal profit. This they did not do. They insisted from the beginning that the system must be village-owned and village-operated, accruing to the benefit of all the villagers. So the income from water-rents went to the village, sufficing not only to pay off fairly promptly the costs of construction but also to provide surplus funds for repairs and for village improvement such as street paving and maintenance. An early result of the installation of the water system was the organization of an efficient "Hose Company" of volunteer firemen.

About the same time, street name-signs were installed at intersections in the village; and street corners were bedecked with large kerosene-lamps which a village employe, making the rounds, lit at dusk and snuffed out at dawn (unless he overslept). In 1898 Marshall Hill organized an "Afton Gas Light Company" which undertook, by means of artificial gas, to provide better lighting for both streets and homes. It did so for a time along Main and Spring Streets, but it was soon put out of business by the arrival of electricity and its installation on the streets, in village houses, stores, and churches, and presently on farms all over the township.

The first telephone line in Afton, so far as I know, was an amateur one, connecting the Hayes house with the store of Marshall Hill and enabling Doctor and Merchant to chat with each other. I am sure that the first telephone switchboard, connecting a few Afton lines with the outside world, was in the Hayes house, one or another member of the family acting as "Central." This was briefly, however. In 1898 an "Afton Telephone Company" was organized with an office of its own containing an enlarged switchboard and a paid "telephone girl." Not until still later, and then chiefly through the efforts of Darwin Craig, was the Afton Company merged into the larger Deposit Telephone Company.

In 1899, the title of the Afton Academy was formally changed, in compliance with growing usage and State counsel, to that of Afton High School. This was during the principalship of Charles S. Gibson, undoubtedly one of the very best and most energetic

principals that the school has had. He and his charming wife (who taught the fifth and sixth grades) were here from 1896 to 1902. School standards were upheld. Extra-curricular activities were encouraged. Altogether, the school acquired such excellent repute as to attract more and more students from outlying districts, and even from a distance. Attendance in the higher grades was double in 1902 what it had been in 1877, going up from 45 to 90, while increase in total attendance was from 140 to 220.

The increased school attendance led in 1908 to the replacement of the bird-like frame building of 1875 by a new and larger structure of brick and stone, containing auditorium and gymnasium in addition to class-rooms, library, and laboratory. Its cornerstone appropriately bears the names of the three members of the Board of Education at the time, men who did much for the school and served long on the Board: Will Hall, continuously from 1894 to 1915; Morris J. Mudge, 1904-1913; Philetus A. Hayes, 1890-1893, 1897-1900, 1905-1911.

8. CONCLUSION OF AFTON'S FIRST CENTURY

The generation which witnessed the separation of Afton from Bainbridge in 1857 and flourished during the next twenty or thirty years, was succeeded by a second generation that made the progress which has just been sketched from the late 1880's to the First World War. It is a third generation which in its youth participated in that War and which has since furnished leadership for the continuing progress of Afton town and village. It is already aging, and it will be a fourth generation that will direct local affairs in the first decades of Afton's second century.

I shall not single out for mention the leaders of the last forty years as I did those of earlier times. They are too numerous for the space permitted, and the large majority of our people know who they are and how to evaluate them and their services. I confine myself here to pointing out a few of the more recent events and making some general reflections.

As in the American Civil War of the 1860's, so in the World Wars of this later time, Aftonites have loyally furnished their fully proportionate share of fighters and fallen dead. Memorial Day, here as elsewhere, has assumed broader significance, and the local Clifford-Holmes Post No. 923 of the American Legion worthily continues and upholds the patriotic tradition of the now defunct Vanderburg Post of the Grand Army of the Republic. The township supplied American armed forces with 115 men in the First World War and 357 in the Second. Among Afton's dead in the former were Andrew Clifford and Willard Holmes (for whom the local Legion Post is named), Charles Seely Jennings, Andrew Humiston, and Elton Parsons; and among those in the latter war were Lt. Burnard Page, Bruce Bosket, Adam Bryden, Paul Estes, Benton Dutton Hyde, and Sam Wilmarth. Moreover, Afton is well represented among the youth of the land who, in one branch or another of the armed services, and in one or another farflung region of the world, have latterly been endeavoring to safeguard freedom and peace. For the war memorial in Caswell Park, funds were raised by the Legion under Commander Donald McHugh and the Women's Auxiliary under Sophie Quincy.

At home, there have been some notable events. One was the

organization in 1916 of the Afton Home Bureau, a woman's affiliate of the State Agricultural College of Cornell University. Under its first president, Mrs. Daniel Grant and through splendid co-operation and hard work of its members, sufficient funds were raised to ensure the transformation of the old Valley House into the present Village Hall. Successive presidents, since Mrs. Grant, have been Mrs. Burt B. Hyde, Mrs. Fred Foster, and Mrs. George Hawke. While the Bureau has retained part of the second floor of the Hall for its own use, most of the building has been turned over to the village for a variety of purposes. The ground floor has been divided between a spacious auditorium for public meetings (including elections) and commodious quarters for the public library. On the second floor, rooms have been assigned to village offices (police and justice), to the Legion, to Boy and Girl Scouts, and to an historical collection.

The movement for a public library was sponsored by the Home Bureau, and the first funds for it were solicited in 1933 through joint efforts of Mrs. Carlton Hayes, Mrs. Alden Mudge Sr., and Mrs. Whit Y. McHugh. Popular response was promptly favorable, and at a meeting on August 11th, 1933, "Afton Free Library" was definitely founded and by-laws adopted. A provisional charter was granted by the State in 1935, and an absolute charter in 1951. The first trustees were Howard Adamy, Lawrence Carroll, Daniel Grant, Mrs. Burt Hyde, Mrs. McHugh, Mrs. Mudge, and Mrs. John Tobey. The first custodian was Sylvia Pierce (Mrs. Clyde Swarner), a trained librarian. Annual subsidies have been forthcoming from both town and village budgets, as well as from the State and local "community chest." The collection of well chosen volumes has been steadily growing, as has also the number of readers.

A few years after the Village Hall was acquired, the brick building originally put up by Daniel A. Carpenter, and much later occupied by Clarence Eldred's clothing shop, was purchased and turned into a Town Hall. On the first floor, offices were fitted up for Town Supervisor and Town Clerk, with, of course, the town records. Most unfortunately, Afton's early town records were lost in the great fire of 1884, but there are plenty since then. The town firemen have their quarters and meeting hall on the second floor.

Two notable organizations, other than Home Bureau and Li-

brary, have been particularly active in recent years. One is the local Grange, comprising farming families of the neighborhood. On the eve of the Second World War it acquired a house on North Main Street near the river bridge. Afterwards this was sold, and purchase made of the brick building which had formerly housed Keator's grocery store.

The other is the Chamber of Commerce, founded in June 1925 and made up of business and professional men. Its first officers were: Alden A. Mudge, Sr., president; C. Wayland Guy, vice-president; Clarence Eldred, secretary; and A. T. Morgan, treasurer. A prominent part in it has since been played by Darwin H. Craig, local attorney, and Fred Foster, superintendent of schools.

There had long been a succession of youth organizations in Afton. In the 1890's, for example, there was a "Boy's Brigade," with annual summer campings on one of the river islands where Cunahunta Indian villagers had raised corn six score years previously. It declined and died, however, as did a unit of Boy Scouts formed in 1921. But then in 1931, sponsored by Clifford-Holmes Post of the American Legion, a more enduring unit was chartered as Afton Troop No. 51. It was affiliated with "Delahanna District" and the Susquehanna Council of Boy Scouts of America, possessing Camp Tuscarora near Gulf Summit. Among the local Scoutmasters have been Roger Snedeker, Larry Estes, Malcolm Parker, Everett Baker, and Merwyn Fenner. An "Explorer Unit" for teen-age boys was added in the 1940's, and a "cub pack" for little fellows in 1954. Of these, the leaders have been James Blakeslee, James Ernstrom, Thomas Neal, and James Morrow.

Already, in the autumn of 1926, an Afton troop of Girl Scouts came into existence and, thanks to the devoted and inspiring guidance of Mildred Merrell, our present Postmaster, it has flourished ever since. It is now associated with the Chenango County Council and is raising \$2,500 as its share toward the project for a County camp on Lake Sear.

Significant additions were made to Afton's water system in the 1930's. New springs were tapped and the surrounding hillside was planted with 130,000 evergreen trees. This was done during the long and efficient mayoralty of E. L. Doolittle.

The First National Bank had opened for business in May

1920, and two years later C. Wayland Guy began his long career as cashier. In 1928 the Bank moved into its present dignified new office building. As president, Morris J. Mudge was succeeded on his death in 1932 by Burt B. Hyde, and he in turn in 1939 by Bruce S. Keator. To the staff, meanwhile, were added Carroll Vail, Richard Barr, and several others. In the last thirty-five years the bank capital has increased from \$30,000 to over \$300,000.

A considerable amount of new building has characterized recent years. Besides the bank building on Main Street, just mentioned, the Catholic Church of St. Agnes was erected in 1949 on the corner of Spring and Academy Streets in brick colonial style at a cost of \$45,000, and adorned with a Rembrandt etching (the gift of Dr. George Bennett) and with carvings of an accomplished sculptor, Harry Donahue. Moreover, church annexes for social purposes have been built by the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Episcopalians. And a handsome brick building, housing the fire engine and other fire-fighting equipment, has been erected on Spring Street opposite St. Agnes Church.

A goodly number of new residences are to be found all about the village. A group of natives have acquired Afton Lake, with surrounding land, and have ringed it with a series of attractive cottages and homes. Likewise the river area on the east side which years ago was covered with strawberry beds, has become the scene of a fine housing development. And, replacing the iron bridge of 1908, a new and wider one of steel and concrete now spans the Susquehanna. It is Afton's sixth bridge at the spot.

Probably the event most symptomatic of the latest era in Afton's — and indeed American — history has been the extinction of all the local district schools and their merging into a single "Central School" in Afton village. This has been accompanied, we know, by a revolutionary influx of boys and girls in school buses from the surrounding countryside and corresponding increase of teaching staff, student activities, and financial outlay. A graduating class, numbering from four to twelve prior to centralization, now numbers from twenty-five to thirty-five. To meet pressing need, the school building of 1908, which cost \$25,000, has been extended and re-equipped in 1957, during the principalship of Lauren B. Andrews, and the superintendency of Fred P. Foster, at a cost of

three quarters of a million. It's a long step from South Jericho's log-cabin school of 1790!

After all, however, we must remember that Afton, like other American towns, is no longer living in an era of oxen or of horse-and-buggy, or even in an era of steam railroad trains. Here, as elsewhere, the advent of the automobile, truck, and tractor has ushered in a new era. The tractor, with attendant machinery (combines, balers, corn-blowers, hay driers, etc.), has profoundly affected farming. Applicable to valley and plateau farms, it has prospered these, while many a less favored hill farm has been abandoned and transformed by the State into forest preserves. Nowadays in Afton township the contrast is striking between valleys with their cultivated and improved appearance and some of the hills reverting to primitive conditions, roamed over again by wild animals, and with only an occasional dilapidated building or decaying apple orchard to indicate that they had once, in days of Jericho, been cleared and tilled.

One result is that, while residents of Afton village have gradually increased in number, the population of Afton township as a whole was less in 1950 than it was a hundred years before. This is equally true of all Chenango County. For despite marked growth of Norwich city and the several villages, the total population of the County declined from 40,311 in 1850 to 39,138 in 1950.

A fast-moving era is surely with us now. Fifty years ago, it took half a day to get from Afton to Bainbridge and back by horse and buggy; now, by auto, it takes twenty minutes. Fifty years ago, moreover, the railroad was the one means of distance travel; now, huge freight and coal trains, with diesel engines, whiz through town, but very seldom does anybody board the one remaining passenger train. Everybody now uses automobile or motor bus. In 1910 few in Afton had an auto; in 1957 scarcely anyone, whether villager or farmer, is without an auto, and many have two.

With the auto, Aftonites have been seeing the world outside, and becoming ever less isolated, ever more nationally minded. Retired farmers and merchants, who used to spend their declining years in the village, now motor for at least the winter months to Florida. School-children make trips en masse by bus to Washington. Family auto tours to California are not uncommon. On Sun-

days and holidays the improved Afton highways are full of cars in which our people make pleasure jaunts over a wide area or are visited by relatives and friends from afar. The township now has five repair-garages, four agencies for selling and trading automobiles, and eleven gasoline-filling stations!

Afton has never had a motion-picture theatre, but for any such lack it now more than compensates by having a radio in every home and television in most. By these means it can hear and see whatever the country at large is hearing and seeing.

In conclusion, attention should be called to the very important fact that the automobile has helped Aftonites not only to get away from home but to live at home while working at a distance. Thereby the earlier tendency for young people to migrate to industrial centers is being appreciably checked. An example of the newer tendency is afforded by the sizable group of enterprising ex-G. I.'s who, returning to Afton after World War II, have resettled here. And what more beautiful spot! Here they have cooperatively built new and attractive village houses in which they are raising families, while they earn a living by daily motoring to work in offices, shops, or factories some miles away. They thus are reenforcing the *residential* character of Afton and are taking a lively interest in its civic and social welfare. The present and immediately preceding mayors—Richard Holdrege and Alden Mudge Jr.—with other members of the town and village governing boards, are ex-G.I.'s, and they are doing a splendid job.

Such persons ensure Afton's continuing health and true progress as our beautiful and God-blessed town moves from its first century of achievement into a second century of rich promise.

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Lu B. Cake, *Old Mormon Ms. Found* (1899), the diary of Reed Peck's Mormon days

One should not overlook, moreover, the valuable reminiscences of such descendants of early Aftonites as Mrs. Daniel Grant (Aurelia Bresee), Mrs. Allen Herkimer (Grace Church), Mrs. Dan J. Holleran (Eva Farnsworth), Mrs. Dan Jennings (Isabel Seely), Mrs. John Liggett (Celia Landers), etc., and the materials in the Historical Rooms of the Afton Free Library. Much unpublished material on local history has been collected by Dr. Edward Danforth of Bainbridge. Also, many pertinent articles appeared in *The Afton Enterprise* in 1957.

APPENDIX

NOTES ON THE TEXT OF DR. HAYES

p. 1, par. 1. Mr. Ted Whitney of Norwich, a former teacher and student of Indian artifacts and archaeology, believes that the flats just south of the village limits on Route 7 are the most likely site. Lieut. Erkuries Beatty, a soldier with General James Clinton in his descent of the Susquehanna in August of 1779, mentions that they camped near the site of Cunahunta which had been burned the fall before and that "A little below this town there is 3 or four Islands in the River where the Indians Raised their Corn."

p. 5, par. 3. The burning of the church may not have been as dastardly a deed as here implied. According to Smith's *History of Chenango and Madison Counties* of 1880, the meeting house was begun in 1799 but never completed. He quotes an informant, "If the building was fired, it was not on account of a disrelish for religion of which it was a symbol, but because the building itself was considered no ornament to the town."

p. 5, par. 3. Commodore William Bainbridge was the son of a physician in Princeton, New Jersey. The family home on Nassau Street is now open to the public as an historical museum.

p. 6, par. 3. Some sources say that Hezekiah Stowell traded the Harmonie Farm site with Elnathan Bush for the lands in South Jericho where he finally settled.

p. 6, par. 3. Isaac Meier should read Isaac Miner.

p. 8, par. 1. The house built by Solomon Landers at 155 Main Street was extensively remodeled and the pillared portico added in the 1930's by Dr. Carlton J. H. Hayes, the property being named by him Jericho Farm.

p. 10, par. 1. Gregory's Store, 80 East Main St.

p. 10, par. 2. According to Edith G. Colwell in her *Hi-O Jericho*, Peter Betts moved to North Bainbridge about 1820-25, becoming an extensive landowner there and establishing a store, a grist mill, a brewery and an oil mill.

p. 10, par. 2. The Enos Johnston farm at Bettsburg Corner is now owned by Herbert Cross. The mansard-roofed house was built about 1876.

p. 10, par. 3. Many plank roads were built as connectors to railroads. The Erie had been completed to Binghamton in 1848, passing through Deposit. The plank road from Vallonia Springs to Deposit was built in 1850 and then extended to Nineveh and Coventry according to O.P. Judd in his *History of the Town of Coventry*.

p. 11, par. 3. Heth Kelsey Inn, 211 Main Street, now owned by Wayne Black.

p. 11, par. 3. Daniel Grant house, 14 Main Street, now owned by James Royston.

p. 11, par. 4. Edgar Garrett house, 197 Main Street, now owned by Ernest Poole.

p. 11, par. 4. William Herkimer house, 9 Caswell Street, now owned by Brian Barre.

p. 11, par. 4. Amos Caswell house, 13 Caswell Street, now owned by James Blakesley.

p. 11, par. 4. Gilman Caswell house, 17 Caswell Street.

p. 11, par. 4. Liggett house, 129 Main Street.

p. 14, par. 1. The New England tradition of the meeting house being used for both worship and town business had died out prior to the Revolution, according to Ola Elizabeth Winslow in her *Meetinghouse Hill, 1638-1783*. When taxes no longer supported the church, the town was excluded from use of the church building. Here the situation has been reversed with religious services being held in a public building. As late as the 1930's Rev. Daniel Geddes of the Afton Presbyterian Church held Sunday School services in the Bulkeley, Melendy Hill and Bettsburg district schoolhouses.

p. 15, par. 2. Josiah Stowell lived on the present Reiling farm south of Afton on Route 7.

p. 15, par. 2. Fawn Brodie, in her biography of Joseph Smith entitled *No Man Knows My History*, states that, "When Joseph Smith first began to use his seer or "peep" stone, he employed the folklore familiar to rural America. The details of his rituals and incantations are unimportant because they were commonplace."

p. 15, par. 4. The Biblical statement from John 4:44, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country", is certainly true of Joseph Smith. Writings by his contemporaries in the local area are derogatory as are later works such as those by Lu B. Cake at the end of the 19th century. The books *The Farm Boy and the Angel* by Carl Carmer and *No Man Knows My History* by Fawn Brodie are more objective and attempt to present an accurate picture of Joseph Smith and his times.

p. 15, par. 4. The 1826 trial transcript is now lost but it was published in several places during the 19th century. It is included in the appendix of Fawn Brodie's book. Both trials are discussed in a pamphlet by Wesley P. Walters.

p. 16, par. 2. The Biblical Urim and Thummim were discussed in a scholarly article by W. Muss-Arnott in 1900. They were stones set in the breastplate of the high priest of Israel and are mentioned in Exodus, Deteronomy, I Samuel and II Samuel. They were used in communication with Jahweh before making decisions.

p. 16, par. 3. The episode of walking on water is told as happening in several localities -- Nineveh, Lanesboro, South Bainbridge. One of the most credible statements is that by Harvey Baker in a newspaper clipping of 1900 in the Collection of Regional History at Cornell University. He relates the discovery by Thomas and Enos Cornwell of a plank bridge beneath the water in the river as they were mowing hay on the river flat. The Cornwell homestead was the present Arthur Grover farm on Route 41 south of Afton.

p. 17, par. 1. Two letters in the Collection of Regional History at Cornell University, notarized by Delos Van Woert of Afton in 1903, describe the departure from South Bainbridge of Smith's group as witnessed by Harriet E. Shay of Afton and Sally Ann Beardsley of Coventry.

p. 19, par. 1. The Nickerson house, called Sunny Crest, stood on South Main Street next to 109 Main Street. It was razed to make way for a proposed Victory Market which was never built.

p. 19, par. 2. The Town Hall is at 169 Main Street.

p. 19, par. 2 The Carpenter house is at 163 Main Street.

p. 19, par. 2. The Farnsworth house is at 148 Caswell Street.

p. 19, par. 3. The Church homestead is on Route 41 south of Afton and is now owned by Fritz Schultz.

p. 19, par. 4. The Sand Bank house is on Sand Street at the rear of the school and at present is unoccupied.

p. 23, par. 1. The total number of men enlisted in the Town of Afton was 156, but, according to the register compiled in 1865 by Town Clerk George Champlin, the addresses of about one third of these men were from adjoining towns such as Coventry, Colesville, Vallonia Springs and Sanford. Some of these may possibly have lived within the town and received their mail at another post office. However several enlistees gave addresses in Unadilla; Oneida, Madison County; Scott, Wayne County; New York City, etc., while no address is given for others.

p. 25, par. 2. The Chenango County map of 1855 definitely shows the larger portion of the village on the west side of the river. Even the Burr maps of 1829 and 1839 mark the village on the west side although the location is out of place in relation to Kelsey Brook.

p. 25, par. 3. The Union School was torn down after the building of the new brick school. Some of the lumber from it was used in the building of the house now owned by Stanley LeSuer at 46 Caswell Street.

p. 26, par. 2. The Afton Inn is at 175 Main Street.

p. 26, par. 3. Page's Market is at 158 Main Street. It was sold to Gordon Gregory and Keith Weeks on June 1, 1974, but is now used as a used furniture store.

p. 28, par. 2. Neil Hyde states that he remembers the fire at the sash and blind factory. As he would have been only two and one half in 1892, he thinks the date was later. O.P. Judd, in his *History of Afton*, gives the date as May 6, 1902.

p. 30, par. 2. Crowley's Milk Plant closed about 1971.

p. 31, par. 2. George Mudge sold the feed mill to McDowell and Walker in 1973. A spectacular fire destroyed the plant in November of 1975.

p. 31, par. 3. The Alton Jenks house is at 20 Spring Street.

p. 31, par. 4. The Clarence Eldred house is at 141 Main Street.

p. 32, par. 2. Zenas Tarbell's house is at 104 Main Street.

p. 32, par. 3. Horton Hardware is at 198 Main Street.

p. 36, par. 3. The name Benton Dutton Hyde should read William Benton Hyde.

p. 41, par. 3. Richard Holdrege was not an ex-G.I.

