

CENTENNIAL REVISITED



A Collection of Articles from the
“Afton Enterprise” for the
Centennial of the Town of Afton, 1957

Edited by Charles J. Decker,
Afton Town Historian

FRONT COVER: Mabel Clock, Editor Howard Adamy, wife Edith, and dog Buddy examine a Centennial issue of the Afton Enterprise. The Adamys received an award for their coverage of the event.

PREFACE

In 1957, the Town of Afton celebrated the Centennial of its separation from Bainbridge to form a new town in Chenango County. Preparations were made throughout the year, with the main celebration and parade on July 13. The actual date of incorporation was November 18, 1857.

For several months during 1957, local residents wrote down their memories or researched records for a series of articles which appeared in the Afton Enterprise, a weekly newspaper. These articles were for all to read with the aim to inform them of the history of our town which began many years before 1857. The culmination of the observance was the address by Dr. Carlton J. H. Hayes at the Afton Fairgrounds on July 13. In his talk he outlined our history from colonial times. This address was later expanded into the "Story of Afton" which is still available in a second printing.

It is fitting that this volume of articles from the newspaper be dedicated to those writers who preserved the various parts of our past for their contemporaries and their successors. A great fund of local history has thus been preserved and can be enjoyed as well by readers of the 1990's, nearly forty years later.

Many of these writers are now gone, so we cannot again go to them for their stories. We are fortunate that they wrote them down in 1957 so that we can still read them.

—Charles J. Decker, Afton Town Historian

Photos of authors are as near 1957 as possible.

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The Afton Historical Society

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BEGINNINGS

Town and Celebration

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOL OUTLINES BIRTH OF A COMMUNITY

by Fred P. Foster

Into the unbroken wilderness, our forebears came in 1786. They settled on lands of the Clinton tract (later Jericho, 1791; Bainbridge, 1814) the present Afton area being known as South Bainbridge until November 18, 1857 when Afton Township was formed from Bainbridge.

Here they built their rude cabins among the giant trees of the forest as they pushed the western frontier down the Susquehanna valley. Although they well knew that privation, relentless toil and hardship awaited them in establishing their homes and providing a livelihood for themselves and families, yet there was in their indomitable spirit a will that was worthy of the challenge that awaited them.

They found here no welcoming fireside, for until 1786 there had been no white settlement west of Unadilla; instead the Indian roamed widely through the valley where they chose to establish a settlement, he being a "neighbor" upon whose good will they could not depend. The Indian was always suspicious and often hostile to the invading white man since the punitive Sullivan-Clinton campaign had just swept over them in 1779, leaving many Indian villages fired and sacked.

The valley was largely in its natural state, except for light clearings farther to the South at the great island of Gunnagunter (later Stowell's island) where a few barn-like structures had been built, a little corn was raised in the "patches" and native apple stock was bearing some fruit. While other "Pale-faces" had looked upon the area since long before the Revolution as missionaries and traders, these pioneering families were the first to explore and to take root here.

Although the wood-land was a trackless territory, save for Indian trails, the newcomers were fortunate in following the course of the "noble river" (Susquehanna) from its headwaters at Otsego Lake since it provided a direction and, in log canoes or dug-outs, its long stretches of placid water could be utilized for easier travelling.

A drama of high adventure was being enacted as they pressed onward by the river. Although many of them were from families of New England and had known there conditions of reasonable comfort, yet they shouldered the task, resolutely and cheerfully, of rearing their rude cabins of split logs whose "chinks" were plastered with mud against the elements. A covering of bark, elm and hemlock being favored, made the dwelling fairly water-proof. Since glass had not yet come to Clinton, the window openings were covered with greased paper. The door, when a blanket of skin was not used for the purpose, was made of split slabs set upon wooden pins and hinges. The cabin floor was generally of the "halved" trees but

often it was of dirt so that a fire could be kindled directly on the floor, the smoke rising to pass through an opening in the roof above. The one-room home was "parlor, bed-room and bath"— also, the kitchen!

The food for the family in these early days was mostly a little grain, wild plants and their fruits, a few vegetables, maple sugar and whatever animal foods could be had from the hunt or streams. As time passed, later settlers brought to the area a few of our common farm animals; but the Indians had cows and hogs before that time. The water supply was the spring, in which the locality still abounds, or the running brook. It is probable that much river water was utilized since the homes were set hard by.

As soon as the forest was opened to admit the sun-light, often by merely killing the trees by girdling, Indian style, little patches of cereal grains began to be tilled; harvesting of course, in this primitive state was done by hand, as was, also, threshing and grinding. Later as the need for added space for planting arose, great trees were felled, dragged together by the plodding ox-team and burned. The waste of this first-growth of virgin timber sacrificed to the flames, was prodigious; but the territory was being wrested from the world for what must be deemed a noble purpose: that of home-building. One can imagine that the heavens over the valley of the newly found home-land must have been aglow as the torch was carried, often nightly, from "burning to burning."

As already intimated, these settlers were sturdy stock. The first settlement in the Afton area was by the family of Elnathan Bush, of Dutch ancestry, who came from Sheffield, Massachusetts in July 1786. They pressed on to Cooperstown on horseback; then by canoe down the river and settled on the west side opposite the "big island", known as Stowell's Island, two miles below Afton.

Before the Revolutionary War, Bush had visited the region with the hope of settling here, being accompanied at that time by two relatives. In 1790 he exchanged this property with Hezekiah Stowell for one hundred acres of land in Bainbridge which had been taken up by Stowell the previous year, and removed there. It is the place now known as "Harmonie Farm," adjoining the Beatty acres.

The Stowells settled on the West side of the river on the site formerly occupied by Bush.

In 1803 Peter Betts migrated here from Connecticut to form the nucleus of a settlement, giving it his name, now Bettsburg.

As Justice of the Peace, he was called Judge Betts. He opened the first store and served as Postmaster in the first Post Office.

One of his four children, Pamelia, was the great-great grandmother of Roberta Harper Johnson of this place.

Judge Betts served Chenango County in the State Assembly for three terms.

A sawmill and gristmill were operated on that site, along with a cheese factory (which building still stands) and a tavern. Afton's first bank was located there, and other business enterprises trace their beginnings back to the community known as Bettsburg.

This flourishing community was the forerunner of later commercial and social development of the Afton area.

HISTORY IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

by Centenarian

We approached the old house in a modern car, intent on the business at hand. The Historical Committee was meeting to prepare for the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Afton, July 13.

Appropriately the place of meeting was the home of Eva Holleran, known as the Old Farnsworth Place, named after her grandfather who built it in 1847 on the foundation of an older residence that had been destroyed by fire the previous year.

Named "Maple Leaf Farm" for the brand of butter that was produced and sent to New York City in five pound packs, an air of history surrounded the premises. We entered, feeling awed in the presence of persons and events, long past.

The committee settled into the comfort of the charming living room of the spacious quarters. The old law required at every so many miles buildings should be erected to provide lodgings for travellers, and this was on the road from Oxford to Deposit where considerable traffic occurred.

The Centenarian, invisible, hovered in the room, listening to voices of the present and the past.

"A hundred years," observed Mrs. Celia Liggett.

"A long time," nodded Mrs. Holleran.

Fred Foster, the Chairman, smiled. "If those years passed as quickly as these, then it would not seem so long."

Harry Horton was entertainingly genial while the order of business advanced. He spoke of arranging some of his prized historical possessions in his store windows to share their interest and beauty with the general public. The Chairman wondered how many other merchants would make window space available for the use of the Committee. Better to have them on display for several weeks in the business district, it was thought, than a one-day show on the Big Day at the Fair Grounds. (July 12, remember? By then, everyone will be visiting and renewing old acquaintances and enjoying the many events and activities now being planned by the Program Committee. But that is another story!)

On this day in history, May 23, 1957, Dr. Carlton Hayes voiced his desire to see a comprehensive history of the town of Afton prepared for publication.

"We should have begun this work a year ago." Celia Liggett spoke for many. Poor comfort for me, the Centenarian, I guess I wasn't so important at a mere ninety-nine.

Dr. Hayes reminded us that the enabling Act of Legislature, the separated Afton from Bainbridge, occurred on November 18, 1857, to take effect some months later. We wondered, would interest be sustained to continue the necessary research, "spade work," he said, for as long as it would take, after the Celebration Day? The Doctor's scholarly list of 24 topics of Afton history that ought to be developed glided on like the chapters of a book. It really should be done...

The talk went on about ways and means: there will be more articles, of course, in the weekly issues of the Afton Enterprise, to culminate with the special large centennial edition in July. (Copy welcome, the earlier the better, came the word from the Publicity Committee, represented there by Frances Fenner) and, we hope,

for items and features in other publications.

What about a brochure or souvenir program for the Celebration? Would that be an appropriate place for a short historical summary? Alas, the Finance Committee is having its problems. Will the modest budget allow even for a bare printed program? Would a souvenir booklet sell, and if so, for how much? Could advertising make such a project self-supporting? These questions necessarily arose, but their answers lay outside the powers of the Committee to invoke.

One thing we knew, the long-suffering merchants were generously contributing, as usual, to the Centennial Fund, but much more help would be necessary to meet the minimum budget.

Would private citizens give, a dollar or a dime, to help put this thing across? (Everett Baker, Finance Chairman, will gladly accept any sum, large or small.)

The Centenarian muses to himself, hearing the words, sensing the anxiety. Mrs. Holleran read entries from the old diaries of her grandfather, Jonathan Farnsworth of 1856-58 recounting frequent borrowings and lendings interspersed with reports of day by day activities of the time.

The diary, with a handsome scrap book made in her Librarian days, rested on a hassock before our hostess. The Centenarian dropped a silent blessing on the few who see and know and care and record, aware of those who have gone before—and others yet to come.

The Centenarian watched the Historical Committee, hard at work, contributing time and talent and energy and wondered: will this event, this celebration, be just another field day, to come and go and be forgotten? Or will there be a record?... Will it fail for lack of a few dollars? Do people, not just the members of the Centennial Committee, but the rest of us, enough of us, CARE?

Only time, my friend, will tell.

The charming room glowed with kind colors and respectful lighting. Conversation was warm relaxed, constructive. The thinking was earnest, with careful consideration, bright with laughs.

Harry Horton remembered picking strawberries for Charlie Graham on the river flats, and told about the arguments that went along with picking.

"I remember, Darwin Craig and I, were picking berries, and had the hottest argument about the presidential election. McKinley had just beat Bryan and we got so excited, knowing so little... boys."

"I picked too," Celia spoke up "There on the flats where the development is coming up now."

"And so did I," remembered Dr. Hayes, "and he wouldn't let us eat one—not at a cent a quart!"

As Carlton Hayes read through his list of topics that should be researched, we reminisced, aloud, and silently. (Ah the stories that I, Centenarian, could tell, that never were written down!)

Who knows how Algerine Street got its name?

"As it came to me from Dr. Danforth," Dr. Hayes recalled, "it was in 1808 when the United States was at war with the Barbary Pirates and landing at Algeria! Some bad characters—no offense to anyone—lived on that road and the street was

called, Algerine, after the pirates."

We laughed while Mrs. Fenner scribbled busily. None of us had seen the tale in print— before.

Of course the matter of Joe Smith came up. He came and went before my time and so I have to fill out the facts from things I have been told, just like the rest. But it's a fact that his Book of Mormon was published in 1830 and he was tried for disturbing the peace in Nineveh and South Bainbridge (Afton) before my time, and the records stand. So does the state marker at the fair grounds.

With a firm hand, Chairman Fred Foster guided the discussion and as delightful time ran low, he ticked off the items of business:

See that merchants will make window space available.

Who will lend historical items for display?

Collect items at the Town Clerk's office; be sure they're labelled for safe return.

Invite the public to share in our historical resources; memories, letters, documents, records, sought by the Historical Committee for reference and compilation.

Our "good nights" were exchanged through the old church-style door with its iron knocker, timeless hospitality of the Inn-size house. The history minded folk found their modern cars under the trees and stars.

The Centenarian drifted back upon the memories of other days to his special instant in the scheme of things.

Centenarian is an imaginary resident of the Town of Afton for its duration, who reports on past persons and events with the privileges of history.



Fred P. Foster
Afton Yearbook 1962

II. REMINISCENCES

NOTES FROM SKETCH BY MRS. MAE LIGGETT

Notes from the Early Days of Afton
by the late Mae Caswell Liggett

The setting sun still cast the glory of reflected gold through windows which hold memories of other happy days in Afton.

Many years have passed since that June morning when Mary and Sally were sitting on the steps of the Bank and T.L. Willey's store watching the people as they passed.

It was a long wooden building with two wide steps extending the length of the stores. In the bank was Mr. Devillo Church and his sons Fred and George and the large white bulldog which seemed to lead such a lonely life.

Then the next was the store filled with so many interesting things; there were counters of gay calico and glass cans filled with long sticks of colored peppermint candy and one filled with bright jackson balls; then there were shelves filled with glass oil lamps and chimneys and lanterns to carry when the streets were dark at night.

Next was the furniture store of Mr. Howard, painted white, and part of the house where his wife and two daughters, Hatty and Grace lived. Mr. Howard was also the undertaker and his nephew Grant MacDonald had come to help him.

In the other direction they saw a long line of horses, wagons and some buggies. Farmers and their wives were coming to town to do their shopping and the line of hitching posts which extended in from all the stores gave them a place to tie their horses. A team of oxen had been driven down from his farm by Mason Martin.

In front of the saloon which was run by Mr. Hunt, many of the men were tipped back in comfortable arm chairs enjoying the morning sunshine.

The saloon was painted a light pink. Then came the drug store of Henry Carr while above the store, the Masons held their meetings. Then came another drug store, that of Mr. Tuck Hyde.

In both of these drug stores were comfortable arm chairs which were in the back of the store next to the round stoves which kept the stores and men warm when the snows of winter howled outside.

Mr. Carr was very peaceful and when the arguments became to heated for comfort, it was always found that the chairs had been removed to some unknown quarter and politicians had no place to sit.

Sally and Mary were always attracted to the large blue and red glass globes in front of these stores.

But today their attention was centered on the train which was to bring a car filled with boys and girls from New York City. They were fresh-air children and were to be taken into the different homes.

They had walked down the wide wooden walk and run up and down the stairs and slid down the railing at the sides which was quite thrilling as the stairs were steep and the distance down the bank would have meant a bad fall and they still had a long time to wait so it would be better to see what was going on in the town.

Underneath the store next to the railroad walk, Mr. Zenus Tarble had a meat market and inside it was always nice and cool. On the other side of the building, Mr. Hickox had a hardware store and on the steps a mowing machine and rake and tools were standing. Inside there was a high bicycle which was the envy of all the boys in town. George Church had one and was often seen riding.

Mr. Hill had the grocery store. He lived on the hill overlooking the town and was helped in the store by his son Marshall. All the children knew Marshall was their friend and would often trade candy for eggs when they could not get pennies from their own families.

Across the street Mr. John Chamberlin and his brother Ralph had a place where coal was sold and back of it was a livery stable where horses and buggies could be rented by the day. They were known to all the young people as Uncle John and Uncle Ralph because they always had time to notice children and sometimes Uncle John would let Kitty Shay take a little black pony which would follow her around the street.

Kittie had the long dark braids reaching below her waist, her father owned the Shay block and kept a grocery store. He lived in the next house with the long French windows. The Sash and Blind factory run by Addison Brower and Billy Wright was another busy place. Here one listened to the constant buzz of the machinery where timber was sawed while the yard lumber wagons brought the large logs of pine and hemlock which were piled for sawing

In front was the carriage shop of Coggins and Merrill. . and in back of the building was the blacksmith shop of Jack Swift. Here one saw horses waiting to be shod and saw the sparks from the anvil as the shoes were being made and thrown into the tub of cold water At the back of this building was the place where the staves and barrels were made by George Champlin

All day long men came and went. It was a happy place as one listed to the sound of the whistle re-echoing through the town and heard the laughter of those who worked.

In front of the wagon shop was the town pump and here small boys and girls assembled not only to get a drink of water but receive a ducking if one was not very careful.

There stood the Sentinel Building where the town paper was published by Mr. Seaman and it was here one learned of the important happenings in Afton.

Mr. Seaman's son had received some distinction as a tight rope walker.

Mary and Sally remembered the stories told by their mothers and grandmothers of the times when the pioneer settlers were living in their log homes with the great fireplaces and brick ovens where all the food was cooked. They told of the times when they killed their own meat and how the Indians came during the butchering and brought them salt (in return for a share of the meat) saying, "My squaw

she love them." The Indians knew of a secret place where it could be obtained and gave it to the white people.

Conkopot was their chief and they were tall and brave.

One time their grandmother had prepared a dinner for the noon-day meal and put it in the open window for a moment but when she turned it was no longer there but was being carried away by a number of Indians.

The streams were filled with fish and the woods with deers and bears and all kinds of wild game which they shot with bows and arrows.

The Landers family lived in a little home build of logs above Afton near the bank of the Susquehanna. It was a cold morning in winter when Philander and his brother Hial started for the woods on the hill to cut wood. They had commenced to cut down a large tree with a hollow at the bottom when suddenly a big black bear appeared. As the bear commenced to slowly come toward them they realized their danger. Hial ran to the house to get his gun, while the little brown dog remained with his master, barking and yelping at the bear, which grabbed it, throwing it in the air, but all the time getting nearer. Philander realized that Hial would return too late. He raised his sharpened axe and struck the bear a piercing blow which cut its head open. Standing on its hind feet it put its two front paws to its head holding it together and with the most pitiful cry died, leaving the little cubs which the boys took home.

Mary and Sally were familiar with the story of two little Indian boys who lived with their tribe on Cunahunta Island (now owned by Charles Arnold, known as the Chamberlain Island) and one summer day caught a very large grasshopper and a dispute arose as to the ownership as each claimed it.

All the children of the tribe took part in the dispute, relatives joining in the fight, and still the quarrel continued until several different tribes came and a battle was fought known as the Grasshopper War. Each generation finds the arrows still left in the ground telling of the struggle.

Then came the time when wagon roads took the place of the trails through the forests which had been marked by the Indians.

Down the years these stories of these early days had been carried down the generations in the families of these early settlers of the beautiful Susquehanna Valley.

Selected and edited for the Afton Centennial Committee

May 10, 1957

by Frances Fenner, Afton, New York

from writings of Mae Caswell Liggett

preserved by Celia Landers Liggett

AN EARLY HISTORY SKETCH OF AFTON

For D.A.R. in 1924 by Celia Landers Liggett

The first I find of early history of the vicinity where Afton is now located, was in June, 1769, when history tells us a company of white men were following the Indian trail down the Susquehanna River, when they came to an Oneida village called by the Indians, "The Great Islands of Gunta-Gunta," and later history records that on October 8, 1778, Col. Butler and his forces were traversing the Susquehanna River they came to an Indian village located on a "Group of Islands called Cunahunta". At the close of the Revolutionary War, all land west of the Unadilla River was uninhabited by the white man. According to treaty, the Unadilla was the boundary line, called "The Line of Property."

After the Revolution, the whites wanted to push farther west. Governor Clinton purchased from the Oneida and Tuscarora Indians quite a large area of land just west of this "Line of Property." Many localities were laid out and named. What is now Afton and a portion of our neighboring towns of Bainbridge and Coventry, the name Jericho was given. Thus it was that what is now our beautiful village of Afton was once in Jericho wild.

When land was divided into the township of Clinton, towns began to be formed, Bainbridge being named in April 1814, and Afton was then South Bainbridge.

Forty-three years later breaking up large towns into smaller ones called for changing the name of South Bainbridge. Some suggested giving our town a name beginning with "A". Some political patriarch was an admirer of Robert Burns and his well-known song, "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," and on November 18, 1857, our beautiful village was given the name of Afton.

The first white settler was probably Elnathan Bush, moving from Sheffield, Mass., with his wife and four children on horseback to Cooperstown and down the river by canoe. They settled on the west side of the Susquehanna River opposite Cunahunta Islands. About 1790 Elnathan Bush and Hezekiah Stowell, one of the "Vermont Sufferers," traded farms. Mr. Stowell's eldest son, Asa, married and settled on the part of the farm on the east side of the river. There the first tavern was kept, in a log hut, later replaced by a frame building and it stood on or near the present site of the Ward Cross residence. In 1876 this building was moved across the road and made into a cheese factory.

Another "Vermont Sufferer" was Gould Bacon who was living on one of the Stowell Islands when a serious freshet came on in the fall and overflowed the island. Mr. Bacon, seeing his danger, hastily filled a satchel with food and climbed a tall tree top. On the way up he lost the satchel of food and it went down the river with all other good things. He managed to secure a pumpkin which floated to the tree-top, and history states he lived for three days on raw pumpkin.

He moved to Unadilla where he died a bachelor, and his tombstone records these words: "He toiled for heirs he knew not of, and straight was seen no more."

The next settlers here were my own ancestors—Landers. In 1628 there sailed from England, Thomas Landers and son John. They settled in the New England states. A Thomas and wife, Mary Lake, moved from Litchfield Conn., to Lenox,

Mass. In 1786 their two oldest sons Eben and John left their families and proceeded to Cooperstown, hence down the Susquehanna making a landing near what is known as the Landers home on the East Side. Here they made a clearing and built a log hut, returning to Lenox, Mass. In the dead of winter, Eben and his wife Olive and three children, Isaiah, his wife, Thirza, also two brothers, John and Joseph made their slow way with oxen and sleds to Unadilla, and thence on foot in the snow, following the Indian trails through the wilderness, leaving most household goods in Unadilla, bringing only necessary utensils which were rolled in a feather bed which Eben carried on his back. His wife brought their youngest son, Stephen, two years old in her arms. After many hardships they reached their destination March 1787.

The farm where he settled has been handed down from father to son and daughters until the "passing on" of one of our charter members, Sarah Landers, it has passed out of the family name, after 137 years, though (in 1924) belonged to a descendant of Eben Landers— Arthur Fisher. (The property is now known as Jericho Farm.)

I have often heard my father tell of hearing his father and aunt Melissa Wilkins tell about the Indians. One story I remember so well about the Indians coming to borrow their father's iron kettle. They knew where there was a salt bed. They would gather the mineral and boil it down in the iron kettle, which would be gone several days, but when it came back, there was always a big supply of salt in it for grandfather.

He and his family were always kind to Indians and they did much to protect him and his.

In 1788 Richard Church, the son of Col. Timothy Church, came from Brattleboro, one of the "Vermont Sufferers." The farm of 300 acres was located on the East side and lay north and back of the Eben Landers farm which Frank Faulkner owns. Levi the first son, settled on the old homestead and lived to a good old age, leaving the farm to his son, Rush.

Mrs. Grace Herkimer is a direct descendant of the Church family.

Nathan Benton settled three miles above Afton in what is now called Middlebridge, about 1808. Here another tavern was built, also a grist and sawmill. Most of us remember the "Peck Red Mills" as they were called in later years.

Abraham Benton came in 1796, settling on what we call the Pollard farm, owned by Holmes Brothers. He was the first settler on the west side of the river, where the village now stands.

About 1790 the first schoolhouse was built, a log structure that stood at the forks of the river road on the East Side. The first teacher was Nathaniel Church. The first church was the Universalist organization in 1802 by Daniel Buck.

Now, to you D.A.R.'s I would like to ask the question: "Do you suppose 125 or 130 years from now someone will be gathering history or incidents on what we are doing today (October 23, 1924), just after the close of the Great World War? If so what can be recorded that we, as descendants of such brave, noble men and women as compared with the early settlers of Afton, have accomplished?"

From the Afton Enterprise, October 23, 1924.

MRS. JENNINGS TELLS OF EARLY DAYS IN AFTON

Mrs. Liggett's note about the Sash and Blind factory revived a long-ago memory. Mr. Wright's daughter Anna and I were friends from babyhood. Before we began going to school she and I would go to the factory about closing time to walk home with her father. On one occasion one of the men said to me, "Little girl, would you like to blow the noon whistle?" Of course I would, so he held me up and I pulled down on the wire as he told me to. Such a burst of sound! The people of Afton had again been notified, it was time to dine.

I found a letter recently written to me by Mrs.. Margaret (Landers) Sanford. She told me it seemed so strange that someone else owned the old Landers homestead lived in for 144 years by a Landers and at last by a descendant of the landers' girls, Olive I think her name was—that married Andrew Fisher.

Arthur had been ill for some time so sold it to Carlton J.H. Hayes. I think being one of our Afton boys he undoubtedly loved making it more modern and more beautiful in ever way than anyone else could possible have done and he added the final historical touch by calling his homestead "Jericho Farm."

Mr. Jay Austin lived in the first house on the east side of the bridge the right side of East Bridge street. His first wife was also a "Landers girl." There was one son Charles. He was quite young when he went to New York City where he found work and stayed there all his life. He married a young woman, charming and very well liked who used to visit Afton quite often. One of the relatives went home from town one day, not very long after Charlie went to the city. He informed the family he was doing well and said "I was told he earns \$1000 a year and spends it all. He was informed that it was untrue, that he couldn't spend that much in a year!"

Thomas Landers, one of the family was a lumberman, and successful. He built the house now owned by Mr. Copeland on Algerine Street. He married Mary Emmons and her sister Abbie lived with them. Both women were bright and full of fun and very well liked. There were two children, Frank and Billie. Finally they sold the home and moved to Jersey Heights, part of Jersey City where he built quite a mansion, three stories and a basement. His son and wife lived in a part of it later. Frank was with Tower Mfg. Co. as long as he lived. Billie was artistic and did decorating for Macy's but finally married and lived in Chicago. There was one daughter Mabel.

New York has taken a great number of Afton boys in this hundred years. One who won quite a reputation as a newspaper man was George Champlin's son Charles. He was tall thin, witty and amusing.

In the old days Afton Union School and Academy used to put on some very good entertainments. School auditorium was too small, so they were held in Sullivan Hall, which would be filled.

About every pupil took part in some way, made a long evening but everybody loved everything. "Variety is the Spice of Life."

The one I remember must have been when I was four years old. I've never seen a program of it but have seen 1872 and 1874 programs. I remember two things, the play "Snow White", which was such a popular movie, about 20 years

ago. Kitty Caswell with long blond curls was "Snow White," and Jennie Shay was the wicked step-mother queen. The other, was "Madam Jarley's Wax Works" compared very favorably with the one I saw in "Eden Muse" in New York some 16 years later. The "big boys and girls" took the parts and Charles Champlin was Madam Jarley. Dressed in black with "poke bonnet", black gloves and a very festive looking madam— she moved the figures about, poured oil(?) from a long spouted container into the ear of any squeaky or slow statue— wound them up at the back— they did as told.

I never forgot John Carr who sang "A Little Farm Well Tilled" and one other I can't remember the title, but like all the Carrs of that day he could sing. I used to sing both of them. But alas! I have also forgotten.

Continued June 20 & 27—

Inasmuch as Charles Loop was one of the chief actors on Afton's birthday, I think something should be said of him. His home was the one now the property of our new mayor, Richard Holdrege. A pleasant, very neat place and on the right side of the walk from the house to the street, was a small garden. It held big red tomatoes and all the small early vegetables we used to grow. Like many of the homes, the lot was fenced. His wife was a Champlin. Her brother Charles went to Oneonta, married and lived there most of his life. One sister married Dr. Cook's son, James and one married Herbert Dutton. She left him with a son and daughter Cora to mourn her loss. They attended the Afton school and when ready, Cora taught in District School. Finally she went to Oneonta Normal when it started and graduated in 1892. After teaching on Long Island two years, she married John Lilley, a brother of Mrs. Cora Barr.

The Lilleys lived in Binghamton for a time then with two sons moved to Alabama. At his death, Mr. Lilley left an old and a new home, they were moving to. They were two fine young men to look after their mother and a thriving business.

Cora was a quiet girl like her father and had a nice quiet humor. Everyone liked her. She had an unusual hobby, collecting stones and metals mentioned in the Bible. I was fortunate enough to have a small but genuine diamond from her and a nugget of gold brought by Elvil Fairchild, a "49er" to his father Silas, who finally gave it to me. Mr. Loop was a painter by trade and the last time I saw him was in 1896 in June when he painted my father's house.

At this time Moses Caswell bought land about 1832. For some time there were no buildings on the present street to the one by the school. A gate prevented anyone from going over the land until after the Union School and Academy was built. The first house built was on a piece of land in front of the Presbyterian Church. There was an old apple tree on it— gone these many years and a large hickory tree that had large, extra fine nuts on it. The land was purchased by Lawyer J.B. Kirkhoff and the house built back far enough to prevent injury to the trees. The Kirkhoff's had one daughter Emma who was quite a girl when a pair of twin girls came 1868, only one, Georgia survived.

About this time too, Mr. Kirkhoff sold this home and moved to a house on

South Main Street. May was the youngest. When the mother died Lawyer Kirkhoff and his three daughters went to Connecticut. Emma married and became a widow. Georgia came to Afton and was the second wife of E. Jones, a painter who built next to the Lynn LeSuer house and May married in Connecticut.

The next building on the street was Mr. Abel Briggs, if I remember correctly. Then the Presbyterian Church then the house William Herkimer built for his son Gilman and wife.

The house owned by Alton Jenks was built a long time ago too. Dr. Hayes was there for many years. Dr. Crull was there for over 20 years. The Moses Caswell property may have been under the home where he died across from the school bus station. The corner by the first house belonged to Amos Caswell, then George Tanner. Estelle Caswell Tanner's heirs sold it quite recently to Glen Morgan.



Mae Caswell Liggett



Celia Landers Liggett

PANTHERS COMMON IN THE EARLY DAYS

by Tom Neal

In 1815 a panther or mountain lion was shot with a Flintlock gun by Ferris Crane, great-uncle of Mr. Arthur Crane. After trailing and treeing it in an apple tree on Jim Childe's flats, he shot and killed the beast. He was 20 years of age at the time.

A few years later he killed another panther near Page Pond, now Girl Scout Camp, while on a deer-hunting trip. A deer had been shot and dressed out and hung in a tree. The panther got the deer during the night, was later trailed, treed and shot.

Asked whether there are still panthers in these parts, Mr. Crane says definitely yes. While trapping he has heard them scream and seen tracks, and while deer hunting on the Leon Clark farm about five years ago, saw one, about five feet long, with long thick tail and fawn colored.

Mr. Guy Howe recalls that Jack Whitney shot one of the last deer killed before the deer herds vanished from this area. This deer was taken round Marsh Pond about 1890. There was a period of about 18 years before the deer returned. Some of the first noted were seen on the meadows in back of the Fair Grounds.

Some animal tales were found in some papers of the late Bert Lord, told by Mr. Eleazer Pinney who lived on the old homestead until the latter part of the '80's when he went to Wisconsin to live with the family of his sister Fanny.

"When John Pinney was clearing the farm where Fred Pinney now lives, he had a wolf-pen on top of the hill in a cleared spot about a mile from the highway. It was stoutly built of logs with a flat roof in the middle of which was a trap door on which he would tie a lamb."

"At night the wolves would come. One by one they jumped for the lamb, down would go the door, and the wolf would be in the trap. In the morning, Mr. Pinney would enter the trap and kill the wolves. One night he caught nine, the lamb was uninjured, but how terribly frightened the poor creature must have been."

"One night at dusk, one of the Pinney boys saw a black bear carrying their pig over toward east hill. He grabbed his musket and gave chase. He overtook the bear up near the Shaver Hill road and killed him and brought the pig home, but it was injured so badly that they had to kill it"

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember when the Republicans gave the Fusileer parade in honor of the election of Harrison, only to have the news come over the wire the next day that the Democratic candidate, Grover Cleveland had won the election?

Do you remember the man who always carried a lighted lantern in the daytime? Let us call his name Diogenes.

Do you remember the sleigh ride party with the four-horse hitch and the horses refused to go to Bainbridge. Instead they took the sleigh, merry-makers and all into the cellar where Horton's store now stands?

Do you remember the big fire and the irate Dr. Bissell who slept thru all the confusion?

Do you remember the black horses owned by the Pollard farm and were always roaming the streets at night?

Do you remember the half-holiday for a skating party at Afton Lake, only to have it terminate in the tragic death of one of Afton's most promising students?

Do you remember Creamery Hill where everyone coasted in winter?

Do you remember the little wood colored cottage, occupied by a very popular colored family? The house stood where the Baptist parsonage now stands.

The two little boys who used to see how near they could stand to the "flyer" as it sped through Afton, without having their hats blown off?

The long flight of stairs that led to the depot with advertisements on every step?

The boy who used to put the ends of the girls braids in the school ink wells?

The Kick-a-Poo Indians who gave a free show in front of the Sullivan House and afterward sold their wonderful Elixir?

The dear old lady who chided her pastor because he drove his horse (just once) around the race track?

The bowling alley that stood where Swart's Hardware now stands?

The girl who interrupted the marriage ceremony to tell the groom that his cows were out?

Mason Martin's ox team that drove to the Baptist Church?

The first and only telephone in Afton that was in E.W. Kirkland's Hardware store?

WRITES ABOUT EARLY NEWSPAPER

By Centenarian

The Centenarian pushed his chair back from the kitchen table and rocked on its hind legs while his bride picked up the blue willow china plates and set the butter in the cellarway. He scratched his sideburns thoughtfully as he pulled the newspaper from his pocket and turned up the kerosene lamp that centered the table. The lamp was a wedding present, very new, with a fluted pumpkin-shaped reservoir. Wild roses were painted on the frosted glass globe.

"I brought home the new paper," the groom remarked to his wife as she busied herself with the pump-handle and the tea kettle, washing up the dishes and pans.

"And what is the news?" she called over her shoulder, swishing the hunk of yellow soap in the dishpan.

"Sez here, Mr. Seaman will give a chromo, size 12 x 15 as a prize for anyone who will bring in a new subscription to 'The Home Sentinel,' before May 10. He wants to increase his list to one thousand names for advertising benefits."

"Hum," mused his bride, "It seems good to have a home paper in Afton."

The Centenarian extracted his toothpick from his vest pocket. Holding the paper to the light, he read importantly:

"The Home Sentinel." A Weekly Choice Mental Entertainment, Devoted to True Home Interests. Volume I, Number 1, Afton, New York Saturday, April 8, 1876."

The dishwasher turned to face her husband. "Lets save it, dear," she said impulsively. "Our very first paper in our own little home."

Centenarian smiled indulgently. After all, here he was, a married man, almost twenty years of age. The world and forever lay ahead. He commenced to read:

"A friendly greeting to all of our patrons. Prosperity and many years of true happiness. We shall take pleasure in receiving a call from any with orders."

The teenage housewife hung her dishtowel, a carefully bleached feed bag, on the back stoop, and took the chair opposite her husband.

"One of the most convenient improvements made in this village during the past season is the plank walk and steps from Main Street to the depot. It does credit to our business men who built it."

Mrs. Centenarian interrupted the reader. "That will be a help getting the 9:19 for Binghamton in the morning."

"Yep," came the reply, "Because if you miss it, the next train for Binghamton is the express at 2:36 in the afternoon. Of course if you wanted to go to Oneonta, you could take the 9:45 a.m."

"I always get nervous" confessed his bride "about those two trains at 2:36 in the afternoon, one each way. Suppose they got mixed up and were both on the same track."

"Pooh!" Centenarian laughed at her fears. "The Albany & Susquehanna doesn't get mixed up. 'Course from Oneonta you can come back on the 8:00 p.m. express at night. From Binghamton you have to come back on the 6:31 p.m. local."

"Six trains a day," mused the girl " and the stage coach to Deposit every after-

noon at three. Afton is really on the map!"

"Hum, listen to this: The Presbyterian Society are now hauling material for a new church on the corner of Academy Square and Garrett Street."

"Mr. Charles Tracy has recently put upon the steam mill formerly owned by L.W. Fisher, and now by Fred Seabolt, a fine steam whistle. This mill is located about a mile below Afton.

"C.E. Carrington's new house, near West Main Street is fairly under way in building.

"The Maple Sugar visit held on last Monday by our Methodist friends as a closing Social with Rev. T.P. Halstead at Yale Hall, was a success.

"Mr. Halstead's last Sabbath's services were largely attended. He leaves many warm friends in town."

The girl, who was of religious bent broke in, "He doesn't have any more friends than Rev. J.J. Jones has among the Baptists."

"Well," agreed her husband, "Rev. G.W. Porter of St. Ann's is well liked. But they'll all end up coming to the Universalist Church, Rev. T. L. Dean really gives a good afternoon of it at the two o'clock service."

"The Baptist and Methodists like morning worship," offered the girl. "You could attend one of those, then ours at 2:00 and go to St. Ann's at 3:00."

"One's enough, thank you," replied the young man, and continued to read.

"J.H. Nickerson has workmen engaged in finishing his residence. When completed, it will be a luxurious home and an ornament to the place.

"Mr. (They Say), is generally a foul-mouthed creature. Be careful how you carry his bones. Such work is corrupting."

The missus nodded and smiled her approval at the scriptural quotation. The Centenarian Flipped the paper over to the front page where an advertisement occupied half a column of type.

"Afton Union School and Academy. The 17th term of this school will commence on Monday, March 27th.

"The village has peculiar advantages for school. It is in the midst of an old, moral and refined community; remote from large cities, with their attendant vice and temptations.

"Faculty: Prof. David F. Kohler, A.B., Principal, being a classical graduate of Cornell University and also the State Normal School at Albany, enables us to prepare students to enter the Junior class in College, and also give the most thorough instruction in the modern method of Teaching, adopted by the State authorities, to all who desire to engage in that profession.

"Miss Mattie E. Lee. Miss Hellen J. Pratt, Assistants. Miss Zaelia Barber, Primary. Mrs. Dr. Hayes, Teacher of Music.

Terms of tuition from \$4 to \$10 depending on the course.

"Parents sending their children to this school may be assured that their physical, mental and moral natures will receive close attention."

The reading of the advertisement completed, the Centenarian turned to a piece promoting The New York Sun Herald "1776 New York 1876" the copy continues. "1876 is the Centennial Year... the year of the twenty-third election of President of

the United States.

"The opposition House of Representatives will sternly and diligently investigate the corruptions and misdeeds on Grant's administration, decide on Grant's aspirations for a third term of power and plunder..."

Centenarian glanced at his bride who was yawning audibly. Smiling to himself he folded the paper neatly, reading one last filler as he tucked it back into the pocket of his checkered jacket.

"Don't linger where your love lies dreaming. Wake her up and tell her to get breakfast."

Based on Excerpts from "The Home Sentinel" published by John F. Seaman, Afton, New York, dated April 8, 1876 bearing the penciled name, D. VanWoert and preserved by Miss Ruth Chamberlin for the enjoyment of the readers of a successor, "The Afton Enterprise."

III. OLD FAMILIES

MRS. R.C. GUY WRITES OF FAMILY

Excerpts from an interesting letter recently received from Mrs. R.C. Guy, formerly of Afton, now of Crosswinds Trailer Court, St. Petersburg, 4, Florida. The historical details were related to her by her father in years gone by.

"My father would be 108 years old now, if he were living, and my mother about 92. My step-mother would be about Aunt Nora's (Benedict) age and my mother a little older. Randolph's parents and my parents always lived in Afton excepting my step-mother before her marriage, lived in Bainbridge.

"My grandfather, Selar Decker and family moved from Schoharie County when my father, Joseph Decker, and Charles Decker, father of George, Frank, and Lillian Decker (McKee), were young boys. They moved to where Bennett now lives. Charles stayed there and raised his family. My father, when a young man, went into town and engaged in business. I can't tell where, but it was before the big fire. Henry Carr had one side of the store, selling drugs, and my father had a general store on the other side.

"In time my father left there and bought the store of the Church family. When the big fire came and burned all the stores on that side of the street, my father said that their household goods and some things from the store were moved across the street in the night as all the stores were burned by morning. Then my father built the store where Jenks & Swart are now in business. We owned the store for some years but then sold to Jenks & Swart. I was born there. Then we moved to the home on South Main Street. My father married Lillian Whitaker. Her father, Britton Whitaker, used to be a cooper and had a shop down by the old under-ground crossing. I can remember going out to the creek on Pollard land where he soaked his staves. He made barrels and butter firkins and had a good business.

When Grandfather Decker moved to Afton, there was no Presbyterian Church in Afton; they went to Nineveh to church. He was one of those who helped to establish the Presbyterian Church in Afton.



Nora Decker Guy.
Decker Family

FIVE GENERATION FARM ON EAST RIVER ROAD

The Foundation of American Agriculture is
Built on Family Team-Work
By Centenarian

It was June 1836. The near-vertical rays of the sun shimmered and danced on the grassy fields and wooded slopes of the Susquehanna Valley. It was a golden day for James Poole who had just come into possession of 208 acres of land by purchase from Peter Northrup, originally settled by one Morgan Lewis in the region known as Bettsburg.

For five generations, the Poole Farm has passed from father to son as a family enterprise, and as such it is older than the Township of Afton.

The land was only partly cleared, producing grain and hay to feed the cows which produced milk, butter, meat and hides for sale or trade in the community. Much of it was in timber, the woods the Indians had called home in previous years.

To keep the cows out of the woods, James Poole expended the sum of six dollars for a new-fangled invention named Patent Portable Field Fences just being introduced under patents of 1858.

In 1881, James Poole died, leaving his farm to his son, William H. who husbanded it carefully over the turn of the century. As his son Lewis had preceded him in death, William left the farm to his grandson, Ernest L. Poole who took possession in 1912.

Now, under the able management of Ernest and his son Ned, the farm produces a yearly cash crop of cabbage as well as maintaining a 50 head dairy of Holstein cattle. Corn, hay and grain to feed the cows are produced on the premises. Some 20 hives of bees help contribute to the fertility of surrounding fields and orchards to sweeten the lives of customers at the Poole roadside stand located on the "East River Road" between Afton and Nineveh.

As for Ernest Poole himself, or "Judge Poole" as he is familiarly known, the traditional occupation of farming permits a happy combination with service to the community through the County Government.

After serving 18 years as Justice of the Peace in the township, Mr. Poole was elected in 1945 to represent the township as one of the 23 supervisors which constitute the governing body of Chenango County.

He is now Chairman of the Committee on Public Welfare as well as he important committee on Forestry for Chenango County.

Ernest Poole's son, Ned, now in partnership with his father, like the rest of the family, grew up on the farm taking his place in the family operations by doing his chores and helping with the work. Ned participated in 4-H Club work for eleven years, and earned his Master Farmer degree in Future Farmers of America in 1956 by keeping comprehensive records of his various farm projects.

The Poole century-plus farm could not have succeeded without its complement of women. The full support of wife and mother was necessary to make the enviable record it now holds.

Ernest and Rita Poole are proud of their four children, now grown and mar-

ried, and ten grandchildren with their fine potential for the future to the Poole Farm. In addition, six foster children called the Poole farm "home" in recent years as the family group embraced a succession of less fortunate youngsters.

The Poole farm has raised more than its obvious crops of cabbage, dairy products and timber. It has produced timber for the real America that millions of us proudly know as "home". The real wealth of the Poole place, like that of Afton and its countless counterparts all over the world, lies in its growing crop of good citizens.



Francis Fenner
Centenarian

WRITES OF EARLY REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER IN AFTON

One of the early settlers in these parts, which was then known as Jericho, was Nathan Burlingame and wife of Bartlett, coming here from Gloucester, Providence Co., Rhode Island in 1799 or 1800, locating on what is known as the former George Johnson Farm on Algerine Street. Here he ran a large sawmill on the creek, which in later years was only a small creek supplying a water-trough on the road. After his second son Richard married Sally Landers, Nathan sold his place to Richard and bought on the East Side of the river. This he bought of Richard Church in 1810, being a portion of the farm now occupied by Gordon Wood. Here he and his step-son had a hammer factory which was run by a water wheel. The water was brought down in deep troughs erected on stilts, and was supplied by springs in the valley which is now covered with timber, back of the Raymond Cornell place at the foot of Melondy Hill. It was only a few years ago that the old water wheel, which was put together with old wooden pegs, was destroyed by a boy who wanted something to do. Here Nathan built a house which was just below where the Wood home now stands, and in later years a portion of that old house was moved onto a new house which was built by his grandson and namesake Nathan Burlingame and wife, Hattie Hunt.

Selling this out he next moved to North Sanford where he had another saw-mill. A portion of the old mill dam can be seen just above the creek bridge as one enters North Sanford. Leaving this place and mill to a grandson Lewis Burlingame, he bought a farm in Colesville Township, purchasing of Alvin Briggs. This was located on what was known as Randolph Mountain, back of Windsor. Here he ran a grist mill. A few years ago one of the old mill stones was lying along the creek near the Lester Church.

While living in Rhode Island, he served in the Revolutionary War. After moving to Randolph Mountain he secured a pension which always came to South Bainbridge (now Afton). He would walk the 18 miles, get his pension cashed and walk two miles farther to a grandson's Rufus Burlingame, who lived on a portion of his first settlement on Algerine Street, where he would spend the night. I have often heard Rufus Burlingham's widow tell of his coming through the gateway onto the lawn, where he would stop, jump into the air and click his heels together twice before his feet touched the ground. He spent his last years on Randolph Mountain. His last trip he made for his check he had just passed his 95th year. Wearing a new pair of boots which made a blister on his heel, causing his death at 95 years and four months. On his tombstone which stands in Mountain View Cemetery, near Lester, N.Y., are the words: "A Valiant Soldier of the Revolution."

Three of his grandsons, Charles, Rufus and Nathan lived and died in the vicinity of Afton. There are a few keepsakes of his which are greatly prized: a wooden salt dish which he had whittled out with his jackknife, a snuff box which he carried in the Revolutionary War. These are greatly cherished by a great, great grandson, Melvin Burlingame of Minneapolis, Minn. The old Army musket which he carried in the revolutionary War, is in the possession of a great, great granddaughter Nellie

Burlingame of Algona, Iowa.

Down through the years living in and around Afton his descendants have been strong, sturdy, hard-working people.

One great great granddaughter Mrs.. Celia Liggett still lives in town.

MRS. JENNINGS TALKS OF OLD RESIDENTS

The following is from Mrs. Isabel Jennings:

Blessed be diaries! What a fund of knowledge comes from the old ones!

I've wondered who the first Postmaster was and was pleased to learn that it was Cornelius Atherton, who still has descendants in Afton. Mr. and Mrs. Atherton were the kind of lovely old people the children love.

The Postmaster I remember was Mr. E.M. Shay. He owned the "Shay Block" recently rebuilt by Attorney Sam Whitman.

As one went into the present Beauty Parlor, the Post office was on the left and his grocery store on the right. Mr. Shay was a quiet, kindly man liked by everyone. There were three children, Jennie, Martin and Ina Catherine, always called "Kitty."

Two sisters of Mrs. Shay lived with them, Beolia Clapper who was an invalid, as long as I can remember and Amelia Clapper, a musician. She played the organ at St. Ann's as long as she was able and had music pupils. Miss Charlotte Shay, Mr. Shay's sister, was a school teacher for many years and spent the vacations with the Shays. The present doctor's office was used by Mr. and Mrs. O.N. Swift. He was Afton's jeweler—his bench in the front window and Mrs. Swift kept a fine supply of years and taught the women to make it up. The basement was used by Andrew Fisher and Wirt Newby for a meat market. I must have been about four years old when I went to do errands for my mother. Nothing around those days to harm children. I don't know the age of the Shay block, but it was older than either D.A. Carpenter's house and store, now the Town Clerk's Office or the Riley Easton house, now the home of Miss Mildred Merrell. They were built about 1850. Both were used as family homes until the early 90s.

The Handy home was one of the old buildings and back of it was one still older. I think it belonged to Mr. Champlin and family in my time. The Dr. Cook house, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jere Jenks must have been built about the same time as the Easton and Carpenter houses and possibly H.R. Caswell was at that time.

The oldest house in Afton now standing, is the one built by Heth Kelsey in 1804-5 on a grant of land from the government, as he was a Revolutionary soldier. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clifton Cook. In the Cook home one finds the construction to be much as it was in the old days, with plank walls, heavy timbers which are visible in the attic fastened with wooden pins. In the ground floor rooms are still to be found some of the original hand blown window panes. Some of the flooring in the upstairs rooms is laid with foot-wide boards.

The land spread north and west, very little is left of the once large Pollard farm.

MRS. JENNINGS WRITES OF FAMILIES

As I remember the map of Afton Township, it is of irregular shape. It takes in some of Nineveh and to the southwest are Nurse Hollow and Church Hollow, settled years ago. To the Northwest are Newton Hollow and Wilkins Settlement and North Afton.

Afton Village has no such settlement names. The Landers and Church families and others took up land on the East Side of the river, or on the west side. Our streets are East Main, Maple, Main Street, Pleasant Ave., Spring St. etc., but only the one running parallel with Spring Street and west from Main is named for a family, the Caswell family and goes to the turn where it joins with Algerine Street, near the one time Kirby home, called "the Pillars."

Moses Caswell and his wife, Abigail Somes Caswell, came to this place from Grafton, N.H., about 1832; and purchased a tract of land extending from what is now Spring Street to Academy Street. It must have extended back quite a distance, for it was a large farm. There were seven children: Alvira Jane, Harrison Richmond, Anna Dickerson, Amos D., Gilman N., John F., and Harriet.

Anna D. (Aunt Ann, beloved by everyone) married Edgar Garret, September 18, 1846. They had two children, Ella and Anna. The first home was a small one, but about 100 years ago the present house was built. It is now owned by Mrs. Mary Farnsworth. Ella was an invalid, but outlived the others; Anna married Mark Dutton and eventually that piece of property came to the Marks family.

Alvira married William (Bill) Herkimer and her father built the house for her where her grandson, Allen Herkimer resides. They had one son Gilman, who married Myrtie Allen of Afton. They left a son Allen G. and daughter Ina who is married to Edwin Benedict.

Moses himself lived in the next. When Amos Caswell came home from New Hampshire with his bride, they lived there and Abigail Somes Caswell died there. Sometime later, Moses married a widow, Mrs. Rice. She had two children, Mabel and Wilbur and they lived in the house now owned by Mrs. Bulkley. The children were in school when I was. Mabel married Burr Wilkins of No. Afton. Gilman N. built on the corner and married Eugena Ferguson. They had six children.

Kittie married George Raymond of Norwich and their daughter Blanch married Roger Miller and they live in Lewiston, N.Y.

Estelle married George Tanner and both died in the Amos Caswell home. Edith married Frank Horton. Girard married Alta Phillips. Bertha married Mag. Medbury. It was Amos who willed the town land for a park. It is known as Caswell Park and was looked after for several years by several elderly men, Addison Brower, Eri Lingee, Charles Seely and others who reset trees, mowed, kept up fences, when someone awakened to the fine gift Amos Caswell had made Afton.

The War Memorial is there and it is a place for band concerts, and ball games, a beauty spot (with a little care). Let's have it blooming by July 13, 1957!

The little house on the corner has always been spoken of as the "Susan Post House." Back of it, Harrison Richmond built a small house. He married Sarah Jarett Chamberlain, daughter of Col. John Chamberlain, U.S. Senator at one time.

They had two children, Joseph Pollard and Sarah Janette. Sarah Janette Caswell married George Jay of Nineveh and eventually moved to California where both died. They left one daughter, Margaret Jay. She taught in Whittier, Calif., until retirement. She was in Los Angeles, Calif., last year and is yet, I think.

For his second wife, he married May Ursula Landers in 1858. In 1860 he sold the house and bought of Col. Chamberlain and Bill Moffit, the farm on which he built the home on the corner of Main and Pleasant Ave. He gave to the little band of Episcopalians, the ground on which St. Ann's Church was built in 1868 and was Senior Warden for many years. Two children were born, Mae Ursula and an infant that did not live. Mae married George Armstrong Liggett of Rahway, N.J., June 27, 1900. He was a Presbyterian minister, well liked in his parish in New Jersey which he served for many years. Mae died August 9th, 1956.



Isabelle Seely Jennings

IV. EARLY STRUCTURES

A STORY OF AFTON BRIDGES by Eva Holleran

The following quotation is from a letter by Rev. A.T. Jacobs to "The Sentinel" in 1869:

"In 1829 a company was chartered to build a bridge across the Susquehanna River at this place. Up to that time nothing better for crossing the stream had been provided than scows and skiffs.

This bridge was built by Lord and Bottom at a cost of \$2,400.00.

It was a crude structure according to the present ideas of architecture.

An incident is related by one of the old bridge commissioners that shows the heroic courage of the girls of those days.

The workmen had argued that the first woman to cross the bridge should be presented with a new dress.

Miss Hannah Hamlin, a young lady teaching in the village, wished to cross the river and no boat being near, unmindful of the offer that had been made stepped upon the naked stringers and walked across.

When the workmen perceived her perilous position the workmen all stopped, not a blow was struck, not a word was spoken, until she reached the opposite shore when a good round cheer greeted her success."

We need not say that the dress was fairly awarded. I wish we had a relic of the dress.

The bridge, after suffering damage by ice and being out of use many months at a time finally went the way of most of its kind in the spring of 1848.

In 1849 Jacob Cass built a second bridge at the cost of \$3,000. It was a fine wooden structure substantially built, well covered and promised many years of service, yet it was swept off its piers and dashed to pieces by a tornado in May 1866.

The same autumn a third bridge was built by Skinner at a cost of \$3,250.

The commission was most thoroughly "skinned."

It was a magnificent failure and after being used for eighteen months under protest, passed away unwept, unhonored and unsung.

This brought bridge matters to a crisis.

The old company was unwilling to issue stock to build a bridge such as was needed; a new company could not be raised, and a bridge must be built.

A meeting was called and commissioners were appointed to procure a bill from the legislature to enable the town to purchase the franchise from the company and raise by tax twelve thousand (\$12,000) for the object with understanding that the same should be increased by voluntary subscription.

The commissioners A.C. Hyde, Thos. Landers and H.R. Caswell took measures to swell the sum to about \$14,000 and proceeded to receive proposals and

examine plans. After reviewing different structures and gaining all the knowledge within their reach, decided upon a "suspension bridge" and accepted the plans of G.W. Fisher of Wellsburg, Chemung Co., N.Y. and the proposal by the Fishler Bros., John and George.

The following is an architectural description but it gives but an imperfect view of the noble structure:

"Main span 362 feet, extension span 64 feet, supported by 6 No. 3 wire cables 5 1/2 inches in circumference. The roadway is 16 feet wide suspended from the wire ropes by 5/8" rods four feet apart secured to cables by clasps and wire and to the middle beams by nuts and washers.

"The middle beams are of second growth chestnut five by ten. The planks three inches thick laid lengthwise of roadway are guarded by a lattice railing four feet, eight inches high; braces forming lattice two by five set between the top and bottom cords.

"The abutments are 25 feet above the low water line.

"The towers are of white oak neatly enclosed, representing three sections, surmounted by a tasty cornice and deck roof. A beautiful vane graces the arches on either end in spread eagle style.

"The cables are secured on either side by double anchorages making a supporting power of 800 tons. Ultimate aggregate strength of the bridge 324 tons.

"Weight of structure 70 tons and even this would leave a supporting power of at least 204 tons.

"The cost is \$15,000."

Thus we have a bridge under which the noble river freely passes, unvexed by pier or trestle and over which the current travel freely passes, unvexed by toll, tribute or custom.



Eva Holleran

"THE OLDEST HOUSE IN TOWN"
by Isabelle Seely Jennings

A Revolutionary soldier by the name of Heth Kelsey came to this section in 1796. The government had given him a large grant of land and in 1804 he built a substantial residence called Kelsey Inn.

At the back was a long building having stables for the horses of teamsters who stopped overnight. They slept overhead in bedrooms prepared for them.

The Inn was sold to Silas Fairchild in 1862 who used it as a residence as long as he lived always renting the other side. The house was well built and for many years painted "London brown." There were five windows across the front upstairs, 4 below with the original handmade glass. Under the fifth window was a broad door with narrow windows on each side. Since it was repaired about 1925, the door has a knocker given by the owner of an old house, over 100 years. old.

On entering the hall, there is a door at each end opening into a large front living room. By the left door a circular staircase starts, ending in front of the door of the upper room and hall, the same as downstairs.

In the center of the house upstairs was a square dark room 60 or more inches, containing a raised platform of brick. On repairing, some timbers were discovered, blackened as if by fire, the bricks, supposedly made in the brickyard below Dan Grant's home they were mostly broken and black. Two were placed in the corners where the front walk meets the sidewalk. They are flat square-topped not at all like the usual ones.

Downstairs floors are hardwood, modern heating, water and lighting have been added.

Upstairs the immense old boards remain on the floor. Except for the fireplace and chimney on the north, and the white paint, it might be thought of as the same old house.

Mr. and Mrs. Clifton Cook, the present owners, have put in windows in the ends of the attic, a floor, partition and picture window in the dining room, once the family bedroom. No summer kitchen at the back anymore... but what stories the old house might tell...

Builder Heth Kelsey's daughter Lois, married Clark Smith of Coventry, and Heth and his wife died there and were buried in Greene, where the Chapter D.A.R. placed a Revolutionary soldier's marker on his grave. Clark and Lois spent their last days with their son Edward Smith and family.

Lois Smith Birdsall (Mrs. Raymon Birdsall is a great-great granddaughter of the original owner of the house, Heth Kelsey.

AFTON INN HAS LONG HISTORY

By Avelda H. Daly

The present Afton Inn property springs from roots buried deep in the history of Afton. It has played an important role in the development of the community, and its records are rich in historical lore. It is the only remaining hostelry of the many which once flourished in the town. It has been a meeting place for friends, a stop-over for the weary traveler, and a place where hospitality has reigned since 1823—more than a century.

In early days of our country the towns or settlements were linked by networks of taverns; hospitality was their business. In New York and new England they were called "taverns"; in Pennsylvania and Delaware, they were known as "Inns." Probably the first "Inn" in this area was kept in a log building at Bettensburg on the East Side by Asa Stowell as early as 1788. This building afterwards gave place to a frame one, and was later moved across the road a little further down and converted into a cheese factory.

Heth Kelsey, a Revolutionary soldier, settled in the upper part of the village on the creek which now bears his name, where he operated a tavern. He built the Kelsey house on North Main Street, in Afton in 1804 and 1805, and operated it as a tavern for many years. It was later the Fairchild house and is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Clifton Cook.

Heth Kelsey's daughter Rhoda married Alpheus Wright, who with his brother Josiah, in 1823 built the Hotel on the property where the Afton Inn now stands. Rhoda died in Afton. Her husband later moved with his brother Josiah to the Chemung River and died there. It is interesting to note that Josiah or Joseph Wright was the second postmaster of Afton, assuming the office in 1830 and it is probable the Post Office was in the Hotel. He was succeeded until 1840 by Zaccheus Smith who operated the Hotel at that time. Mrs. Eva Holleran relates that Mr. Smith courted her grandmother's hired girl.

The Afton Inn is best known to the old timers as the Sullivan House. Records show that it was transferred to Edward W. Sullivan and Ada F. Sullivan in 1869. Mrs. Dan Jennings recalls many interesting facts regarding the Sullivan House. At the head of the stairs, on the second floor, were large double doors which opened into a large ballroom. Here were held the exhibitions of the Afton Union School and Academy. The room was always filled to capacity to hear the songs and recitations, and witness such wonders as "Madame Jarley's Wax Works," "Snow White" and other plays equally as thrilling. Road companies presented their plays there and annually the Masonic Ball was held in the great room. Dances and dancing school were enjoyed there by the young people. She states that the Sullivan House set a good table, and had good linen and china. She recently presented two dinner plates of a rose design and originally from the old Sullivan House to Mrs. David Daly, wife of the present owner.

In 1877, about noon, one sunny day, fire swept through the Hotel, doing great damage, but it was rebuilt much in the original arrangement. Eventually Phelps and Poyer acquired the property, and it was then known as the Hotel Phelps. On

May 22, 1898, fire again threatened the building, but the firemen were able to save it from being a complete loss. George Jay was the Architect in charge of the reconstruction and designed the building much as it appears today. The great ballroom was made into bedrooms.

There were a great many proprietors after that and the property was once known as the Central House. Marshall Hill sold it to David Daly in 1941 and Mr. Daly has made a good many changes and repairs.

In 1943 a third disastrous fire nearly destroyed the property. Due to the valiant efforts of Afton and Bainbridge firemen some of the building was saved, and it was rebuilt as it stands today.

Recently, a trunk once belonging to Charles Landers was discovered in the attic of the Inn. Charles Landers, a grandson of Ebenezer Landers, one of the earliest settlers in Afton on the East Side, went to California in 1850 until 1865 and the trunk still bears the California shipping labels. It had been stored at the Inn by Arthur Fisher, one of the Landers family, when the Landers homestead was sold to Dr. Carlton J. H. Hayes. The trunk yielded a wealth of historical items and clothing once worn by Sarah and Margaret Landers. These articles are on display in the Coffee Shop of the Inn during Centennial Week.

Dates and names in this story are believed to be as accurate and authentic as possible. The assistance of Mrs. Dan Jennings and Mrs. Eva Holleran is gratefully acknowledged.



Avelda Daly

V. UTILITIES

THE OLD LAMP-LIGHTER RECALLS EARLY DAYS

By Robert Thomson as told to Frances Fenner

I took Ed Bodley's place, he was lighting then in 1895 when I came here as a young man of 22. I went to work for Papa Briggs (William H. Briggs) in Karschner's Feed and Grocery Store, and the next year I married his girl, Lulu.

I was custodian of the two cemeteries, and then in 1903 they needed a lamp lighter, and I was appointed by Charles Seely, the Village Clerk, father of Isabelle Jennings who still lives here.

It paid \$15 a month, but say, that fifteen dollars went farther than fifty would today.

We had kerosene lamps, on posts located on the streets of the village. There was a tin reservoir, a glass globe, and a reflector cap on top, painted white on the inside and green on the outside.

There were 65 lamps in all. I'd go around and light them every dark night—moonlight nights we didn't need them—17 or 18 days out of the month. Six miles around the village.

Started out from home (present location of Nelson Crane home, later Arthur Zeh's place) went up High to the end, then up Spring to the bridge, then down Spring around the school and out Caswell to the sales stables, then back and out Main to corporation limits, across the bridge, East Side up past Landers place, down to Fairgrounds, and back. Then up Main, down through town to the Bresee place, back, and up Pleasant Avenue to home.

I could do it now. But not to carry a five gallon oil can. Five gallon can gets awful heavy. Fixed it in a frame on a wheel after a while. Had a step ladder on a wheel too. Instead of carrying the ladder, wheeled it up to the lamp post, leaned it against it and stepped up. Filled the lamps when they needed it. They held oil enough for three nights.

Started out after supper, just after sundown, and finished up eight, nine o'clock.

There was a little pin in the middle that went up through that held a little pan. When that was used up the wick was up out of the oil and the light went out. Pushed it down two notches every night until it was refilled and then started over. A notch went four hours. That way they'd burn to about daylight.

In 1914, along in the fall, electricity came to Afton. Electric light replaced the oil lamps. Took them all down, posts and all. They let some small town have them. Had a globe around for a while, but a souvenir hunter got that.

Was I out of a job? Why, I was mowing the cemeteries. Had twelve mowers. Four at each place and four at home. No power mowers in those days.

The cemeteries were getting bigger kept the boys and me busy mowing. Then I was custodian of the school. That was before we had the gym. As the school expanded they put on Harry Guy to help out.

Then Hollenbeck was here on the old building, before the brick building went

up in 1908. I worked in both of them.

Was glad to see the electric street lights come in. They were always laughing at the old ones. Had a lot of fun about them. They would rust through. Get holes in them. Every night I would have to take one or another home to get fixed.

The tin rusted through. I had Ed Weeks solder the pin holes; or bigger places we would patch with a piece of tin.

Electricity, power mowers mean unemployment? Well, at the same time I could do more. I worked in. I could spend more time at the school. There were always odd jobs.

That big place of Mrs. Renner's on the East Side? Mowed it for four dollars a year. Cost four dollars to mow it once now. Had better than a hundred dollars worth of lawns then—a season. That was money.

Then I carried the mail after Fred Wasmuth was killed in 1946. July 15 that was. Let that go last fall.

Why? Guess eighty-two is reason enough. I'll be eighty-three this fall.

Gave up carrying the mail gave up the Town Hall (custodianship) even my lawns and odd jobs.

What do I think of improvements, lights, streets, school, mowers?

Well, golly, always have been and always will be improvements. Hundred years from now these things we have today will look old.

Biographical Note: Robert Thomson was born in Kansas on October 29 '73. They were eaten out by grasshoppers and came back. Then out to California on an emigrant train taking 12 days and 11 nights for the journey. Business ventures did not pan out, so returned east, stopping at Chicago World's Fair and Columbian Exposition on the way, 1893.

Farmed it awhile up the road past Anderson's nurseries, til father died, then moved into the village as a young man.



Robert Thomson

GAS LIGHTING FOR STREETS IN THE VILLAGE

From Aug. 11, 1898 "Enterprise"

The Afton Gas light company has set a lamp post just north of M.G. Hill's store and will place in operation a lamp for street lighting purposes. This is being placed to demonstrate the desirability of gas.

The superiority of gas over coal oil is well understood, although perhaps the question of cost and economy is not so well known to all of our citizens.

The present system of lighting is very unsatisfactory and if gas can be put in and furnished at a reasonable expense, no doubt a large majority of our taxpayers would favor it.

West Winfield has recently adopted this system and can hardly cease wondering how much light can be furnished for so little money.

Other nearby towns are showing their progressiveness by putting in either electric light or gas and Afton should not fall too far in the rear.

AFTON TELEPHONE SYSTEM SET UP IN YEAR 1898

April 28, 1898 Newspaper

Within the past two weeks, the telephone system embracing Afton Village, and the lines to Nineveh, Harpursville, Center Village, Vallonia Springs, Sanford, North Sanford, Deposit, and Masonville has been put into complete working order and a considerable volume of business already done.

The convenience and actual benefits derived from this system can hardly be estimated at first but time will demonstrate its value to the communities represented.

The towns will be brought into closer business and social relations than ever before. The convenience of the village system will be appreciated as time goes on and the list of subscribers increases.

There are already 16 phones in use here as follows:

Central Station, WA. Collar's store, Dr. E.A. Goodsell, Dr. P.A. Hayes, The Enterprise Office, M.J. Mudge's store, C.H. Emmons' store and house, J.B. Pierce's office and house, Church Bros. house and barn, James H. Nickerson's house and Church and Nickerson's milk station, Church & Hill's bank, Church Bros. sawmill, D. and H. station, Star creamery.

In the township are also, Nineveh depot, N.B. Williams hotel, Hobbs Bros., and Dr. Butler of Nineveh. We hope later to be able to give names of the other subscribers to the system.

AFTON WATER SYSTEM ONE OF THE BEST IN STATE

H.G. Horton

The history of the Afton Water Works starts during the years of 1893-94 when the members of the village board, Dr. P.A. Hayes and Morris Mudge and others inauguarated a drive for what is now our water system.

At that time there was a limited water system which came down from the west hill and supplied a number of patrons. The system was known as the Afton Water Co. The D. and H. R.R. also owned a spring in the vicinity of the other water company from which they supplied water supposedly for their locomotives. Other sources of water supply were wells and small springs on individual properties; the only thing to fight fires was a bucket brigade.

There were three sources of water supply considereed, viz. Afton Lake, Perch Pond, and Vallonia Springs. The first was counted out because of lack of elevation, the second, there seemed to be some doubt about the quantity and desirability of the water, so the spring at Valonia was finally accepted as the correct source as time has proven. When the survey was made from the point it was found that the fall was sufficient to furnish 85 lbs. static pressure along the area of main street. There was considerable doubt expressed about the correctness of the survey, so much so that the engineer was made to feel that there had been errors in computation because those who professed to have sound ideas declared that "you could not make water run up hill" so the engineer made his survey in reverse and his figures checked perfectly and the proposition became an established fact. The work of digging the trenches was done by Italian labor (imported by the contractor) who rented a section along the Comell Creek where shacks were built to accommodate about 100 ditch diggers who worked for about \$1 a day. An interesting sidelight concerning the life of these workmen was that every Saturday night they would get a barrel of beer and have a celebration all day Sunday but all would be back at work on Monday morning.

This little village was a sight to behold— deep ditches everywhere and then the laying of the pipes through the street with hydrants and service pipes to homes, the reservoir beyond the upper end of Spring Street was also contructed at that time, connected to the main so that the surplus water not used would run into it and when it was full the reservoir would overflow in a pipe to Bumps Creek. This system furnished adequate water supply in case of fire as the water would run toward the hydrant both from the spring and the reservoir.

The water was finally turned on in 1895, and because the main pipe from Vallonia came through my father's garden, the present Nelson Smith home, he became the first user of the water. I think that the service pipe to the house which was put in at the time is still in use, which shows how pure the water is and free from corrosive contents. There has never been any need for chlorine or other chemicals in any form as far as is known of any sicknesses that were attributed to this water through all these years. The state chemists pronounced it like Ivory soap in purity. After the water works had been properly established then came the Afton Hose Co., with their two wheel carts— one on the east and another on the west side of the river, with a locomotive tire mounted on top of what is now the town

clerk's office (presented by the D.&H. Co.) for a fire alarm.

During the 1930's an addition was made to the system by the purchase of the Westley Curtis Farm a one hundred twelve acre tract surrounding the main spring and containing other springs of equal size.

This tract was bought from Robert Siver of Sidney, N.Y. for the sum of six hundred dollars. The springs which were acquired in the purchase of this land more than doubled the available water supply as they were ultimately piped together into one system. It was my privilege to negotiate this transaction when I found out while visiting him that the property would be for sale, he was a lumber dealer and having removed the lumber that he wanted he did not realize the salvage value of this property. It was at about this time that the state conservation department offered the Afton Fair some trees for a demonstration planting and the idea developed to reforest this Curtis tract. My impression is that trees were furnished at the rate of \$2.00 per thousand to the village and so the hillside was set with about 130,000 trees during the next few years by the scouts and school students under direction of Principal Foster, E.L. Doolittle and George Burgdorf.

Much credit is due to the village officers of that date, Mayor E.L. Doolittle, Leigh Jones and Lawrence Slater, for the interest and cooperation manifested toward the development of this project, which today is rapidly becoming a valued piece of property.

After the reforestation had been completed then a reservoir was built on the property to receive the flow of water from all the springs, so today there is always as there always has been an adequate supply of water regardless of any drought which could ordinarily affect a water supply. Those of us who live today probably will never see the day when this system will be worn out and after all the new users of the water system have been added through more than half a century the registered water pressure on Main street stands at eighty-one pounds.

The cost of this project, not counting the extensions that were made at later dates, was \$22,000.00, the money having been raised with a bond issue which was paid after a few years from revenues and a sinking fund raised by taxes at the rate of \$500 per year.

The distance from the springs to the reservoir on the west hill above the village is about 3.5 miles. Although the main lies on the river bottom at its crossing, it can sometimes be seen at low river level. To provide for emergencies, the first water main had an extra line (dry) across the river on the top of the bridge floor. The new bridge carries the same main underneath .

VI. MILITARY

ACHS FACULTY MEMBER REVIEWS AFTON'S HISTORY OF MILITARY SERVICE By William Farley

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Since the present area of Afton was not settled until after the close of the Revolutionary War, this section made no direct contribution to that history. The names of twenty-nine patriots, however, who participated in that conflict (and later settled in Afton) as commemorated on the village monument, are listed in the section, "History of the Daughter of the American Revolution."

THE CIVIL WAR

An account of any locality's participation in the Civil War must be framed within a very special context. The Civil War was not a clear-cut war with some foreign power providing both the opposition and the needed incentive for unity. Rather, it was a war within one nation involving men of two beliefs, two philosophies and two definitions of the proper composition of human society. Then too, it was a war which found both physically and emotionally unprepared all sections of the country. True, wars involving the United States had been fought before, but by comparison they were but skirmishes, relatively brief and transitory in nature. With a sustaining element of enthusiasm and patriotic ardor, Afton, doubtless like other communities, experienced a period of hasty volunteering, pro-Union oratory and a brass band send off. However, sincere and well-founded as early zeal was, it was often to give way to cynicism as the inevitable ingredients of army life began to exert their influence. Boredom, dirt, disease, delays, bad food and an unvarying attempt to do everything the hard way were all present in Civil War to a degree seldom if ever exceeded by any war. To be sure, the hardships of army training camps, replete with stench, epidemic and red tape performed a useful function. This was to eliminate the unfit, a factor which was very vital in a war of such deadly battle attrition. What was not realized at the time, was that the Civil War soldier was confronted at all times with a situation of superior defensive firepower. Thus with a list of survivors as proportionally large as can be displayed by the community of Afton, our locality can truthfully be said to have done its share in the winning of this great conflict.

Personal note supplied by Miss Myrtha Hyde— Adam Carson, whose farm, now owned by Raymond Miner adjoined ours at the Coventry line, fought in the Civil War. At one juncture, he was captured and placed in the noted Libby Prison, infamous even by Civil War standards and located at Richmond, Virginia. Managing to escape, he somehow crossed through the lines and returned directly home, never applying for legal discharge papers.

The whole number of men furnished by the town of Afton during the Civil War was one hundred and fifty-six. An organizational break down of this number accounts for all but sixty-three. One man served with the 51st Regiment of New

York Volunteers; one with the 89th New York Volunteers; thirty-three with Company G of the 114th New York Volunteers; fifty-one with the 5th New York Artillery; seven with Company E and thirty-five with Company G of the 70th New York Infantry; one with the 8th New York Cavalry and six with the 144th New York Volunteers.

The number of men between the ages of twenty and forty-five enrolled in the town under the United States Enrollment act of 1863, was 292. Of this number, sixteen passed the medical examination, fourteen of these sixteen commuted by the payment of \$300, leaving only two of the number drafted to enter the service personally.

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR — 1898

Relatively short in duration and comparatively small in scope and numbers involved, the Spanish-American War in all likelihood surpassed any of our other wars in popularity and public acceptance. Due to the short time span involved, most of the combat duty was performed by regular components of the army and navy. To supplement the regular army, National Guard units were federalized and as in the Civil War, volunteers were raised through the states.

To the attention of our committee has come the name of only one Spanish-American War veteran. Frank McCulley, father of William McCulley of North Main Street, fought in the Phillipine Islands. He served in that arduous campaign with Company G of the 42nd infantry Regiment.

WORLD WAR I- 1917-18

In the early days of World War I, there was much uncertainty as to what the exact nature of the American contribution to the Allied cause should be. This uncertainty extended from the highest executive and legislative circles of the nation to the smallest crossroads hamlet. Only in the Civil War had compulsory drafting been resorted to. However, once the seriousness of the Allied plight was realized, concrete steps were taken to furnish sorely needed manpower for the European battlefields. First, a bill was passed by Congress to call state militia. Of greater effect to smaller communities like our own was the Selective Service Act, passed as the fairest and most efficient means of raising a large force. This act made liable to military service all male citizens between twenty-one and thirty years of age. Later legislation extended the limits from eighteen to forty-five inclusive. The most reliable sources available place at one hundred and fifteen the number of Afton men enlisted and drafted. In accordance with the desire to send a token expeditionary force to Europe as soon as possible, some troops were of necessity dispatched to France poorly equipped and with only the rudiments of basic training. Perhaps typical of this circumstance was the experience of local boy, Wayne Thomson, who enlisted on his eighteenth birthday. He became the first Aftonite to "go over the top" just six weeks from the date of his enlistment.

On the home front, the call for hospital supplies and woolen wear found ready response. Under the leadership of the American Red Cross, women of the community met to sew and knit all day and every day in the Firemen's Hall over Clarence Eldred's clothing store. Just one result of their labors was the cutting and folding of over two million surgical dressings.

Unprepared as our country was, the casualty list was not large for our area. Among the deceased were Andrew Clifford of the army and Willard Holmes, a seaman. The present American Legion Post 923 bears their names today. The first man returned to Afton for burial was Charles S. Jennings, son of Mrs. Dan Jennings. Others making the supreme sacrifice were Andrew Humiston and Elton Parsons.

WORLD WAR II

Somewhat comparable to the firing upon Fort Sumter which ushered in the Civil War, was the infamous Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Indeed, some Afton men were in military service prior to the December of 1941 event. Impelled by this catalyst however, three hundred and fifty seven names were to eventually find their way to the Afton Honor Roll. Given by Alden A. Mudge Sr., the Afton Honor Roll also denotes sixteen casualties. A listing of the deceased would also include Lt. Burnard Page who was shot down over China; Corp. Bruce Bosket, PFC Paul Estes, PFC Adam Bryden and PFC Sam Willmarth all of whom were killed in France and Benton D. Hyde who was shot down after he had long before completed the number of missions required for return to the United States. Other Gold Star veterans from Afton were Frederick Davy, Homer Dutcher, Geo. Greenman, Wilford Mesic and Everett Brown.

With World War I experiences still all too fresh in mind, and faced with a war of unprecedented scope and magnitude, the homefront stirred itself to a supreme effort. All local civic, patriotic, fraternal and religious groups were combined under the general direction of Civil Defense, the Afton co-chairmen being Jessie E. McHugh and Alden A. Mudge Sr. with headquarters in the village Hall, many activities were carried out. Among them were Red Cross courses in first aid, practice blackouts and the manning of two aircraft observation posts. Manned by local volunteers twenty-four hours daily, one post was on the corner of Spring and Glen streets and the other was on Coventry Road.

Financially, Afton contributed without stint. War bonds sales had generous response and various organizations interested in the physical and moral welfare of the armed services profited from bake-sales, dinner and outright donations.

In the years since World War II, Clifford-Holmes Post 923 under Commander Donald McHugh and the legion auxiliary headed by President Sophie Quincy campaigned for funds and succeeded in having erected the Caswell Park War memorial. The park was chosen as our memorial site because all of the men honored had played and worked there for school or community at one time or another during their lives.

Continued Sept. 5...

Following is a continuation of the miliary history of this area as compiled by William Farley of the Afton Central School staff:

HISTORY OF VANDERBURG W.R.C.

On February 10, 1894, a group of Afton women met and organized what is known as the Vanderburg Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Vanderburg Post No. 12, Grand Army of the Republic. The Corps was instituted and installed by Mrs. Susie Carver, and staff of officers from Binghamton.

The first officers were: President, Addie Havens; Senior Vice, Helen Colvin;

Jr. Vice, Amelia M. Woods; Secretary, Lillian K. Lord; Treasurer, Fidelia Lingee, Neal W. Hayes, Sarah Skelly, Elizabeth A. Haven, Emma Lingee, M. Grace Lingee, Laura Phillips, Ellen M. Sornberger, Hulda M. Davis, Lydia McCullough, Henrietta Lord, Angela Pittsley, Celia A. Willey, Elizabeth Andrews, Mary J. Cable, Lella Maine, Mary E. Everard, Mary Post, Mary F. Tarble, Lizzie H. Smith, Minie Farnsworth, Flora Personeus, Amret Montgomery, Altie Caswell, Sarah Wilder, Adelaide Ayers.

The Vanderburg Relief Corps was represented in the Department of New York during the term from June 1938 to 1939 by Mrs. Illah Johnson who held the office of Department President. Throughout the years the Corps has been represented many times in the Department by its various members.

The officers for 1957 are: President, Irene Barr; Senior Vice, Hilda Van Buren; Secretary, Maude Cass; Treasurer, Thelma Brown.

"The Comrades of the Vanderburg Post, Grand Army of the Republic, have long joined the ever mustering forces in the Great Beyond, but this loyal band of women, will continue to perpetuate their memory, and the ideals for which they fought."

Because the old records were destroyed by fire in 1884, it was impossible to get a complete record of the Grand Army Post and Corps.

Following is a list of the names of Veterans of the Civil War from Afton and vicinity as compiled by the writer:

Cavannah Ayres, known as Cal Ayres, William Benedict, Emmett Benton, John Banks, Theodore Cass, Vet Clark Ol Caswell, George Clapper, Albert Clapp, Perry Cole, Theodore Cable, Henry Colvin, Devillo Corbin, Chet Corbin, Theodore Campbell.

Rev. G.G. Donnelly was killed in 1863. Johoikim Davis, Alvin DeLong, Robert Dimorier, James DeVoe, John Derby, Kirby DeVoe, died in Salisbury Prison.

Enos Ellis, Perry Ellis, Bill Ellis, E. Everhard, Alonzo Farnham, Chancey Ferguson, J.H. Garlic, John Goodnough, A.L. Hopkins, Alvin Hall, D.D. Harris, Charles Handy, Philo Howe, John Hoyt, Sophronius Hinman, James Houston, William Horton, George Hickox, William Walter Johnson, killed in Battle of Cedar Creek.

Delos Jacobs, Hiram Jeffers, Isaac Jones, George Johnson, Nelson Johnson, Mat. Kniskern, John Landers, Tom Landers, S. Warner Landers, killed in Battle of Wilderness, Harry Livingston, Britton Lobdel, Cyrus Lamb, Harry Lucey, Rufus Lord, Jim Lord, Eli Lingee.

John McCullough, John McCulley, Eugene Montgomery, George McDonald, James W. Morton.

Eli Nichols, Wert Newby, Presson Peck, Frank Peck, Ben Pittsley, Len Padgett, Alonzo Phillips.

Hanford Rowe, Homer Rowe, Delos Rowe, Seymour Rowe, Legrand Russell, John Skelly, John Sornberger, Philetus Shaw, Earastus Sullivan, W.G. Shiffer, Donald Stewart, Peter Smith, Zenas Tarbell, Sylvester Terry, John O. Terry, Moses Tuttle, John Tight.

Britton Whitaker, George Wood, Wallace Wilkins, Defore Willey, Will Wilder,

John French, C. Brink Yaple, Sam Yaple, Reed Yaple.

Other names added: Stephen Preston, Andrew Miller, Martin Luther, George E. Church, Charles E. Church, Henry Fowler, George Fredenburg, Oscar More, C. Henry Merritt, George Main, Joseph Butler.

The list of names shown below, were all probably members of the Vanderburg Post 12, the Afton Post, as they attended a reunion in 1879: (taken from the diary owned by Mrs. Eva Holleran.)

Elville Fairchilds, Burton U. Alcott, E.S. McMaster, David Greyhead, J.C. Chamberlain, Ebenezer Wylie, Zacharie Smith, Samuel Armstrong, T.A. Hascall, Gilbert W. Church, Jerome Bartlett, Andrew Bunce, William W. Johnson, Theodore Cable, James Dennis, Henry Davis, Preston Peck, H.S. Vanderburg, Henry O. Padgett, Sewell Burch, Jared D. Austin, Isaac Poole, William Bush, John Smith, Norman C. Booth, James M. Olendorf, Hiram D. Cornell, John D. Burdett, Eli Christian, Asahel Rathbone, Josephus Merritt, J.C. Carpenter, Henry Barber, A.J. Johnson, Austin B. Cass.

Also, Wilson A. Mudge, F.I. Mudge, C.C. Nickerson, Richard Meade, A.D. Smith, Enos M. Johnson, George Taylor, Abel Briggs, W.T. Beatman, Jared Lyon, Edgar Wood, George Pratt, Edward Baxter, E.M. Benton, Z.G. Smith, L.L. Hopkins, J.H. Nickerson, Daniel Landers, George Rath, Jr., A.J. Stewart, Richard Stone, Sophronius Himan, George O. Donnell, Lewis Robins, Chester Tryon, George Williams, W. Wert Newby, Francis M. Meade, Emory Williams, Zenas Tarbell, Hanford Rowe, Andrew P. Aylesworth, Charles D. Davis.



Thelma Brown
Vanderburg Relief Corps



William Farley
Military History

VII. MUSIC

"LET THERE BE MUSIC"

By Edna Albrecht

A village named for a song-poem is challenged by the muse. Afton has met this distinction in many different ways. Citizens' bands, student bands, choirs, lyceum and Chautauqua courses, recitals and soirees—all have quickened the cultural heartbeat, as music "flowed gently" through the years.

Foremost among these tonal influences was a lady—Afton's Mother of Music, Mrs. Permelia Huntley Hayes. As the writer entered upon this project of studying Afton's musical background, she was directed most often to a lovely home on Spring Street, where the parents of Dr. Carlton Hayes had lived. The father, Dr. Philetus A. Hayes cured ailing bodies, and the mother at her grand piano, nurtured harmony in song and lives.

Permelia M. Huntley was born at Marathon, N.Y., on February 14, 1849. After graduation from Brown University, she was married to Philetus A. Hayes, M.D., on September 30, 1869. In April, 1871, Dr. and Mrs. Hayes moved to Afton. After 51 years of loving service as first public school music teacher in Afton, private vocal and instrumental instructor, Baptist Church organist and leader of all public causes, the beloved lady passed away. As a mark of esteem felt by all ages and "conditions" of people, the school was closed on January 1, 1922, and business was suspended to pay honor to the departed.

At the time of Permelia's death, the Afton Enterprise wrote: "Many a one who has become renowned in musical circles received the first instruction and needed encouragement to go on to accomplishment and success from Mrs. Hayes. She always took great interest in each of her pupils, and her best efforts were never spared in their behalf."

In the year 1891 it was recorded in an "Afton Union School and Academy" booklet that "In addition to the drill obtained in the school where a good piano and an organ have been provided by the school authorities, special instruction can be had of competent teachers at reasonable rates."

Other teachers were brought in for certain instruments, but Mrs. Hayes had the burden of organizing all musical events in the school, arranging classes and the other duties of "department head." She also was the instructor for vocal, piano and organ classes.

On the night of March 11, 1891, all was festive in Sullivan's Hall, where a school entertainment was held. On the program were such well-known names as Harry Derby who recited "Boys' Rights," Harry and Ida Carr who played a duet "Bye-lo Land." Lizzie Haven, violinist, presented Galop "In Dulci Jubilo," with Carrie Olendorf as accompanist. A varied program of song, instrumental solos and "declamation" was offered.

In a vocal and instrumental concert, given by Mrs. Hayes and pupils at the Afton Baptist church on Thursday, February 14th, 1889, one reads of a bass solo "Committed to the Deep," sung by Will Carruth, and a duet, "La Tourbillon—

Grand Volsede Concert" (opus 22) played by Mrs. Hayes and Miss Julia Webster. Other players were: Miss Lucy Kelley, G.J. Benton, Eddie Partridge, Miss Cynthia Carr and many others.

The influence of Mrs. Hayes was felt in the organization of lyceum and Chautauqua courses, held for many years in the school house and in Decker's Hall. On one memorable occasion Phinney's U.S. Band played, with Arthur Pryor, who later became famous in New York musical circles, as solo trombonist. These concerts and lectures were always well attended. They were the "social events" of the season, and everyone was delighted to be present.

Then there were the bands, whose exact number is difficult to point out, as new ones grew out of older ones, when the time came for older players to retire, and younger performers stepped in to take their part. Was the new band a fresh undertaking, or an outgrowth of the old? The question is hard to answer, the important fact is: Music always went on its melodious way.

Music in Afton Continued from July 11

The first to be "remembered" is the Afton Cornet Band. Mrs. Eva Holleran reminisced, "It was organized some time in the 1870's. The musicians' suits were colorful, trousers blue with red stripes, coats red and hats blue with huge white plumes and gold colored epaulets on the shoulder."

According to Mrs. Holleran, players were, Henry Carr, Justus Carr, John Pierce, Rush Church, Thomas Farnsworth, Burr Farnsworth, George Hickox, Arthur Carpenter, L. Holdrege, W. Holdrege and Chauncey Hyde.

Carrie and Henry Briggs, 85 and 86 years old respectively, "remembered" the band as follows: the leader, Henry Carr, grandfather of Mrs. Ethel Fletcher, who maintained a drug store where Eldred's store is now located; John and Ralph Chamberlain, brothers, who ran a livery stable and were distantly related to Fred Chamberlain, now living on Main Street; George Hickox, whose hardware business was located in the Red and White store; Riley Merrill, farmer; Jut Carr, Atwood Hyde, contractor; Chauncey Hyde, farmer; and Bobbie Church, drummer.

"The musicians were driven around by a four-horse team," Henry Briggs said. "They would even go to Oxford and Greene."

"They played everything in the musical line," Carrie added, "And there was always a big audience."

Another leader of the Comet Band (mentioned by Mrs. Holleran) was Richard Rush Church, grandfather of Mrs. Allen Herkimer, who was a farmer and played a horn.

Then there was a later band, organized in 1895, of which Elbert Doolittle, Mayor of Afton for thirty years, was leader. Mr. Doolittle, who played the drums, is pictured in a photograph hanging in the Historical rooms next to the Afton Library. After much research, Mrs. Daniel Grant was able to identify the players as follows: Mr. Doolittle, William H. Carr, Frank Payne, George Carr, Fred Goodnough, Tracey Doolittle, Paul Pierce, Phil Waters, Harry Carr, Charles S. Gibson, John Hawkins, Peter Quick, George Goodnough and Frank Carr.

A continuation of this band was led by Charles S. Gibson, clarinetist, which existed five years.

In the relatively "modern" year of 1912, the Afton Citizens' Band of happy memory was formed. According to Harry Horton, who received the epaulets of Henry Carr, leader of the 1870 "Comet Band," there were thirty charter members, who organized on the second floor of the Horton Hardware Building. Mr. Horton, baritone horn and euphonium player, managed the band for fifteen years and took part in rehearsals and concerts for fifteen more years. In all the thirty years, the Afton hardware man was not absent.

Francis Larkin Sr., owner of music stores in Albany, Binghamton and Sidney, organized the Citizens' Band. The number of members varied from time to time, but a list made at one survey was as follows, leaders: Roderick Huff, first leader after organization, E.J. (Sandy) Ogden, C.S. Morrison (composer of "Meditation") L.C. Hallman, Frank Tei, Fred Fleming, Mr. Van Tuyl, Charles Maas.

Players: Harry Blakeslee, Tracy Doolittle, snare drum; Elbert Doolittle, bass drum; E. Russell, Harold Campbell, William Griggs Jr., Earl Warren, Robert Palmer, clarinets; Lee Pomeroy, Robert Van Deusen, horns; Miss Perry, Thelma Fuller, Clarence Hurlburt, trumpets; Robert Quincy, Mr Perry, saxophones; Ralph Corbin, xylophone; Harry Carr, Harry Perry, basses; Harry Horton, baritone.

The Afton Citizens Band played enthusiastically for thirty years, giving summer concerts in the bandstand, every Thursday night from 8 to 9 o'clock.

At a firemen's convention at Oxford the Afton musicians won first place over a number of other town bands. The prize-winning number was "Lustpiel" Overture (Keller-Bela) under the direction of "Sandy" Ogden.

Present day audiences find enjoyment of a summer evening in concerts of the Afton Village Band. This group had its beginning prior to World War II, when a number of professional musicians was augmented by local talent. During the war, concerts were suspended and when they were resumed in 1947, student musicians of the Afton Central School Band, together with interested alumni of former bands made up the personnel.

After the bandstand at the triangle was removed, summer concerts were held at Caswell Park. After the war interim, the pagoda was no longer usable, and lacking a suitable location, the concert series were transferred to the sidewalk in front of the Village Hall.

This season the Thursday evening concerts are being held at the entrance to the new Elementary School building. Russell Nygren, the band leader said he hoped that the better parking facilities would attract more people to enjoy band music in the "grand old American tradition."

Among the alumni members expected to be playing this season are: Peter Vail, Linda Hulbert, Barbara Kaufman, Nancy Guy, Walter Rose, Martin Decker, Carol Williams, Janet Craig, Marguerite Gott and Norman Davies.

Others from the school band include: Sharon Campbell, Dawn Sullivan, Regina Wilcox, Thomas Vail, Charles Crissell, Mary Douglas, Joanne Holdrege, Robert Snedaker, Patricia Covey, Alan Hulbert, Barbara Schott, Helen Bunt, Sharon Eldred, Edwin Simmons, Harold Kaufmann, James Bacon, Dieter Albrecht, Victor Albrecht,

James Flynn, Geraldine Ten Pas, Joellen Talutis, William Talutis, Carolyn Tryon, Duane Buman.

All this rich heritage of musical striving, but how does young Afton accept it? With honor and self-dedication, for now the same kind of player discipline and hard work is drawn from young individualists by another band, that representing the Afton Central School. Every year as youngsters advance in learning and stability, they vie for a place at drums or French horn, saxophone or clarinet. Under the leadership of Russell Nygren, conductor, the Afton Central Band has played its way to the top in scholastic musical competitions. All Afton residents know how able the musicians are, how popular the concerts are in spring and fall, and how much "zip" Afton youth contributes to firemen's conventions and fairs.

Perhaps it would be well to linger on the statistics of accomplishment, noticing the improvement in concert and marching through the years:

1950 at the State Festival, B in grade 2 music.

1951 at the State Festival, A in grade 2 music.

1952 at the State Festival, A in grade 3 music.

1953 at the State Festival, A in grade 4 music.

1954 at the State Festival, A in grade 5 music.

1955 at the State Festival, A in grade 6 music.

1956 at the State Festival, B in grade 6 music.

1957 at the State Festival, A in grade 5 music.

At the Festival of Bands events held in Sherburne, the following ratings were achieved:

1950 2nd place in concert work.

1951 1st place in concert work.

1952 1st place in concert work, 1st place in marching.

1953 1st place in concert work, 1st place in marching.

1954 1st place in concert work, 1st in marching.

1955 1st place in concert.

1956 1st place in concert.

1957 2nd place in concert.

Student members of the band cooperate with the leader in distributing uniforms, keeping books, applying rules, and a number of other administrative details. Officers for 1956-57 were: Patricia Covey, president; Thomas Vail, vice president; Norma Jean Decker, secretary; Mary Douglas, treasurer; Geraldine Ten Pas, manager; Joanne Holdrege, assistant manager; Barbara Schott, librarian; Charlene Merritt, reporter.

Marie Fuller was drum majorette, twirlers were Carol Howe and Rhonda Davis and the color guard was composed of Lynn Pratt, Howard Gohl, Roger Barr and George Barr.

Members the past school year were as follows: Clarinet and flute: Carol Williams, Frances Wilcox, Norma Jean Decker, Julie Copeland, Rebecca Bickford, Sharon Campbell, Joanne Crosby, Judy Robinson, Dawn Sullivan, Regina Wilcox, Carolyn Tryon, Dieter Albrecht, William Talutis, Joan Christian, Bonnie Doolittle, Harry Smith, Carol Hendrickson, Gretchen Weeks, Ronald Bolster, Andy Gay Jenks,

Donna Riley.

Percussion: Paul Miller, Doris Bickford, James Bacon, Victor Albrecht, Arthur Wilcox, James Flynn.

Basses and horns: Mary Douglas, Donna Farrington, Judy Guy, Glenna Holmes, Thomas Vail, Charles Crissell, Richard Le Suer.

Cornet: Patricia Covey, Alan Hulbert, Gary Johnson, Barbara Schott, Sharon Eldred, Helen Bunt, Jill Grashof, Brian Barre.

Trombone and Baritone: Ed Simmons, Charlene Merritt, Donald Drake, Harold Kaufman, Joellen Talutis, Donald Armstrong, Geraldine Ten Pas, Barbara Schoenfeld.

Saxophone: Bryce Lockwood, William Griggs, Dorothy Kelly, Duane Buman, Joanne Holdrege, Nicki Johnson, Warren Rosenkranz, Roberta Riley, Robert Snedaker, Neal Pease.

The Afton Central School Band started quite humbly in 1938 with 15 members, to whom instruction was imparted by a teacher, George Muhlig from outside the village. Then Mr. Nygren came to Afton and dreams were turned into realities. With the exception of four years in the Air Force when Clifton Cook took over the band, Conductor Nygren has held the baton continuously.

Mr. Nygren believes in the importance of his teaching field. "Music is as important to the curriculum as any other subject. Besides giving technical skills and cultural contacts, it trains the mind and imbues team spirit," he said.

Most of the band members who continue their education play in college orchestras or bands. One student Frank Morell of Nineveh continued his music work professionally as a member of a dance band.

Russell Nygren was born in New Rochelle, attended the public schools there. Later he studied music at New York University under the famous conductor, Hollis Dann and Dr. Ernest Williams. During part of his military service, he played with the Glen Miller Band.

Mr. Nygren's creative skill is applied not only to forming new musicians out of casual youngsters but also in composing marches and other musical compositions. Although little is said of this by the composer himself, the work continues from year to year, and music publishers are beginning to take interest in the compositions.

Omitted from last week in Afton Band's accomplishment, was the item that they won 1st place in marching in 1957.

Afton Central School also boasts a well trained chorus and orchestra.. This year, both groups appeared with distinction at music festivals at Norwich and Greene, with Miss Ruth Pinnock, Afton Director, leading the orchestra, Miss Pinnock, a new-comer to Afton last year, has studied extensively in her field. After specialization at Mansfield State Teachers' College and Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, she received her Master's degree in musical education at Ithaca College this past June.

Outside the school, there are private music classes. The first of these was in the home of Mrs. Permelia H. Hayes and her husband, Dr. Philetus Hayes. Mrs. Eva Holleran reported: "As I remember, the class consisted mostly of young chil-

dren from eight to twelve years old. One of the songs I remember was "Mill May."

At the present time, Mrs. Hilda Van Buren and Miss Marion Wylie have piano classes for boys and girls and for elders too. Miss Wylie was born in Afton and attended Afton Central School. She completed a year of liberal arts at Cornell University, then attended two summer music courses at Syracuse, studying under George Mulfinger. She also received instruction from Stewart Pratt, Hartwick College professor and participated in master classes of Guy Maier at Julliard in Bristol, Virginia and at Maryville College in Tennessee. Miss Wylie has taught over twenty years in Afton and expects twenty pupils next year. She is organist and choir director of the Afton Methodist Church and St. Ann's Episcopal Church.

Mrs. Van Buren was born in Utica and attended the Utica Conservatory of Music. She has given piano lessons since she was 19 years old; after receiving her teacher's certification, she gave instruction all up and down the Unadilla Valley. She taught in South New Berlin for a number of years and in Afton for the past 12 years.

Among the well-known teachers with whom Mrs. Van Buren has studied are: Russell White, Composer of New Berlin, Mrs. Ralph Wade of Endicott, musical leader of the Triple Cities and Professor Magandanz of Utica Conservatory.

All the foregoing are expressions of a village's happy spirit of song, yet perhaps music has found its greatest dedication in the five churches in our minds. Singing "to the glory of God" has made better citizens and neighbors, has helped to keep families together in the worship of their Master. Mrs. Permelia H. Hayes was organist and choir leader for twenty years in the Baptist Church. Today her services are being worthily continued by Mrs. Francis Secretst, choir leader and Miss Grace Newton organist.

In the Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Alwin Ten Pas, wife of the minister, directs the choir, and Mrs. Milton Van Valkenburg is organist. Both are blessed with good voices, which are heard in special holiday concerts and cantatas.

Miss Marion Wylie is organist and choir director for both the Episcopal and Methodist Churches. In the latter, a youth choir delights young and old alike. Mrs. Everett Baker, organist of the Catholic Church, is planning a children's and adult choir for the near future. Knowing Mrs. Baker's success as former vocal and instrumental instructor in the Afton Central School, one looks forward to the new musical groups.

Such is the old and the young of Afton's rhythmic dreams and attainments. Happily the has-been integrates the new in a living tradition. One whose melody will "linger on" into a bright and happy future.



Edna Albrecht
(center figure)

VIII. ORGANIZATIONS

HISTORY OF CUNAHUNTA D.A.R. OF AFTON By Mrs. Frank Decker

Our own Cunahunta Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, of Afton, N.Y., was started in 1910, when Mrs. Charles L. Seely became interested and wrote to the State Regent, Mrs. Joseph Simeon Wood, who appointed her as "The first Regent of the chapter to be formed."

To join the Society, a woman needs to be a direct descendant of some man or woman who either fought in the Revolutionary war, or gave some distinguished service to the cause of independence of the United States at that time. This has to be proved by family and United States records, and is looked up and passed by the National Registrar. Hence the need of the Genealogical Library.

There is also a society of Sons of the American Revolution, one of which is located in Binghamton, if any of the Afton men who are eligible wish to join.

Children of the American Revolution form the junior membership group of the organization. At the age of 18, they are allowed to join the D.A.R.

Copied from the first secretary's book, Oct. 12, 1914:

"The first meeting was held at the home of our Regent, Mrs. Charles Seely, and she explained that we had met rather informally at the request of the State Regent, Mrs. Augsbury, to organize our chapter and appoint officers for the year... and that Mrs. Augsbury would come to visit us later."

"The name of the chapter shall be Cunahunta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution of Afton, N.Y. Cunahunta is the name we find given for the Indian Village that used to be situated on the west side of the river, above a place where there are three or four large islands in the river; it was burned by a detachment of Sullivan's Army in the Fall of 1778.

Mrs. Seely explained that the object of the chapter shall be to cooperate with, and further to the utmost all the ends and aims of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

1. "To perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the men and women who achieved American Independence, by the acquisition and protection of historical spots and the erection of monuments; by the encouragement of historical research in relation to the Revolution and the publication of its results, by the preservation of documents and relics and the records of the individual services of Revolutionary soldiers and patriots, and by the promotion of celebrations of all patriotic anniversaries.

2. "To carry out the injunction of Washington in his farewell address to the American people, "To promote as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge, thus developing an enlightened public opinion, and affording to young and old, such advantages as shall develop in them the largest capacity for performing the duties of American citizens."

3. "To cherish, maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, to foster true patriotism and love of country, and to aid in securing for mankind all the blessings of liberty."

The Cunahunta Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution perform many services for the State and National Society; of course many are obligatory.

Other activities include the giving of a bronze marker at the death of a member and placing of flags at their graves on Memorial Day; sending money and clothing to Tamassee School, Kate Duncan Smith School, Crossnore School and Ellis Island; contributing toward the preservation of a section of a redwood forest in California; selling articles made by the pupils of the Crossnore School; helping to finance the restoration of Kenmore, the home of Betty Lewis, only sister of George Washington; making layettes for the Indians at Pine Hill, also, sending beads and money for Christmas gifts for Indian children. The Daughters contribute to the support of two Indian schools in Oklahoma. They furnish copies of records from old family Bibles and provide historical articles for the genealogical library in Washington.

The Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, was organized in 1890 with 18 members. Today it numbers more than 184,000 women in 2,805 chapters.

It is a society for the promotion of patriotism, history, education, and love of country. There is nothing secret and no benefits for the members except to keep our country and its constitution clean and to make good citizens.

They own a debt-free \$7,500,000 structure that houses the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. It is said to be the largest building in the world, built and financed entirely by a woman's organization. It covers a whole block in the city of Washington, D.C.. It houses a fine museum of early Americana and a genealogical library among the finest in the country. There are 28 state rooms furnished in beautiful antiques of the Revolutionary period.

On the third floor of the administration building, a Prayer Room is maintained, open daily. Constitution Hall has a large stage, and seating capacity of 4,000. Here, once a year some 4,000 members of the organization converge on Washington for the annual Continental Congress. This comes during the week in which the Battle of Lexington is commemorated, on April 19.

The Daughters own and operate two schools where no schools existed before—one Tamassee School in Tamassee, S.C. and Kate Duncan Smith School in Grant, Ala. These are fine schools for children of the mountain people. They also provide scholarships, clothing and equipment to eleven other approved schools. They spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships, and loans, donate thousands of U.S. flags and flag codes to schools each year.

They are tireless and vigilant in their crusade against Communist influence in this country. They are actively alert to every opportunity to promote constant and increased reverence for the American heritage. They distribute hundreds of thousands of patriotic leaflets to schools, libraries and other groups. They try to encourage deeper study of American History in the schools by offering prizes for

historical essays, special historic projects, highest history grades and awards for "good citizenship."

They provide Manuals of Citizenship, in several languages, for the foreign-born who wish to become citizens and maintain a \$2,000 trust fund to aid foreign-born students at the Americanization School founded by the Daughters in Washington.

The D.A.R. own and operate many historic buildings throughout the country. They have just completed a beautiful Bell Tower at Valley Forge, Pa., which took ten years to accomplish at a cost of \$378,000.

Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, wife of the 23rd President of the United States was the first President General.

These local officers were appointed by the Regent, Mrs. Charles L. Seeley, on October 12th 1914 at Afton:

Vice Regent, Emma Hunt Church

Registrar, Nan Hill Keator

Secretary, Jessie McGill McHugh

Treasurer, Bessie Guy Sheldon

Chaplain, Alice Adams Dodge

Advisory Board, Addie Perkins Haven, Martha Ingels Bresee

Historian, Evelyn Griffis McHugh

There were eleven ladies at the first meeting, October 12, 1914. The organization list contained the following names:

Mrs. Martha I. Bresee, Afton

Miss Aurelia Bresee, Mechanicsville, N.Y.

Mrs. Caroline Butler, Canton, Pa.

Mrs. Celynda Carpenter, Carbondale, Pa.

Mrs. Emma Hunt Church, Afton

Mrs. Alice Adams Dodge, Afton

Mrs. Ruth Decker, Detroit, Mich.

Mrs. Harriet H. Forsythe, Cato, N.Y.

Mrs. Allie S. Grant, Afton

Miss Charlotte E. Grant, Afton

Mrs. Ina G. Hill, Bainbridge, N.Y.

Miss Levantia Halsey, Unadilla, N.Y.

Miss Agnes Humphrey, Santa Barbara, Calif.

Mrs. Addie P. Haven, Afton

Mrs. Eliza F. Hunt, Cato, N.Y.

Miss Eula Johnston, Afton

Miss Charlotte Lee, Unadilla, N.Y.

Miss Sarah C. Landers, Afton

Miss Margaret Landers, Afton

Mrs. Frances McCullough, Bainbridge, N.Y.

Mrs. Evelyn G. McHugh, Afton

Mrs. Etta Manwarren, Windsor, N.Y.

Mrs. Belle H. Prime, Worcester, Mass.

Mrs. Bertha L. Ruland, Nineveh
Mrs. Bessie Sheldon, Afton
Mrs. Leona Stratton, Oxford, N.Y.
Mrs. Sarah L. Seely, Afton, N.Y.
Mrs. Martha L. Ward, Unadilla, N.Y.
Mrs. Frances W. Swift, Buffalo, N.Y.
Mrs. Nan Hill Keator, Afton
Miss Celia Alvira Landers, Afton
Mrs. Mary Putnam Slusser, Afton
Mrs. Kate Derby Beatman, Afton
Mrs. Sarah Mercer Carpenter, St. Louis, Mo.
Mrs. Ina Chamberlain Davey, Washington, D.C.
Mrs. Helen Slusser Gray, Newark, New Jersey
Mrs. Susan Kelley Hand, Washington, D.C.
Miss Eula L. Johnston, Oneonta, N.Y.
Mrs. Mable Peck Meyer, Bainbridge, N.Y.
Mrs. Frances Way Swift, Buffalo, N.Y.
Mrs. Margaret Prentice Sayre, Trenton, Mich.
Mrs. Frances Johnston McCullough, Bainbridge, N.Y.

These names have merited a star before their names, but many of them are among the list of "The Silent Charter."

There have been many names added, some have taken their membership to other chapters. At present we number nearly 40 members.

Members who have acted as Chapter Regents during the years are:

Mrs. Charles L. Seely, Mrs. Fred Church, Mrs. George Havens, Mrs. Fred Ireland, Mrs. Daniel Jennings, Mrs. Daniel Grant, Mrs. Alden A. Mudge, Mrs. Carrie Pierce, Mrs. Frank H. Decker, Mrs. Allen Herkimer, Mrs. Carlton L. Wrench, Mrs. Caroline Butler, Mrs. Arthur Grover, Miss Mildred Merrell, Mrs. Fred Foster, Mrs. James Ernstrom and Miss Ruth Chamberlain.

Some of the members who have attended the Continental Congress at Washington were: Mrs. Seeley, Mrs. Bresee, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Jerre McCollough, Mrs. Frank Decker, Mrs. Daniel Grant, Miss Merrell, Mrs. Fred Foster and Miss Ruth Chamberlain.

WORK BY LOCAL CHAPTER

We have ten meetings during the year, held at the homes of the members where we open the meeting with the ritual:

"To perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the men and women who achieved American Independence; to promote the development of an enlightened public opinion and to foster patriotic citizenship; these are the objects of our society. Daughters of the American Revolution."

This is followed by scripture and prayer, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and the American's Creed and patriotic songs. This is followed by the business meeting and a program.

There are many committees in the National organization of which we use the following: Yearbook, American Indians, Approved Schools, Historical Room, Ad-

vancement of American Music, Girl Home Makers, Membership, National Defense, Press Relations, Correct Use of the Flag, Prizes, Manual of Citizenship, Magazine (D.A.R.), Genealogical Research, Americanism and Flowers.

We observe the patriotic holidays, with appropriate programs.

Members of the chapter have looked up graves of soldiers who fought in the Revolution, in our cemeteries. Cunahunta Chapter placed a monument on the Village "Triangle", Main and Caswell Streets, Afton, which reads, "In memory of the men in the Town of Afton who fought in the Revolutionary War."

The names are: Aaron Emmons, Eli Seely, Zebulon Cable, Benjamin Carpenter, William Churchill, Samuel Cornwell, Jacob Hammond, William Johnston, Isaiah Landers, Levi Pratt, Seth Stone, Joseph Jennngs, William Newton, Paul Nichols, Matthew Long, John Somes, Jeremiah Boyington, Richard Church, Capt. Enos Cornwell, Oliver Easton, Smauel Johnson, Ebenezer Landers, Martin Luther, Abijah Stevens, Silas Wright, Thaddeus Newton, James Nichols, Israel Stowell and Lieutenant William Beatman.

The monument was placed with appropriate service and the address was given by Peter Nelson of Albany in 1923.

The Chapter also gave a bronze marker for Lt. Beatman's grave in 1956.

In 1917, Cunahunta Chapter gave the first history prize of \$5 to the pupils attaining the highest record in the Regent's examination in Afton Central School. They have continued to give prizes for essays on some phase of the Revolution, \$5 and \$3 each year.

The Swift Memorial Prize for essay was given for many years of \$5 and \$3. In 1935, they gave prizes for bird houses among the boys of the grades. We give a prize each year to a girl in High School for "Good Citizenship" \$5 and a D.A.R. pin.

In 1916, we gave a tea for the teachers of the school.

The organization gave new flags to the school at one time, one in each room.

We have been giving prizes to the girls in Homemaking class for either sewing, refinishing furniture, weaving seats, or good grooming for a number of years.

Cunahunta Chapter was active in starting the Historical rooms in the Village Hall, donated many articles and have been custodians and take a great interest in keeping them in good order and making it a worthwhile project.

They have given money to the Red Cross, bought tuberculosis stamps, set a tree in the Village Park, put on some Chamber of Commerce suppers, entertained school children in the Historical Rooms, the members taking turns.

During the second World War, the members did a great deal of knitting for the Red Cross. Mrs. John Eckler had charge of the distribution of yarn sent to Cunahunta Chapter D. A.R. by the Mrs. William Boyce Thompson Foundation of Yonkers, N.Y. for garments for our armed forces, and she sent the knitting done by the women of the Village in to headquarters.

The Chapter also packed and sent many boxes of cookies to the boys in the Service at home and overseas.

SKETCH OF MASONIC LODGE (From History of Chenango Co.)

Afton Lodge No. 360, F.& A.M., was organized as Nineveh Lodge, January 11, 1855, at which time the first communication was held, and was chartered June 20, 1855. The name was changed June 24, 1862, when it was decided to remove the lodge from Nineveh, where the meetings had formerly been held, to Afton. The first officers were Harvey Bishop, master; Platt Bishop, S. W.; C.G. Northrup, J.W.; Fenner Brown, secretary; H.W. Scott, treasurer; T.C. Healy, S.D.; J. Kelly, J.D.; Jesse Brown, tiler; E.M. Brown and E. Badger, Stewards. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

Vallonia Chapter, No. 80, R.A.M., was organized December 19, 1856, as No. 62 at Vallonia Springs, in the Town of Colesville, in Broome county, where the meetings were originally held. The charter was granted Feb. 3, 1857. The first officers were R.W. Juliand, High Priest; T.C. Healy, King; and E. Bishop, Scribe. The chapter meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month.



Daisy Hurd Decker
Cunahunta Chapter,
D.A.R.

SCOUTING WAS ORGANIZED ABOUT THE YEAR 1921

by Russell Nygren

Sponsored by the Clifford Holmes Post of the American Legion, the local Boy Scout unit, Troop 51, has through the years provided the opportunity of participating in a wholesome program of activities for the boys of our community. As a part of the Delhanna District and the Susquehanna Council of the Boy Scouts of America, our local troop is making its contribution toward building a better America by molding the youth of our area so that they may be better prepared to meet life at their best as citizens in a highly complex world.

We have reports of scouting in 1921 led by a dentist, Dr. Kennedy. Don Whitson was scoutmaster for several years after that.

The first official record we have of a Boy Scout troop in Afton is a copy of a charter dated January 5, 1931. Listed on that charter were Howard Weir, scoutmaster; Donald D. Whitson, assistant scoutmaster, and the troop committee of C.W. Guy, chairman; Ernest F. Tabor, C.H. Eldred, and A.G. Herkimer.

The earliest troop roster is that of the year 1936 with the following names: Lynn Brayman, Hugh Fletcher, Billy Grow, Frank Knowlton, Ward Merrell, George Mudge, Fred Paddleford, David Rhydderch, Harold Slater, Gilbert Swart, Glenn Swart, Wellington Swart, Fay Todd and Stanley Trask. Scouts joining later in the same year included Loren Guy, Allen Herkimer, Donald Swart, Charles Tripp and Lester Holt.

The success of activities for Troop 51 has been achieved through the leadership and inspiration of the men who as scoutmasters have sacrificed so much for the welfare of the youth of our community.

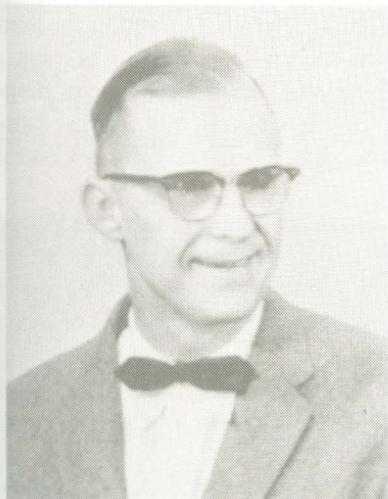
Roger Snedaker and Larry Estes held the position of scoutmaster prior to 1946 and in that year Malcom Parker took charge of the organization. In 1953 Everett Baker continued the work of the troop by taking up the reins until last year when Merwyn Fenner became the scoutmaster.

Presently the Boy Scouts of America are engaged in the second year of a Four Year program the theme of which is "Onward for God and My Country." This program hopes to focus nationwide attention on the goals sought for boys through their troop activities such as: physical fitness, self-reliance, obligation to God, personal responsibility, service participation, willingness to share, practice in democratic living, and the opportunity to become a member of the "scouting team."

Some time shortly after World War II, the Explorer unit was added to the scouting program to provide for the boys in the early teenage group. Interest in this group has fluctuated from year to year, but the Explorer Post, under the guidance of Jim Blakesley have been active this year with the promise of growing in strength in the future.

Even with the Scout troop and the Explorer Post, it was felt that the Scouting program was not complete because the boys of Cub Scout age were left out. About three years ago a group of interested folks got together and started the machinery for the establishment of a Cub Pack in Afton. Cubmasters for the Pack since its organization have been Jim Ernstrom, Tom Neal and currently Jim Morrow.

As a part of The Boy Scouts of America, our troop, post and pack have at their disposal the vast facilities and resources which could be provided only by such a vast nationwide, well-organized association. The Boy Scout Camp Tuscarora, located just off Route 17 near Gulf Summit, is a perfect example of the fabulous facilities available to our boys through the Boy Scouts of America.



Russell Nygren
Boy Scouts

HISTORY OF THE AFTON GIRL SCOUTS

by Mildred Merrell

Girl Scouts of America in Afton were organized in the fall of 1926. The first meeting was held in the American Legion Rooms, the former Church and Hill Bank, now the Coral Beauty Shoppe.

When they outgrew these quarters, they moved to WRC rooms on the second floor on Railroad Avenue. After a fire in the barber shop on the ground floor, the Girl Scouts were given permission to use rooms over the former Clarence Eldred store where the Boy Scout meetings are now held. Later they moved to the third floor of the Village Hall where a fire escape was erected for protection of users.

The Afton troop was organized by Mrs. Henrietta Dickenson Stowe of Binghamton under the jurisdiction of the Broome County Council. Not proving satisfactory, it was decided to try being a Lone Troop, until Chenango County Council was organized.

During these 30 years, Girl Scouts have always been supported by the Village officials and assisted by many civic minded people and the entire community.

The girls have been able to enjoy out of door activity through the kindness of friends who have made places available. Transportation has always been provided when needed.

Each year the highlights have been Camping and Hiking, Afton Fair Floats (when floral parades were held), Cookie Sale, Badge Activities, Parties, Christmas Carols and Community Service.

Many leaders have given faithful service on a volunteer basis. At least a thousand girls and one hundred leaders have been members of the Afton Girl Scouts.

Looking to the future, Afton is doing its share toward the \$78,000 project to provide summer camping for Girl Scouts at the Chenango County Girl Scout Camp on Lake Sear. At the rate of present giving and pledges, our quota of \$2,500 will be realized in the current three-year period.

Thus we can assure our next generation of women and mothers of the character-building and healthful environment that camping provides to supplement our year-round program, Girl Scouts of America.



Mildred Merrell

BROWNIE SCOUTS ARE NEW ORGANIZATION IN AFTON

(Information by Miss Marian Munn)

Brownie Scouts started in Afton in 1944 with ten little girls and two leaders, Mrs. Lauren B. Andrews and Miss Marian Munn.

Now in 1957 the troop has grown to include 50 girls with six leaders.

Meetings are held in the kindergarten rooms of the school, with many wholesome activites and projects provided.

Most of the Brownies continue in Scouting by going into Girls Scouts through "fly-up" ceremonies.

Afton is fortunate to have this opportunity for young girls in character-building activity under a nationally recognized organization.



Marian Munn

BANKING HISTORY OF TOWN OF AFTON

By C. Wayland Guy

The first bank established in Afton was a private institution operated by Carver and Crassus of Bainbridge, and was located in a room in the saloon of Brower and Hunt. This venture was apparently not very sucessful as it carried on only during the winter of 1875.

On January 1, 1876, E.M. Johnston and Company opened a private bank in the Willey Block. The firm consisted of Enos M. Johnston and Devillo C. Church, and continued until 1883 when a new institution headed by Devillo C. Church and Marshall G. Hill took over under the name of Church and Hill. The bank was located in the corner of the Derby Block in the rooms now used for a beauty parlor. It was continued by George and Fred Church (sons of Devillo C. Church) and Marshall Hill until it was finally liquidated in 1922.

During the year 1919 it was felt that the growing community had need for the services of a National Bank. At the same time another committee was formed to establish a National Bank and take over the business of Church and Hill.

Both groups apparently had strong financial and political backing and they were able to accomplish a seemingly impossible task. Two national Banks were issued charters on November 14, 1919, one to be known as the First National Bank of Afton, and the other The Afton National Bank. It was, of course, obvious to all that the community could not possibly have the resources to support the two banks; so the groups were finally joined in a single committee and a charter of consolidation was issued under the name of First National Bank of Afton, under the date of May 1, 1920, with a Board of Directors consisting of thirteen members: W. Lee Dodge, Frank Gurnsey, Harry G. Horton, Burt B. Hyde, Morris J. Mudge, Whit Y. McHugh, I. Wesley Seely, Luke J. Collins, Marshall G. Hill, Wayland A. Hinman, Frank E. Keator, Glen Morgan and William Phelps. The following officers were elected: Morris J. Mudge, president; William Phelps, Vice President; and William H. Southworth, cashier.

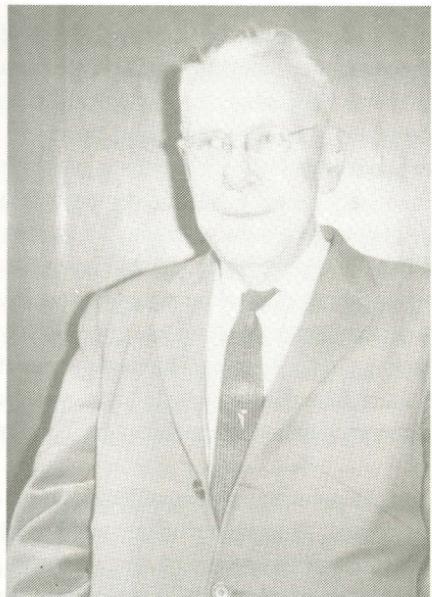
The bank opened for business on May 10, 1920, and the first published statement, issued on June 30, 1920, revealed a very heartening growth. Total assets were \$144,118.53, with deposits of \$113,915. The following year the Board was reduced to nine members: Collins, Dodge, Horton, Hyde, Keator, McHugh, Mudge, Phelps, and Seely.

Mr. Mudge served as President until his death in April 1932. Burt B. Hyde was elected president in October 1932, serving until his death in January 1939. After the death of Mr. Hyde, Bruce S. Keator was elected president and is still serving in this office. Mr. Southworth resigned in July 1922 to accept a position in Connecticut, and C. Wayland Guy was elected cashier, an office he still holds. The present Board of Directors consists of Warren E. Davy, C. Wayland Guy, R. Ray King, Bruce S. Keator and Carroll F. Vail.

The bank was first located in a part of what is now the Red and White Store. By 1927 the business had continued to grow until more ample quarters were needed. The present location was purchased from E. W. Griggs. Plans were drawn and the present modern building was completed and occupied in 1928. The bank is equipped

with a modern fire-proof vault, with over 500 Safe Deposit Boxes for cusotmer use. It is a member of the Chenango County Bankers' Association, the New York State Bankers' Association, the Federal Deposits Insurance Corporation.

Starting with a capital of \$30,000, the bank now is proud of a capital structure of over \$300,000.00; and over the years it has always rendered complete banking service to the community that it serves. It is still a typical country bank where it is always possible to talk over financial problems with one of its officers on a friendly and personal basis. For many years its motto has been "Strong enough to protect you, large enough to serve you, and small enough to know you."



C. Wayland Guy

LOCAL HISTORY OF AFTON HOME BUREAU

By Mrs. Daniel Grant

For over forty years the Home Bureau has been an important organization in our town. While the function is mainly to extend information from the State University at Ithaca, it has always been active in civic affairs. During the war years it was the Home Bureau that started all the new ways of food preservation, and since then new ideas in sewing, cooking, furniture refinishing and many others have been advanced.

One of the first projects undertaken by the many members was furnishing and serving lunches for the children at school. But the main purpose ever in mind was providing a building for the use of the village people. To this end work was commenced to establish a fund.

The Village Hall houses the Fire equipment, a large assembly hall on the ground floor. The Home Bureau has the use of the second floor, and from that space was allotted the library, where books were donated as a beginning, the Historical Room and the Red Cross room. Several other groups have rooms on the third floor.

An early project which the Home Bureau sponsored was a big bazaar, of which Mrs. Bert Lord was general chairman. This activity meant work and did pay off in a good sum to start our objective. There for several years these interested women served food during the days and nights of the Afton Fair. Finally, \$5,000 had accumulated, and this was given to the Village Board to purchase the present property.

At the beginning of this program Miss Adelaide Barts was the Chenango County Agent. Miss Barts has since retired and now lives in California. The first president of the local group was Mrs. Daniel Grant. Later, Mrs. Burt B. Hyde took over the duties and was followed by Mrs. Fred Foster's accomplished leadership. Mrs. George Hawke is the able president at this time.

The Home Bureau meetings have been of the greatest value in aiding its members to learn the latest methods of cooking and how to serve nutritious and proper foods to their families. There were also lessons on the care and use of sewing machines and electrical equipment, wiring, etc. A course in Red Cross nursing was completed, and household management, book reviews, child care and others are among the subjects studied.

While this organization is now technically to be known as the Cooperative Extension work in Home Economics of the State of New York, it will always be thought of as the Home Bureau.



Aurelia Bresee Grant

AFTON FREE LIBRARY IS COMMUNITY PROJECT

By Mrs. Alden Mudge, Sr.

In December 1929 the Home Bureau, having settled in their new rooms in the Village Hall, approved the use of two front rooms for a library and each member was asked to donate a book. In January 40 books were presented and gradually many more were brought in.

In July 1932, Sylvia Pierce (now Mrs. Clyde Swarner) who had taken library training, gave a talk to the Home Bureau about starting a library and offered to help catalog books and get it started, the Home Bureau to defray the cost of supplies.

In October of that year, 1932, about 600 books had been donated and Mr. Adamy contributed 1000 book plates. At this time the Home Bureau voted to name it "The Afton Home Bureau Community Free Library." The library was to be open three days a week, totaling 10 1/2 hours. Miss Pierce was hired as librarian for two dollars per week.

In the summer of 1933 an interested group met to make plans to organize the library under the State of New York. On August 11, 1933, a well attended and enthusiastic public meeting was held in the Home Bureau rooms. It was voted that Afton should have a free library operating under the State of New York and should be known as The Afton Free Library. By-laws were adopted and the following trustees were elected: Daniel Grant, Mrs. Whit Y. McHugh, Mrs. Bert Hyde, Mrs. Alden Mudge, Mrs. John Tobey, Howard Adamy and Lawrence Carroll.

The first Turstees meeting was held August 14 and Daniel Grant was chosen chairman. A canvas of the village and town was made to secure members and funds for the purpose of launching this community project. The result was that sufficient money was provided as a reserve fund to put the library into operation.

In the spring of 1935, after much correspondence with the State Education Department, the Library was granted a Provisional Charter and, due to being incorporated, funds were now made available from the Village and Town for library purposes.

By 1938 the book stock had increased, and circulation had grown to 3776 volumes. On all the visits of inspection by State Education Department personnel full approval had been given of the management of the library. All of this warranted a new schedule of being open five days a week, adding new shelves, and making other improvements.

In 1950 the Home Bureau released another room for expansion purposes. At this time a complete renovation was accomplished, a door was cut through, connecting the three rooms, new permanent shelves were built, fresh painting and papering were done, the former reading room was available for a children's room, and the new room was used as a reading and reference room.

In the summer of 1950, the work on the rooms having been completed, Miss Mosier from the State Library Department held a Work Shop attended by Librarians from several communities, using the Afton Library as a demonstration for the weeding and sorting of book collections for libraries of comparable size. As a result, all books retained were of actual value and interest.

Due to the interest of friends of the library in this project, it was decided to hold an Open House. In November during Book Week the Library held its first Open House and Tea, being assisted by the members of the Home Bureau. Because of interest shown, this has become an annual affair with guests including not only adults but many of the school students.

In 1951 Miss Marion Mosher, State Library Supervisor, who felt that the Library had shown a steady growth in circulation and expansion of facilities, urged that an Absolute Charter be applied for. Mr. Spear, also from the State Department, came to Afton and evaluated assets and services of the Library, after which an application for said Charter was submitted to the State Education Department and in July 1951 the Afton Free Library was granted an Absolute Charter by the State of New York.

In 1935 when the Library was incorporated, 1678 volumes were loaned and in 1956 7979 were circulated. The book stock has increased from 600 to 4600 volumes. Also the library subscribes to thirty magazines covering a variety of interests, i.e. news, technical, sports, children's interests, travel, home, history, health, etc.

Reference facilities of the library are in popular demand and the librarian, Mrs. Jay Bonnell, is ready and willing to help anyone with this service.

The Library has offered other services such as story hours, a place for exhibits such as art, 4-H, Scouts, a meeting place for small groups, a service to shut-ins through the cooperation of the Girls Scouts, making available reference books on almost any subject, sending out-of-date digest magazines to the State Hospital in Binghamton, sending boxes of books to men in the Armed Services during the war, and extending an especial welcome to the men of the Air Force and their families who were stationed in Afton.

At the suggestion of the New York State Department in 1956, and exhibit of books was placed at the Afton Fair. A similar exhibit will be held again this year

As the Library has increased its usefulness to the community, the Afton Village and Town officials have been generous in increasing their aid to meet the expenses. The Library also receives a State Grant and derives its membership and other financial support through the contributions of the Community Chest.

The Afton Free Library has made a steady and continuous progress through the years and is now firmly entrenched as a necessary and welcome adjunct of community living.

Hannah Mudge



FAIR ASSOCIATION ACTIVE MANY YEARS

Harry G. Horton

There is on file a member's badge which reads:

"Member's Badge—Tenth Annual Fair of the Afton Agricultural Society Sept. 17-18, 1868". This places the first Afton Fair on record as of 1858, one year after Afton became separated from Bainbridge.

This fair was held on the tract of land on East Main Street, opposite what is now Gregory's store. This also is the site where the major leagues of those earlier days were played with the once famous Afton Stars. An interesting incident was told to me by the late Charles L. Seely of Afton how he won a first prize on a yoke of oxen. The judge announced in the a loud voice the winner, Charles L. Seely of Afton. It is not known just how long this fair continued beyond the date indicated on the member's badge but we do know that there was a lapse of time between the old and what is now known as the Afton Fair and Agricultural Association which was founded in 1889. The first exhibition date is revealed in the first premium list dated 1890. The association was a partnership affair and each individual connected with it along with the others was personally liable for the payment of its obligations.

The promoters of the project are revealed in the first premium list issued in 1890 by the names of the officers: President, J.B. Pierce; vice president, M.D. Lane; treasurer, D.C. Church; secretary, Geo. A. Haven; assistant secretaries, I.W. Seeley, Geo. L. Chruch.

Other officers and directors were: Chief Police D.A. Hyde; Supt. Gates, H.C. Partrige; Supt. Cattle, C.S. Landers; Supt. Horses, Geo. McDonald; Supt. Sheep and Swine, Robert Littlefield; Supt. Poultry, W. D. Makley; Supt. Agricultural and Mechanics, Geo. B. Hicox; Supt. Races, Will Slattery; Supt. Floral Hall, J.H. Nickerson; Supt. Stock, R.R. Church, Father of Grace Herkimer. Fred Church succeeded J. B. Pierce as president and Fred Buck succeeded D.C. Church in 1898. Fred Church held the office until 1920 and I.W. Seeley took over the office of secretary which he held until 1915 when Harry G. Horton took over the office for two years.

In 1916 Horton resigned and Mr. Seeley was reelected again and held the office to 1920. At this time matters had got into bad financial condition, the fair-grounds consisting of 79 acres and buildings were in deplorable condition. There was a mortgage on the property of \$4000 and a deficit of \$6000 which was more than the value of the property at the time, so it was found necessary to either discontinue the fair, in which case those involved would be obliged to pay up the indebtedness or to reorganize the fair into a corporation; the latter procedure was finally approved by those affected, and in 1920 the corporation became a reality with the authorization of the issuance of \$20,000 common stock with par value of \$100.00.

The corporation could assume the mortgage but required that the members of the old organization buy enough stock to liquidate the amount of indebtedness; this amounted to an assessment of \$400 for each one for which they would receive 4 shares of stock. It was found, however, that some could not raise the money for

the stock so that finally the corporation was obliged to absorb the difference. From this date the process of rehabilitation started and from then on the fair began to show signs of new interest and new life. It was an uphill struggle to discharge the debts, repair the buildings and cope with the unpredictable weather which often left the operations in the red. Harry G. Horton was elected executive secretary and held the office for 27 consecutive years. The presidents, Frank Guernsey, 2 yrs., first after re-organization; Lewis E. Fredenburg, 2 yrs.; Wm. Phelps, 13 yrs.; Fred Drachler, 11 years.

In the early days of the corporation floats became quite popular as exhibits, there having been on occasions as many as 38 in the floral parade at one time.

It was during this same period that special attention was given to the importance of live stock exhibits and under the supervision of Leon R. Russ, the exhibit developed to the size of those much larger fairs even rivaling some state fairs. For a number of years the exhibit of cattle was shown in a tent 525 ft. long which had never been heard of before and even a tent of this size failed to house all the cattle shown. The magnitude of the cattle show was such that it required fifteen tons of hay to feed the stock for four days. In the line of amusements of course, were the horse races, horses which broke the track records one of which was Major Woolworth who later traveled abroad and took part in races.

There were also auto races in which the famous Billy Winn and others took part which were managed by Ralph Hankinson, deceased, the owner of the Langhorne Speedway near Philadelphia. In the vaudeville, top performers (such as the Pearl Haines Revue; the lady's name is now Mrs. Harry Horton) were the rule with emphasis on musical entertainment like the Ben Yost male sextette, Murdoch MacDonald and his Scotch Highlander Band, Lampman's Band, Roy Smith Band and greatest of all Edwin Franko Goldman in person with his Central Park Band, and the Dixie Minstrels.

It is interesting to note that on different occasions the fair paid as high as \$3800 for music alone in one year.

Another attractive feature of the fair was a public wedding before the grand stand, with flowers and appropriate music at which time the noises of the midway were silenced for five minutes.

EARLY HISTORY NOTES ON THE AFTON FAIR

The Afton Fair—Supplementary Notes by Harry Horton.

Floats—There were several classes of floats which included school, firemen, band, farmer, secret organizations, etc. There were three premiums in each class, \$35, \$25 and \$20 prize money for first, second and third prizes.

Poultry—Charles L. Seely of Afton was a poultry fancier who sold white crested Black Polish all over the United States and in some foreign countries. He was also exhibitor at one or two world fairs and at many of the poultry shows including Madison Square Garden and won many trophies for the excellence of his birds.

Mr. Seely held the office of Superintendent of poultry for many years during which time there was a pronounced interest in this exhibit which increased in size until the premium money amounted to \$3200 for one exhibition. The entry fees were usually 10 per cent of the amount of the first premiums. The premiums were first and second \$1. and 50 cents respectively.

Oxen—the fair of 1890 offered prizes of \$5 and \$2 first and second. This policy continued for many years. We note that the fiftieth anniversary premium list offered fifteen dollars for a yoke of steers, the offering was discontinued in 1947.

Stock Parade—It was the annual custom to have the stock parade on a Friday afternoon at which time the prize winners would be displayed in a half-mile trip around the race track and as the 4-H club agent, (retired) this parade developed into a very interesting and educational feature. There the winners were halted in front of the grandstand with their prize winning cattle, and cited for their accomplishments and presented with silver cups or ribbons, according to their winnings. Among the names of prominent judges of yesteryear ins that of Clifford E. Greene of Chattam, N.Y. of Waldon farms, who judged here for many others from Cornell University Department of Animal Husbandry and western colleges, this work being performed in a judging tent with seat provided for spectators.

Local Talent Races—One Model T. Ford race created a bit of entertainment. It worked like this: the race track was spaced at 1/8 mile sections with a white line across at each eighth; the racers were required to stop their car with the front wheel on the white line, stop the motor and then get out and crank it. This was called an obstacle race.

Lumber wagon race—where farm teams were hitched to empty lumber wagons for a half mile "heat."

Mule race—These mules, 5 in number, were hitched to two wheel carts. The officers of the fair participated, not a very fast race, but full of entertainment.

Dr. Edwin Franko Goldman—Dr. Goldman became world famous because of his interpretations of the classics in music. He worked his way up under the difficult circumstances from a cornet soloist in a theatre.

When John Phillip Sousa passed away, Mrs. Sousa presented the Doctor with his baton and said that it was Mr. Sousa's wish that he should have it and to carry on the work of the great bandmaster. Dr. Goldman fulfilled that wish. He and his band were here in 1936 and 1937 arriving by special train from Albany, N.Y. On each trip here he gave two concerts on two consecutive nights. One of these nights

it rained and Mr. Carl Legg of the Eureka Tent and Awning Co. contrived a band shell from a tent erected on the stage so that the concert could go on. Those who were privileged to hear and see him at close range can never forget these concerts. It was through personal connections that he came here at all, because he did not go to fairs. The only one known is the Toronto International Exhibition where he had given concerts.

He was also the composer of the well known "On the Mall" and "Children's March." Music lovers from far and near, came to listen. The selections played here, consisted among others, "Finlandia," William Tell Overture," "Overture to 1812," "Poet and Peasant Overture," "Introduction and the Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin" and many others. These performances were unequalled in any town or city.

In 1890 there were many special premiums offered by firms or individuals.

"R.E. Smith of Afton, offers one setting of W.C.B. Polish eggs for the best display of games."

"J.B. Pierce of Afton, will give 10 tubs for the best package of dairy butter not less than 50 pounds."

"William H. Briggs of Afton, will give one sack of flour to the girl who bakes the best loaf of bread."

"O.J. Green will give a pair of bracelets for the best silk quilt."

"A.T. England, Afton, will give one silk umbrella to the one showing the best selection of assorted cakes."

"N.E. Barton, Afton, will give one year's subscription to The Afton Enterprise to the farmer who takes the largest number of agricultural newspapers or magazines.

"In the subsequent recordings which were made of "Children's March" Dr. Goldman used a set of sleighbells which was presented to him by Mr. Horton.



Harry G. Horton.
Afton Fair and
Afton Water Works.

AFTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BEGAN IN 1925

By Malcolm Parker

On 30, 1925, an organization meeting was held to form an Afton Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the organization was to be "To foster and advance the General, Civic, Industrial and other interests of the village and community." Annual dues were \$10 per voting member.

Charter members of this group were Frank Lewis, Harry Horton, Donald Whitson, G.L. Chamberlain, Lawrence Carroll, Allen Herkimer, George Decker, H.A. Benedict, Daniel Grant, William L. Griggs, Darwin Craig, C.D. Grow, William Merrell, Wesley Handy, M.J. Mudge and Son (3 memberships), Emerson Demeree, Romey Fredenburg, W.L. Dodge, Jenks and Swart (2 memberships), First National Bank (3 memberships), Charles L. Thomas, Clarence Eldred, E.R. Gregory and Son (2 memberships), Fred Lewis, Afton Coal and Lumber Co., Bert Lord, E. L. Doolittle, L.E. Fredenburg, Olin Finch, Bruce Keator, Frank Keator, A.H. Schoolcraft, L.W. Gettes, Burt Hyde, Morgan Brothers, Morgan's Garage, Albert Pixley, L.F. Pixley, Ernest Tabor, George Topliff, Afton Auto Sales, W.Y. McHugh, Frank H. Decker, Arthur Wasson, Emma Handy, Norva Grey, Gail Williams.

Following was the first slate of officers: president, Alden A. Mudge; first vice president, C.W. Guy; second vice president, Lawrence Carroll; secretary, Clarence Eldred; treasurer, A.T. Morgan.

A committee on By-laws was appointed consisting of Harry Horton, Bruce Keator and Wayland Guy, also a committee on membership: Daniel Grant, A.T. Morgan, and C. H. Eldred.

Meetings were held at Keator's Hall, Poyer's Hotel, The Valley House, Methodist Church parlors. Regular meetings were discontinued after February 1926.

It is interesting to note the projects which were discussed and undertaken at this time: New traffic lines; hitching space behind Tabor's store, Caswell park, free camp site for tourists, business closing hours, confidential list of undesirable accounts, public drinking fountain, door-to-door salesmen, Afton community bulletin and snow racks on Belden Hill.

AFTON C OF C HAS PROMOTED MANY PROJECTS

The following article is a continuation of the article written on the Afton Chamber of Commerce by Malcolm Parker:

REORGANIZATION

On March 10, 1941, a re-organization meeting was held in the Afton Village Hall. A dinner was served at 6:30 by the Home Bureau.

Rev. Frederick Nichols opened the meeting. C.H. Eldred was elected chairman and officers were elected for the years as follows: President, J. Ward Williams; Vice-president, John Tobey; Secretary, Richard Barr; Treasurer, Randolph C. Guy.

It was decided that any person interested in the welfare and growth of Afton was eligible for membership. Forty-seven people present signed for membership.

The dues were to be \$2.00 per year.

Those serving as presidents are:

J. Ward Williams, March 1941 to March 1945.

Darwin Craig, March 1945 to March 1949.

James Ernstrom two terms, 1949 to 1951.

Francis Karshner, one term, 1951 to 1952.

Allen Herkimer Jr., one term, 1952 to 1953.

Rev. C.B. Klinetob, one term, 1953 to 1954.

Fred P. Foster, now serving his fourth term, 1954 to...

Projects

Through the years, the Chamber has exerted a quiet but persistent influence on the welfare of the community. It has sponsored many worthwhile projects, and, perhaps fully as important a service, it has acted as a sort of clearing house and advisory board on questions of civic concern.

Among the activites sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce at present is the Christmas Tree Lighting along the business section of Main Street during the Christmas season.

The Chamber attends to the planning and financing of the annual Night of Fun, with the parade, prizes for original and fearful costumes, movies for the younger, dancing for the older young people and cider and doughnuts, all free.

The Chamber sponsors the annual Honors Banquet for Afton Central School athletic lettermen, cheerleaders, selected band members and the school valedictorian and salutatorian.

Another project of the Chamber is the 4-H Rooster Project. Members of the Chamber help finance a poultry project for each 4-H boy or girl interested and receive a dividend of two roosters at the September meeting when the sponsor also pays for the dinner of his protege.

Always there is the continuing industry that will be an asset to the community; and paralleling this is the constant attempt to keep our village a beautiful spot in which to live and work.

Miscellaneous Items in the History of Afton Chamber of Commerce

April, 1941. Pest Extermination Contest.

The Chamber offered prizes of \$5, \$3, \$2, and \$1 to Future Farmers under the supervision of John Pluta, agriculture teacher. First prize was won by Irving More, second by George Youngs, third by Vernon Merritt and fourth by Philip Comings.

A committee on Welfare and Employment was set up to arrange for an employment station at the Village Hall.

A campaign against Greyhound bus horns and prolonged whistles was set under motion.

October 1941. Topics under discussion were the need of a Traffic Officer, garbage disposal, a trophy for softball championship and the Community Chest Plan proposed by Daniel Grant.

December 1941. The Chamber gave prizes for Home Christmas lighting.

March 1942. Wolfe Kaufman, John Pluta and Donald Whitson were appointed as a committee on collection of scrap iron.

John Pluta, Arthur Wasson and Harry Horton were named to a committee on Victory Gardens. The prize winners of the contest were as follows: Senior Division, first, Philip Comings; second, Vernon Merritt; Junior Division, first, Ann Comings.

September 1942. The new Service Flag was dedicated at a ceremony in the Village Hall on Sunday, September 27, at 2:30 p.m. Clarence Eldred and Rev. Clifford Webb had charge of arrangements with the high school band furnishing the music. The flag was made under the supervision of Mrs. Jay Bonnell of the local Red Cross Chapter.

January 1943. Ladies' Night. It was voted that dinner tickets be \$1 per person, "to cover cost of dinner and to replenish the treasury."

September 1943. Representative Orlo Brees spoke to the Chamber during the din and confusion of a Blackout Test.

The Chamber joined the Fire Department in presenting a movie at the school for Fire Prevention Week.

April 1944. Another Blackout Test, during a talk by Mr. Edward Light of the New York State Gas and Electric Co.

The need for a landing field for airplanes was introduced, leading to the construction of an airplane landing field for private planes.

Darwin Craig asked that the Chamber advertise in the New York Times for a manufacturing firm to settle in Afton. Later replies indicated the need for a suitable building to attract industry.

March 1945. The Chamber recommended that a traffic patrolman be hired by the village.

July 1945. Returned servicemen were invited to attend Chamber of Commerce meetings. (It was good to have them back!)

Rev. James Wolfe gave a talk on "President Truman as I Knew Him When a Boy."

October 31, 1947. The first annual Night of Fun was sponsored by the Chamber to get the whole family to "raise Halloween" together.

April 1948. Petitioned Janet Hill Gordon to have Route No. 41 rebuilt.

Theater Committee reported not enough response from possible investors in a new theatre.

September 1948. The new bridge was reported ready for opening. Saturday evening entertainment was started in the Village Hall.

Summer, 1952. "Afton Days" proved to be very popular.

June 1955. Asked the Town Board to reconsider the Swimming program.

June 1956. A committee was appointed to work on the problem of getting a new doctor to settle in Afton, Wayland Guy, chairman; Neil Hyde, Francis Karschner and Alden Mudge Jr.

March 1957. Darwin Craig reported for the committee on revision of the Chamber of Commerce pamphlet on Afton. The committee, Mr. Craig, Howard Adamy and Clura Atherton.

March 1957. It was reported that progress was being made on the new street behind the stores on the east side of Main Street.

Conclusion. This list of activities of the Afton Chamber of Commerce gives just a glimpse of the concern which the Chamber has for the prosperity of the community. It is hoped that as time goes on, these items have increasing interest and value.



Malcolm Parker

IX. CHURCHES

AFTON BAPTIST CHURCH ORGANIZED IN YEAR 1836 By Rev. Alan Douglas

The First Baptist Church of Afton, N.Y. was first organized as the South Bainbridge Church. In the early days of the settling of this community a few earnest Christians felt the need of being an organized church, with a house of worship.

On January 15, 1836, a small group gathered at the home of Moses Caswell to consider the propriety of organizing a New Testament church following Baptist principles and practices. It was unanimously agreed to call a council of messengers from neighboring Baptist churches to examine their doctrinal position and to consider the advisability of organizing them as a Baptist church.

The following communication was addressed "To the Brethren of the Council to be convened at the house of Isaac Seely, in Bainbridge, on the 17th of February, 1836."

"Dear Brethren— We, the undersigned, believing it to be the duty of all who profess godliness to do all that is in their power to promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, and being desirous to promote it in the south part of Bainbridge, where Satan's seat has been of long standing, and we being located so that we cannot enjoy privileges of church fellowship, humbly ask you to take into consideration our situation and the blessed cause of Christ and if expedient, to give us your fellowship as a Church of Christ, for which your brethren and sisters do humbly pray."

The examining council met at the home of Isaac Seely, Feb. 17, 1836. It chose Rev. C.B. Sparks as moderator and Rev. H. Roberts as clerk. The council was composed of messengers from Baptist churches in Masonville, South New Berlin, Coventry and Guilford. After hearing the confession of faith of the local group the council voted unanimously to recognize them as a Baptist church and to welcome them into the Baptist fellowship.

Those who thus formed the membership of this early church were: Eli Seely, Seth Seely, Eunice Seely, Garrit Dedrick, Nancy Dedrick, Sebastian Thomas, Charles Toby, Nancy Toby, Moses Caswell, Abigail Caswell, Caroline Thomas, Phoebe Smith, Bernetty Seely Woodard, Elizabeth Woodard, Lydia Knight— fifteen in all. Rev. H. Robertson was chosen to preach the following day, and Rev. E.B. Sparks to present the hand of fellowship and address the church. The church petitioned to unite with the Chenango Baptist Association July 16th, 1836.

The building of the house was next in order. The lot was given by Mr. Lysander Pollard, a citizen of the town. Although few in numbers they were full of zeal. Accordingly timber was hewn and drawn to the lot. But now a very formidable obstacle confronted them; here was the timber for the frame, but where was the rest of the material, or the money to buy. Discouraged, they decided to sell the

timber, keep the money, and perhaps later a way would open. But their enthusiasm was aroused in a way they had not anticipated.

The boys in town, thinking to have some fun, took the timbers and made a block house, made a steeple with the rafters, caught a neighbor's cow, confiscated her bell, hung it in the tower and, tradition says, rang it all night. This so aroused the building spirit that they said, "We will have a house." The townspeople were also aroused and together a frame was raised and enclosed, but not finished.

The church was probably finished in 1841, for July 11 of that year the records show that action was taken relative to finishing it and procuring a bell. It was not until 1847, however, that they speak of owning their house of worship free from debt. In 1839 their number is reported as 32. \$20.38 is recorded for Home Missions.

The records concerning pastorates show that none of the early pastors served for an extended length of time. The first pastor was Rev. C. B. Sparks who served two years. Rev. D.B. Crane then served two years. Rev. J.H. Dwyer served less than one year. The next pastor was Rev. D.M. Root who served 14 months. Rev. Levi Peck next served three years. Rev. Lewis Robinson began his pastorate in May 1846 and ended it in 1847. Thus in its first decade the church had six pastors.

The membership grew slowly from 15 at the beginning to 64 in 1847. In that year the church entertained the Association for the first time. Difficulties beset them time and again but they kept on working and praying.

On July 14th, 1849 the church adopted the declaration of faith and church covenant that is now generally known as the New Hampshire Confession of Faith. Membership declined somewhat until 1854 and 1855 when, under the ministry of Rev. George Balcom, frequent revivals and large additions increased the membership to 94.

In 1857 the Sunday School is first mentioned. In this year South Bainbridge became Afton and the church became the First Baptist Church of Afton, N.Y.

During the period of 1856 to 1865 the church was at low ebb in most ways. The unsettled condition of the country preceding and during the Civil War doubtless was responsible for this condition in some measure. Rev. G.G. Donnelly served about two or three years, 1860-62 and then volunteered for army service. The next year he died in battle.

Under the pastorate of Rev. E.T. Jacobs, 1862-69, good attendance was reported, membership 84 to 92 and \$1500 was raised for repairing the church. In 1871-72 the membership was 90, congregations good, benevolence was \$58.48. No pastor in 1873 but benevolence was \$91.38.

In 1874-79 Rev. J. Jones ministered to the church with profit, steady and healthful growth. The church was repaired and carpeted and an organ bought. Total cost \$800. Under Rev. C.A. Stone the membership reached 138. The alcove and baptistry were added to the church. Benevolence was \$177.95. The membership later declined somewhat. During Rev. Mr. Stone's pastorate in August 1884, the business section of Afton was destroyed by fire. The Baptist Church was not injured but a number of its members incurred severe financial losses. Many valuable records were lost at this time, including the records of the Baptist cemetery.

Rev. H.C. Leach served as pastor 1886-89. During this pastorate the parsonage was built at a cost of \$1200. Steady progress was made in all departments. During the winter of 1889-90 two young men from Hamilton ministered to the church with good results. Their names were Frank H. Divine and W.A. Sholar.

Among the practices of Baptists in those days was attendance at Covenant Meetings which were held once a month on Saturday afternoon preceding the observance of the Lord's Supper the next day. The following record is typical and significant since one of the persons mentioned is still living, Fred Chamberlin, and another was the founder of Practical Bible Training School in Johnson City and a famous evangelist of his day, Rev. John A. Davis, D.D.

Saturday, January 4, 1890: "Covenant meeting was held today, sixty-six being present not all members of the church, but a goodly number. B. Sholad from Hamilton led the meeting. Meeting opened by singing and prayer. Nearly all spoke after which opportunity was given to those who wished to unite with the church to come forward and relate their experience. The following persons were received as members and baptized: Fred CHamberlin, John A. Davis, Huldah Ann Davis, Mary Welch, William H. Briggs, William Hollenbeck, Marian E. Hollenbeck, Edith T. Caswell. After which meeting adjourned with prayer till the 11th day of January 1890."

The Rev. L.L. Rury became pastor in May 1890 and remained about three years. The church was repaired, a basement put under it, and a furnace added. The barn was built at this time. A Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Society was organized. The first roll call was held December 31, 1892. Benevolence \$209.83.

A very successful pastorate followed under Rev. H.T. Hill, 1893-99. The membership rose to 244, almost double. A mission was established at Vallonia Springs, and a chapel was built and furnished at a cost of \$1600. Its dedication was September 29, 1896. John A. Davis was licensed to preach March 4, 1898. Benvolence, \$735.38.

Rev. H.C. Merrill was pastor, 1900-1902. Another roll-call service was held in October 1900. The church was kept in good condition both spiritually and materially. A letter sent out to the members by the pastor reveals the secret of this prosperity—a faithful adherence to the Word of God. Hattie Scott keeps this letter as a treasure.

The next pastorate was that of Rev. H.A. Waite, 1903-1906. New members were added and the church remodeled. But benevolence was down to \$49.83. In 1904 the Mission at Vallonia Springs was disbanded. Benevolence rose to \$250.82. In 1906 another roll-call service was held; 150 were present; 84 gave a verbal testimony; another 20 made response by letter. During this pastorate Rev. John A. Davis held evangelistic meetings with good results.

Rev. C.H. Colgrove was pastor from 1909-1913. He baptized a candidate the first Sunday of his pastorate. At the annual roll-call in 1909 a vote of thanks was given to Deacon L.E. Jackson for his many years of service as clerk. A vote of thanks was also given to R.A. Chamberlin for 40 years as a choirester. C.B. Yaple gave \$500 this year for the "use and support of the Baptist Church for all time." The following year a like gift was made by Sister Abbie Caswell.

February 3, 1912, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "Resolved: That we as a church, hereby place ourselves on record as being unalterably opposed to dancing, card-playing and theater-going and will henceforth do all in our power to discourage these practices, which we believe injurious to spiritual life."

With the coming of Rev. C.O. Fuller in 1914 the Ladies' Aid reorganized and placed a furnace and range in the parsonage. The Women's Missionary Society again took up their work.

Deacon Jackson, one of the old-timers and spiritual stalwarts, went to his heavenly home February 16, 1914 at the age of 80. He was a member of the church for 48 years, most of the time a deacon, and many years as church clerk. Mrs. H.G. Carr wrote as church clerk, "Our first Covenant meeting since Mr. Jackson was laid away. We thought of him and of the glad songs of rejoicing he is singing. In the hearts of many was the desire, 'Let my last days be like his.'"

These covenant meetings were occasions of encouragement for all. There were confessions of wrong doing and requests for forgiveness and prayers. Letters of reception and dismissal, as well as candidates for baptism were voted upon. Sometimes the letters of dismissal were refused until arrears in church pledges were paid. People took their religion seriously in those days. How many of our business men, farmers and others would leave office, shop or farm and go to church on Saturday afternoon once a month for Covenant meeting?

In 1915 electric lights were put in the church, the metal ceiling was installed, and "the interior renovated from cellar to garret." It was in 1918 that our church suffered its first casualty of the First World War, Willard Holmes, a fine Christian young man went down in the U.S. transport, Ticonderoga.

Rev. Burge Gates had a second pastorate here 1919-22. He was a greatly loved man, highly esteemed for his genuine Christian character. During his pastorate the pipe organ was installed at a cost of \$2500. The hardwood floors were also laid. The four churches of the community organized the "Week-Day Church School" in 1921. This school has been a model for many other similar schools and is still functioning in a greatly expanded way.

The Rev. C.W. Newman was pastor 1922-23. The church roll was revised somewhat during his pastorate. Rev. Floyd Fennen was pastor 1923-25. The Ladies' Aid was very active in this pastorate. A record shows a vote of thanks from the church for a gift of \$200.

Rev. Lester Huxtable began his pastorate March 1926. This was a progressive and profitable pastorate, the longest so far, eight years. A number of people united with the church as a result of several series of special meetings of varying lengths. Material progress was evident, too, and benevolences rose to \$563.

Rev. W.B. Adams was pastor from 1934-1936. A series of special prayer meetings in connection with special meetings in the church brought in new members.

Rev. Fred G. Nichols served as pastor 1937-1942. During his pastorate, the Church Centennial was observed. Extensive repairs were made in both parsonage and church. New church pews, carpets, floor refinishing, painting, papering, a new heating system and a new chimney cost the church \$1358. The centennial was a

success in every way. Former pastors and local pastors took part. Music was in charge of Mrs. Nichols, a very talented musician and a great help to her husband.

During Mr. Nichols' pastorate, fellowship was encouraged with Fundamental Baptist Churches of Binghamton and vicinity; a number of pastors from these churches visited and spoke in the local church from time to time. Missionaries such as Dr. Harvey Farmer, Rev. Bernard Bancroft, Rev. Edward C. Bomm and others helped to keep up missionary interest. Benevolence \$250. Good work was done by the young people. The church roll was revised in 1940 to 198 members. A hardwood oak floor was laid in the parsonage. In 1942 Rev. Nichols resigned to enter the chaplaincy in the army, a profession he still follows with rank of major.

Rev. Alan Douglas began his pastorate in May 1943 which continues to the present time. In 1943 the organ was cleaned, tuned and the organ room made weather-tight. New hymnals were bought in 1946. The \$3,300 endowment which had been invested with the New York State Baptist Convention for many years was recalled and invested in government bonds at a better interest rate in 1946.

Interest in missions has shown a steady and healthy growth. We partially support such missionaries as: Miss Gardner in Jamaica, B.W.I.; Miss Barnum, Assam, Ind.; Miss Pease, Japan; Rev. and Mrs. R.J. Davis, Nigeria; Rev. and Mrs. T.B. Wimer and Rev. and Mrs. D. Jewell in French Equatorial Africa; Rev. and Mrs. H. Turner, Guatemala; Miss Ricks, Liberia; Miss Houcks, Philippine Is.; and many other special speakers and missionary organizations, both at home and abroad.

General improvements were made on church and parsonage in 1946. A new roof was put on the parsonage and the church painted inside in 1948. Choir chairs were given by Mrs. Sullivan in 1950-51 in memory of her husband Emit Sullivan. Several older deacons resigned and were made honorary deacons for life: Randolph Guy in 1948; Fred Chamberlin in 1949; Burton Wood in 1954; R.A..Thomson in 1957. Deacon Frank Scott died in 1948. His memory is still fragrant.

Special evangelistic meetings were held in May 1951 under the leadership of Rev. Larry McGill and Anton Marco, converted opera signer, which resulted in 42 recorded decisions; 15 first decisions; 8 re-consecrations; 19 out of town decisions. Another result was the crystalization of Richard Tait's decision to enter the ministry.

A roll-call meeting was held in October 1951 to which many responded. Among the oldest members present and honored were: Fred Chamberlin, member for 61 years; Mrs. Hattie Scott, 58 years; R.A. Thomson, 56 years; Mrs. Celia Liggett, 54 years; Randolph Guy, 52 years. In connection with this event letters were sent to inactive members. Some were removed from membership and the roll was revised.

In 1953 the Missionary Circle began to support a native boy in the Sudan Mission School at Roni, Nigeria. Next year they added another boy and this continues to the present.

In 1954 a Tither's League was organized. Although not many united in this way of giving, its influence has been felt in all the church. Average giving of the tithers in this way is \$130 to \$140 per member, per year.

The church buildings were painted externally in 1954. Re-decoration of the church inside in 1955. The Ladies' Aid bought new carpeting for the church, cost

\$600 in 1955. Pulpit furniture was re-upholstered and new collection plates given, both generously donated.

Richard Tait was ordained to the gospel ministry, September 30, 1955 after a preparation of four years at Baptist Bible Seminary, Johnson City.

In 1956 a new heating plant was installed, cost not to exceed \$5000. Ceiling was insulated. A gift of over \$200 from the Chamberlins made it possible to buy a new bell. The spirit of voluntary giving seemed to be contagious. Others gave lesser amounts as they were able, so that stained glass windows were repaired, a new electric range was purchased, new flags were purchased for the auditorium, with much labor donated by various individuals. Neh. 4:6 was fulfilled by many of our members. New toilets have been installed this year, 1957, and the downstairs entirely re-decorated.

A committee is now at work on a constitution and by-laws.

A concluding resolution that would sum up all our desires and purposes for the future is found in Neh. 9:39. "And we will not forsake THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD."



Rev. Alan Douglas.
Baptist Church.



Grace Church Herkimer.
Afton Methodist Church.

HISTORY OF THE AFTON METHODIST CHURCH

By Mrs. Allen Herkimer

The Methodists of Afton first held services in the village school house. Union Valley, North Afton (Ayreshire) and Afton (South Bainbridge) formed a part of the old Bainbridge Circuit until formed into a charge in 1858. In those days the Parson traveled from place to place by foot or horseback.

The Society became incorporated at a meeting held in the schoolhouse on November 24, 1851. Jesse Flagg and Dorr Stowell presided. Dorr Stowell, Charles Griswold, Samuel Bump, Luman Pollard and Isaac Furgason were elected trustees of the First Methodist Episcopal Society of South Bainbridge.

On April 12, 1852, Damaris Garrett deeded the society forty-four rods of land, in consideration of \$150. The church was built on this lot at a cost of \$1,500 and was dedicated in September 1852, by Rev. William Reddy. This church was thoroughly remodeled in 1880. At this time Mr. George Knight presented the church with a bell.

In 1899 the building was again thoroughly rebuilt. The tower and an addition to the left of the building were built. Stained glass windows replaced the old ones, the floor was carpeted and the room lighted with gas. These improvements cost \$1,906.34. Fire did considerable damage to the church building on December 12, 1936. Services were held in the Village Hall while repairs were being made. In 1952 plans were made to build a kitchen, classroom and restrooms on the back and also to lengthen the dining area.

Graydon Quick, chairman of the official board, drew up the plans and supervised the work. He and other men of the church laid the wall and did the carpenter work, thus saving considerable expense. This building addition was completed in the Spring of 1953.

A room on the second floor is now in the process of completion and will be used for school purposes.

The first parsonage was purchased of Lyman Lesuer in 1865 for \$1,450. It was located on Spring Street, a short distance above the church.

This was sold to Truman Green in 1893. In 1894 the society secured a property on Pleasant Avenue for \$2,250 from Mary Barrett. This was used until going into the present house in the Fall of 1901.

Among pastors who have served the Afton church are W.W. Andrews, B.B. Carruth, A.J. Cook, N. B. Ripley, C.B. Personeus, C.E. Sweet and E.L. Jeffrey. We also find the names of Bronson, Lathrop, Brooks, Roberts, Jones, Kingston, Graves, Freeman, Klinetob and Bartz. The present pastor is Rev. William Watson, recently appointed at the 1957 conference to serve the Afton and North Afton Churches.

Source of Information of early history, "History of the Wyoming Conference." by A.F. Chaffee.

AFTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STARTED IN 1875

By Charles Decker

The history of the Afton Presbyterian Church began in 1875 when the Rev. William H. Sawtelle of the Nineveh church began preaching every other Sunday afternoon in the Baptist church. On Feb. 19 of that year a meeting was held in the Afton Baptist church for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian Society and electing trustees. The society was incorporated on that date with the name of the First Presbyterian Church of the Town of Afton which act was recorded in the county clerk's office on Jan. 20 in 1876. Henry Doolittle, Robert Yale and George P. Smith were elected trustees.

A committee from Presbytery came to Afton June 1, 1875 for organizing the church to which the following charter members brought letters of dismissal—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Yale from Unadilla; Mr. and Mrs. Ira Yale from Bainbridge; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Doolittle and Mr. and Mrs. Selar Decker from Nineveh; Delos Lyon from Laurens and Miss Emeline Merrill from Windsor. The first elders elected were Selar Decker, Henry Doolittle and Ira Yale.

In the spring of 1876 steps were taken to build a church. A lot was purchased for \$500 and money, materials and labor were solicited. The building was started in the summer and completed, furnished and formally dedicated on June 1st, 1877, the eightieth anniversary of which we celebrate today. The sermon was preached by the Rev. John McVey of the North Presbyterian church in Binghamton with the dedication by Mr. Sawtelle of Nineveh, and acting pastor of Afton. A dedicatory prayer was offered by Rev. E.T. Jacobs, formerly of the Baptist Church.

The writer of the account pays tribute to Mr. Robert Yale in the following way. "It is but justice to say that the society is largely indebted for the success of the enterprise to the devotion and perseverance of Mr. Robert Yale, one of the trustees, who superintended the work, procured most of the subscriptions and generously gave the whole of his time and labor until the building was completed. He ought ever to be remembered as the indomitable leader in the enterprise."

The church has been redecorated three times since its erection. In 1908 the choir loft was enlarged and the entry and steeple moved from the center to its present position. In 1930 the hardwood floors were laid at the time of redecoration and last summer the present improvements were made. The church bell was given by Miss Martha Graham in 1892.

The Parish House or Francis Memorial Building was opened in Sept. 1926 while Rev. D.M. Geddes was pastor. The bronze plaque beside the door was given by Mrs. A.L. Strause, widow of Dr. J.J. Francis in whose memory the building was dedicated.

In the Senior High Sunday School Class we learned, when studying about the church-ruled society established by the Puritans, that the elders of our church were given the power of discipline over its members in the constitution. Twice in the records of the session, this power of discipline has been exercised. In 1882 a member was tried before the session and after several hearings was suspended from the church until he should make a satisfactory confession. The charges brought

against him are interesting.

1. Absence from prayer meeting.
2. Absence from public worship thereby injuring the cause of Christ.
3. Endeavoring to create a disturbance in the society by misrepresenting the relation of G.R. Bissell to the church.
4. Showing a very bad spirit when asked to sign for the support of the Gospel.
5. Apparent contumacy, when properly notified to come before the session.

In 1903 another church member was accused by Rev. W.W. Ketchum of immoral character, and suspended by the session. Fortunately both men confessed to wrong-doing and were later restored to membership.

In May 1890 an innovation was adopted for church services. The session voted to have congregational singing and a committee was duly appointed to select hymn books.

The first every member canvas was conducted in 1915 under the supervision of Dr. Francis with very favorable results. The first circular for the canvas stated that \$.25 per week per member would be sufficient to support the budget.

The week-day church school, then held in various church buildings, was inaugurated in Sept. 1921 and has continued successfully since that time.

Mention of mission work is prominent throughout the years but the pinnacle of mission interest may have been reached in 1922 when the Afton church ranked 4th among the 34 churches of Binghamton Presbytery in per capita giving. In 1921 substantial sums were sent to famine sufferers in Persia, Syria, China and Russia, the total amounting to \$218.

The session minutes are also a chronicle of the joys and sorrows of the members of the congregation. Weddings, baptisms and funerals are recorded. In the summer of 1913 three young members of the church died of polio. In 1918-19 two persons died in the great influenza epidemic. The churches were closed by health authorities for a month in Oct. 1918 as a precaution against the dread disease.

The years of war are reflected in church activities. During World War I union evening services were suspended in the winter months and the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and Presbyterian churches held union morning services and Sunday school to conserve fuel. A great patriotic union service was held April 15, 1917 in the high school auditorium with 400-500 people attending. A total of 14 names was added to the honor roll of service men from the church.

In 1942 during World War II the purchase of a bicycle was made to aid Mr. Webb in making gas-rationed pastoral calls. The faithful sending of a church newspaper to servicemen is recorded and again and honor roll was dedicated.

Dr. J.J. Francis stands out as an exceptional man and minister. He had a brilliant mind, having entered college at the age of 14 and was licensed to preach before he reached the age of 21. He was a forceful speaker and was invited to speak at events such as commencements in various parts of the country. He lectured on literature and astronomy at scores of colleges and universities. During his pastorate at Afton he celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination and was honored by a reception at the high school attended by 300 people.

Mr. Geddes was also an able pastor and extended his preaching activities to

Sunday afternoon services at school houses in the Bulkeley District, Nurss Hollow, Bettsburg and Melonyd Hill the last of which was the most successful. He organized the Rangers, a group of young boys and was often seen going out on hikes with them.

Perhaps it is because the session minutes are more complete for the pastorates of these men and Mr. Webb that makes their work seem more complete than for earlier pastors. Mr. Webb was the pastor I grew up with and the minutes reveal the tremendous amount of planning and preparation for the programs such as the Pioneers and Merrymakers which I am afraid many of us took for granted. The Pioneers had some recreational program planned for every Saturday from basketball to shop work to trips to the Endicott Johnson factories and Binghamton Press, not to mention the five day camping trips to Lilly Lake.

I must pay tribute to the long years of service given by elders, trustees and other officers. Year in and year out they faithfully attended meetings and conducted the affairs of the church.

In closing I would like to make an observation about the work of our church. Nineteen years ago I was among twelve young people who joined in a communists class. Of these twelve persons, I and one other are the only ones still living in Afton. The others are scattered far and wide, most of them living in cities. The same can be said of many other groups which came into our church. This fact serves to point out the great opportunity and obligation that we have as church members to see to it that we so conduct our lives and the affairs of the church that those who come into our midst and then depart may learn from our example and truly go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.



Charles J. Decker

NORTH AFTON CHURCH OLDEST IN COMMUNITY

Reprinted from the Afton Enterprise August 9, 1928

"The church structure was built in 1828 and for some years used as a place of worship for both Universalists and Methodists. After some time the Universalists erected a structure in Afton on the east bank of the Susquehanna and the Methodists then had full use of the structure.

"In 1864 the church building was moved several hundred feet from the Coventry-Afton road to the Oxford-Afton road where it now occupies a commanding position on the latter highway. When rural populations were large, the North Afton church membership exceeded in size both of its neighboring churches at Union Valley and Afton. And even now it is active and aggressive with a large group of young people in its constituency.

"Centennial services were held Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 10-12. On Friday evening there was an old home night at the church with special music, speeches by former pastors, members and residents of the village.

"On Saturday a centennial picnic was held in the community house grove. Sunday morning Rev. J.L. Thomas of Trucksville, Pa. preached. Sunday evening the churches of Afton combined with the North Afton people in a large union service at which Sr. M.S. Godsall preached, also Hon. Bert E. Lord, recently returned from overseas, spoke on "My impression of European Churches."

The general public was invited to attend all these functions.

ST. AGNES CHURCH CONSTRUCTED IN 1949

by Mary Tobey

For many years Catholics in this area attended Mass in Bainbridge, Deposit, Greene or Sanitaria Springs. On June 9, 1946, with the Rev. Chas. Dee as pastor, the first Mass for St. Agnes Parish was said in a house on North Main Street, then owned by the Afton Grange. Eighty-six people were in attendance and when it was found that large numbers continued to attend, arrangements were made for holding services in the Village Hall beginning on July 14th. Through the generosity of the Afton Home Bureau, use was given of a room on the second floor where priest and altar boys could put on their vestments and where supplies and equipment could be kept. Mass was celebrated in the assembly hall on the ground floor.

On June 14, 1946 a woman's organization, St. Agnes Guild, was formed with the following officers: Honorary president, Mrs. Carlton Hayes; president, Mrs. Lauren Andrews; vice president, Mrs. Myrlin Page; secretary, Mrs. Howard Rose; treasurer, Mrs. John Plosky. The Guild has been a source of spiritual inspiration and information as well as working for fund raising activities. Guild members have taken care of arranging the altar and caring for altar linens and equipment. Some of the first altar linens were even made from fine Irish household linens donated by the women.

Father Dee was replaced in June 1948 by the Rev. Edward A. Goulet and plans were started for a church building. In anticipation of this a fund had already been established in the name of St. Agnes Church. The name of St. Agnes for the Afton parish commemorates a famous young Christian girl who was martyred for her faith by a pagan Roman emperor on January 21 in the year 304 and whose emblem, the lamb, would seem especially appropriate for a farming community.

Plans for a church of colonial design were drawn by Arthur Lacy and Sons and the contract awarded to F. & K. Lewis Inc. of Afton at a cost of \$45,000. Seating capacity is about 160 persons.

Ground for the new church was broken on April 15, 1949— Good Friday— on a lot at the corner of Spring and Academy Streets, donated by Dr. Carlton Hayes and Dr. Wm. Crull, the first trustees.

The ground breaking ceremony was attended by many of the business and professional people of Afton, a situation typical of the friendly interest and help that has been extended to the Catholic congregation by members of all the other churches in town. This cooperation coupled with generous donations from many friends from out of town as well as members of the parish itself had provided a fund adequate to go forward with the construction of the church.

On October 1, 1949 the first Mass was celebrated in the new church and all the boys and girls who were to be confirmed the next day, as well as many others, received Holy Communion. On October 2, the Rev. Walter A. Foery, Bishop of Syracuse, dedicated the church and Father Goulet celebrated the Mass. Immediately after Mass Bishop Foery confirmed a class of 6 boys, 12 girls and 9 adults.

The first wedding was that of Wm. Donohue and Madeline Caracciolo on Nov. 24, 1949; the first funeral was for Albert Schoterman on Jan. 28, 1950 and the

first child baptized was Linda Agnes Cutting, July, 1950.

In October 1953, the Rev. Edward A. Goulet was transferred to Boonville and was replaced by Rev. Thomas Hayes who in turn was succeeded in July 1955 by the Rev. Patrick Hartnett, the present pastor.

Of particular interest to visitors to the church are the wood carvings and an original Rembrandt etching, "Descent from the Cross." The etching, which is above the door, was the gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Bennett. The wood carvings include a large crucifix above the altar, an Agnus Dei on the front of the altar, the statues of Christ the King, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Agnes, St. Joseph and the Stations of the Cross, representing the events connected with our Lord's crucifixion. These hand carvings are the work of the widely known sculptor, Harry E. Donahue of Ossining, New York.



Mary Tobey

ST. ANN'S CHURCH BEGAN IN 1858

By Florence Guy

Occasional Episcopal Church services were held here from quite an early period, when the village was known as South Bainbridge; however, not very accurate records of this period exist. As early as 1793, services were conducted by the Rev. Joseph Badger at Harpursville, and St. Luke's Church of that village was organized April 15, 1799, by the Rev. (afterwards Bishop) Philander Chase who was its first pastor. No doubt these two ministers occasionally preached here.

It is known that the Rev. N.M. Adams, of Unadilla, held services here at least once prior to 1838. The Rt. Rev. W.N. DeLancy, D.D., first Bishop of Western New York, officiated here twice, once in the Baptist and once in the Universalist meetinghouse, in the years 1840 and 1842.

The first attempt at regular services was made by the Rev. W.E. Eigenbrodt, D.D., who was rector of St. Peter's, Bainbridge from 1838 to 1841. The services were held generally in the afternoon, at five or six o'clock, after Mr. Eigenbrodt had conducted two full services in Bainbridge. They were held, sometimes by candlelight, in the old school house, a forlorn and rickety building.

In answer to an inquiry in 1860, Mr. Eigenbrodt wrote: "I rode down sometimes with one, sometimes with another of the congregation (of Bainbridge), generally with Col. Juliand; and Capt. Newton would often go to give us his valuable aid in music. I always used the Church service in full in the school house. Mrs. Damaris Garrett lived near it, and there I was often refreshed, and put on my gown. Sometimes I went on horseback. Mrs. Garrett was a good woman and deserves to be remembered. I always thought that, generally beloved as she was for her goodness and resorted to for her intelligence, she was the light which was eventually to drive off the thick darkness of the neighborhood; for I do think there were few spots in a civilized state, less favored with a knowledge of truth than South Bainbridge was at that time. Universalism was dominant and strong, and the sects in their attempts to cope with it only made it more obstinate and indifferent."

The old school house stood by the side of the Baptist meeting-house (to which the Church had a claim when not used by the Baptists) towards the close of his ministry in Bainbridge, about the years 1849-1852.

In 1857 it is recorded that a seemingly providential opening led the Rev. W.A. Johnson, then rector in Bainbridge to propose fitting up a suitable room for regular services.

The work was begun in the summer of 1858 and the Chapel opened for services November 21st. The following description of the Chapel appeared in the "Church Journal" in January 1859: "A two-story building, erected for a select school-house, but looking externally like one of the common smaller meeting houses, providentially fell under the control of the only male communicant in the place, Mr. Harrison R. Caswell. It was deemed expedient to fit up the upper story in a plain way for a chapel, and this has been successfully accomplished at an expense of little over \$300. Of this Mr. Caswell generously gave from his moderate means over one third, a large portion of the remainder being contributed by liberal church people, chiefly in the city of New York.

"The old ceiling was removed and the slopes of the roof lathed and plastered, securing a height of sixteen feet. All the chancel furniture, as well as the benches for the seats, are made of seasoned chestnut, oiled but not stained. A proper chancel, ten feet in depth, is formed by setting off a vestry and library room on each side. The side walls of the chancel are painted straw color, to correspond with the walls of the body of the house, which are papered with a plain paper of the same shade. The slope of the chancel roof is painted an ultra-marine blue, shaded off to a lighter color. The chancel furniture will all answer for a new church.

"Evening services are held once a fortnight by the Rev. W.A. Johnson of Bainbridge. Through the kindness of the New York Bible and Prayer Book Society, our chapel has been provided with a full supply of neat Prayer Books, and the people are fast learning to use them.

"Beginning with the very first service, a choir wholly unused to chanting has sung very effectively, without any instrument, two of the Gregorian tunes. The first service was held November 21st. The chapel has usually been full, and sometimes crowded with an attentive congregation; and an increasing interest is being manifested in the pure gospel, as taught by the Apostolic Church. Thanks be to God."

Continued history of St. Ann's Church—Aug. 22

In April 1859, a Sunday School was opened which numbered during the term ended Christmas, some 28 scholars; in 1860 about 40 and in 1861 from various causes, but 14.

The Bishop visited the congregation for the first time on September 11, 1859, when two were confirmed, in the presence of a crowded congregation. The consent of the Bishop having been obtained November 29, 1859, legal notice of a meeting for organizing the parish, was given on the 8th and 15th of January 1860. On January 16th, a meeting was held in the Chapel, when the persons present incorporated themselves under the name and title of "The Rector, Wardens, and Vestrymen of St. Ann's Church in the Town of Afton, Chenango County." John Russell and Harrison Caswell were elected Wardens; and William Wilkinson, Zael Woodard, Wright Deer, George Landers, Eli M. Shay, Daniel Carpenter, Daniel A. Carpenter and Horace Jones, Vestrymen. The Rev. W.A. Johnson was chosen Rector.

A resolution was made in 1860 providing that "all monies for religious purposes in this parish be raised by weekly offerings in time of divine service. Whereas St. Ann's parish being a mission station and its missionary in receipt of a stipend of \$62.50, it is incumbent upon us in accordance with the laws of the Diocese to make contributions to the mission fund." Furthermore it was resolved that "after the expenses of the house are provided for, the balance of the offerings, be they less or more, constitute the salary of the Rector, provided said balance does not exceed the sum of \$100, any surplus to be at the disposal of the Vestry for Church purposes."

Apparently this did not work out too well, for in the minutes of 1861, we read, "A motion was made and seconded to change the order of supporting the parish from the weekly offertory to subscriptions and the following committee

was appointed to solicit subscriptions: D.A. Carpenter, William Wilkinson, Eli M. Shay."

In 1862, the Rev. W.A. Johnson resigned, and D.A. Carpenter offered the following resolution: that we make an effort to raise by subscription for the year 1863, the sum of \$100 for the support of preaching and incidental expenses of St. Ann's Church, Afton.

According to the minutes for June 25, 1866, a committee was appointed to locate a site for a church. At a meeting September 10, a committee was appointed to draft and circulate a subscription for the purpose of raising money to build a church, and N.B. Stowell was appointed to see to getting a suitable stove for the church. Land for the church was given by Harrison R. Caswell. The cornerstone was laid in 1867. By October 1867, \$584 had been paid for lumber, the carpenter and the mason work on a new church.

From the records for September 1868, we learn that the vestry resumed the debt of the Church and sent their request to the Bishop to have the Church of St. Ann's consecrated. The consecration took place October 1, 1868.

As the years passed, it seemed difficult to obtain necessary funds to carry on the work of the Church. At nearly every annual meeting Harvey Hinman was appointed to draw up a subscription paper and circulate it, to try to raise funds enough to pay off the debt. In the minutes of December 1870 we read, "On motion of H.R. Caswell we make an effort to raise the salary for the Rev. J..A. Robinson to \$250 besides the stipend." The motion was carried and again Harvey Hinman was appointed to circulate a subscription for that effect. The Rev. Mr. Robinson agreed to stay if the said amount could be raised. Whether the amount was never raised or what happened we do not know, but in the Vestry meeting of April 7, 1871, the Rev. Mr. Robinson presented his resignation and it was accepted.

By May 1872, a resolution was passed to pay the Rector, the Rev. Mr. Palmer, \$300 a year, in quarterly installment. On June 8th, 1872, N.B. Stowell made a proposition to the Vestry that he would give the timber for a thousand ties to pay off the church debt and the Vestry should get them out and deliver them to the railroad. The proposition was acted upon and accepted.

The first time the ladies are mentioned in the minutes was in 1877 when the resolution was passed that the Vestry hire the money in the ladies' hands and apply the same to pay the Church debt.

In 1888 we find things picking up a bit financially because Mrs. Lu B. Cake was thanked for her very liberal Easter donation of \$25 and the records assure us that as a consistent and devoted Church lady she will be held in kind remembrance by the members of St. Ann's Church. At the same meeting the Vestry thanked Isaac Louderback for the efficient manner in which he had managed the financial affairs of St. Ann's Church, and for once there is no mention of Harvey Hinman's being appointed to circulate a subscription.

If undue emphasis seemed to be placed on the early financial struggles of St. Ann's, it must be remembered that most of the information has had to be gleaned from the minutes of meetings of the Vestry, the body of men concerned with the physical and financial state of the parish Church.

On August 3, 1890 the Rev. Orin Sands held service at St. Ann's in the afternoon. Later that day the Church was struck by lightning and the structure totally destroyed. However, all furnishings were saved. The insurance was \$1500. On August 23rd the Vestry met to appoint a building committee to procure plans and specifications for a new Church. By September the plans and specifications were accepted and the building committee was authorized to let the contract as soon as \$2150.00 could be raised. By that time the Rev. Sands had left, and the Rev. A.G. Singsen became the Rector, April 17, 1891. The church was completed at a cost of about \$3000.00 and opened for its first service September 6, 1891. It was consecrated by Bishop Huntington October 6, 1891.

The Rev. Mr. Singsen resigned in September 1894, moving to Findlay, Ohio. The Rev. Walter E. Bently became Rector November 4, 1894.

In the next few years the women apparently played an important part, for we read in the minutes of 1895, "Motion made and carried that Charles Guy is to be a committee of one to wait on the ladies and ascertain if they will make up the deficiency on the insurance premium." In 1900 the ladies of St. Ann's Guild were asked to consider the proposition to put eavestroughs on the Church and properly drain the Church so that the basement could eventually be done off and to pay all expenses for same.

A printed program for Tuesday, July 18, 1905 tells of the consecration of a Communion Set as a memorial to the Rt. Rev. Frederic Dan Huntington, S.T.D., L.L.D., First Bishop of Central New York.

An Afton Enterprise of May 31, 1906, announced that "on Tuesday, June 5 at 3 p.m., the Rt. Rev. Charles Tyler Olmsted, Bishop of Central New York, will visit Afton to consecrate the new bell and pulpit, and to administer the Apostolic Rite of Confirmation. The pulpit is a massive piece in quartered oak, hand carved, sacred to the memory of the late Rector of St. Ann's the Rev. Edwin Lee Tanner. The design was found among his papers, being the last work which he completed for the Church in Afton. Members of the congregation and friends of the late Priest have contributed more than enough to meet the cost of this, the finest article of furniture in the parish. It is a fitting monument to one whose godly influence and saintly life have contributed so much to the betterment of our people."

Cast on the surface of the bell, which came from the foundry of the Minelly Bell Co., is the following inscription: "To commemorate the services of the Rev. William Allen Johnson, founder of this parish in 1857. 'Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals; praise Him upon the loud cymbals.'"

In 1908 it became necessary to put a new roof on the Church. The minutes record a motion for the treasurer to draw a paper to solicit for subscriptions for slating the roof. However, Mrs. Charles Seely and Mrs. Erwin Gifford headed a group of ladies who made and sold aprons to pay for the slate roof, and no apron was sold for more than 50 cents.

In 1913, the Rev. Luther L. Weller was instrumental in having the Easter offering designated as the start of an endowment fund for the parish. This offering amounted to \$216.00 of which \$100 was given by Mrs. Elizabeth Y. McHugh. Also during this same period, through Mr. Weller's influence, a fine Estey reed

organ was purchased and installed. Mr. Weller was himself an accomplished musician, and whenever the regular organist was not able to be present, Mr. Weller played the organ, led the singing and conducted the service.

For a long time the communicants of St. Ann's recognized the great need for a parish home. Finally through a generous bequest of Mrs. Linda Seely Carpenter it was possible to make the long-dreamed-of plans materialize. Communicants and friends of St. Ann's also contributed about \$5,000, and finally in the fall of 1955 the Parish House was completed. The modern kitchen equipment was all furnished by St. Ann's Woman's Auxiliary.

Over the years St. Ann's has been extremely fortunate in having the services of the following capable Rectors: the Rev. William Allen Johnson, the Rev. J.A. Robinson, the Rev. M.E. Wilson, the Rev. A.W. Cornell, the Rev. J.E. Johnson, the Rev. J.W. Capen, the Rev. Vibbard, Jr., The Rev. Mr. Clark, the Rev. A. G. Singsen, the Rev. Walter E. Bentley, the Rev. H.A. Cresser, the Rev. H.M. Brown, the Rev. Edwin Lee Tanner, the Rev. Wilson E. Tanner, the Rev. Henry Sizer, the Rev. Luther L. Weller, the Rev. R.W. Nickel, the Rev. J. deLancey Scoville, the Rev. Thomas J. Collar, The Rev. Bradford H. Tite, the Rev. Sidney E. Heath, and the Rev. James E. Wolfe.

At the present time St. Ann's has a communicant list of 120, a Church School of 38, an active Auxiliary, Altar Guild and eight boys as Acolytes. Now as in times past, the members of St. Ann's are a fellowship of faithful people, worshipping, working and playing together, doing all to the glory of God.



Florence Guy

UNIVERSALISTS STARTED ORGANIZATION IN 1818

From Chenango County History

The First Universalist Church of Afton was originally incorporated as "The First Universalist Society of the Town of Bainbridge," at a meeting held in the schoolhouse in the Kirby settlement September 14, 1818, of which Matthew Long and Thomas Humphrey were presiding and returning officers. James Johnston, Reuben Kirby, Ebenezer Landers, James Davidson, Stephen Stilwell and James H. Humphrey were elected trustees. Their house of worship was erected in 1818. How long this organization continued there is no record to show, but that it exerted a wide and powerful influence for many years thereafter the records of the Baptist and Episcopal churches abundantly testify. It was re-organized as "The First Universalist Society of South Bainbridge," May 5, 1855, at a meeting held at the Universalist Church in South Bainbridge (Afton) and presided over by Rev. Chas. S. Brown, the pastor. Noble Buck, Reuben Kirby, Thomas Humphrey, Murlin Jackson, Stephen D. Pratt and Philo Landers were elected trustees, and a constitution was adopted. The records of the society subsequent to 1855 are very meager and furnish very little definite information in regard to its history. Rev. J.G. Bartholomew commenced his labors as pastor June 22, 1856, preaching half the time, and closed them April 18, 1858. Rev. W. Delong commenced preaching here one-fourth time May 14, 1865, but how long he continued does not appear; neither do the records show who filled the interval between 1858 and 1865. The desk was occupied every Sabbath in 1867 by Rev. J.F. Porter. The church was again organized under its present name February 20, 1860. Rev. T.L. Dean filled the office of pastor from November 8, 1874, to May 1, 1875, after an interval of two years of partial inactivity. Our informant, who is a member, says, "The Society is in a low state and has the appearance of becoming extinct, as there is not life enough in the present members to do anything towards keeping up the organization."

—From "History of Chenango County, 1880" verbatim.

The original church building, the first church to be erected in Afton, still stands on the East side, an upstanding, rugged structure, interesting in architectural line, but much neglected. After an interval of many years, it was again used by another religious sect which discontinued its services about 1928. Since then, it became the bus garage of the Afton Central School and at the present time is used for storage purposes.

X. DR. HAYES ADDRESS

The following is an account of the address given by Dr. Carlton J.H. Hayes, at the Afton Centennial of July 13th at the Afton Fairground.

Mr. Chairman, Supervisor Poole, Mayor Holdrege, President Grant, Natives and Friends of Afton, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We celebrate today the centenary of our present township. But Afton is not the first township here, nor the first settlement. This goes back not a mere hundred years but over 170 years, and before that, reaching back several more centuries, there was the Iroquois Indian village of Cunahunta, situated two miles down the Susquehanna, from our Afton village.

A peculiar fact about this region is that it never belonged to Dutch or British. No foreign flag ever flew over it. The boundary, as finally fixed between the Iroquois and the British colony of New York ran down the Unadilla River, and thence to the Delaware along the line which still exists as the eastern boundary of Bainbridge, Afton, and Sanford. Thus, until the Revolutionary War, while there were white settlements in what are now Otsego and Delaware Counties, there was none in the present Chenango and Broome Counties.

It was fortunate for us, though not for the Indians, that they sided with the British and the Tories in the Revolutionary War. For the resulting border warfare led to the famous Clinton-Sullivan Expedition which overwhelmed the Indians and delivered their land to white settlement. General Clinton's part of that expedition came down the Susquehanna from Otsego Lake, and on a Friday, August 13, 1779, it passed through here noting the destruction of Cunahunta and encamping that night, with boats, supplies, on one of the adjacent islands.

Thus ended the long Indian sway over this region, leaving few reminders to us—only the name of the river, a name for our local D.A.R., some arrowheads and stone tools. The newly independent State of New York took over the Indian Territory by right of conquest and nominal purchase and promptly proceeded to survey it preparatory to white settlement. One of the important surveyors, I would remark incidentally, was Professor Robert Harpur of Columbia College in New York, who for his work, obtained 61,000 acres centering in the community named for him—our neighboring Harpursville.

As originally surveyed, what is now Afton was first included in a township styled "Clinton" in honor of Governor George Clinton and his brother General James Clinton, and was designed to provide compensation for the so-called "Vermont Sufferers," that is, war veterans who had suffered loss of previous land grants in Vermont on account of its secession from New York and its establishment as a separate state. Hence the first white settlers here in 1786, and the next two or three years, were Vermont Sufferers. But they were soon outnumbered, with the help of land speculators, by other immigrants from Connecticut or the Hudson Valley.

Nor did the name "Clinton" long stick to the township. In 1791 it was renamed "Jericho" and temporarily enlarged to cover the whole southern half of the present

Chenango County. Before long, however, Norwich and Oxford and Guilford and Greene and Smithville and Coventry were successively lopped off, and in 1814, the name of what was left was again changed from "Jericho" to Bainbridge," in honor of the naval hero of the time. From then until 1857 present Afton was known as "South Bainbridge."

I haven't the time, nor you the patience, for any detailed account of pioneering days in old Clinton or old Jericho or old South Bainbridge. For us who live in the 1950's it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of the hardships and labors of settlers of the 1780's, 1790's and early 1800s. There were then no motor cars or railroads or even highways to bring them in. There were only Indian trails and horses, carts, and oxen, or river canoes, and around all these at first a veritable jungle of forest and underbrush, infested with wild animals. At a Jericho town meeting held in 1792, a bounty of 40 shillings was voted for killing wolves and the next year the bounty was increased to 3 pounds sterling.

And once settled here, what labor the immigrants performed! With no tractors or bulldozers, with only primitive tools and personal strength they cut down forests, pulled out stumps, built log cabins and barns, piled stone fences, planted and cultivated and harvested, and simultaneously constructed roads, saw mills, grist mills and shops.

In what is now Afton town, the east side of the river was for some time considerably more peopled and important than the west side. On the east side were the first inn, the first school house, the first store, the first post office, the first church building (that of the Universalists), and the first cemetery. Gradually, of course, a settlement grew up on the west side, but not until 1829 was it connected by bridge with the east side, and only later the construction of the railroad along the west bank of the river assured the west side's predominance.

Various other settlements were made in the present township at a comparatively early date. One was Bettsburg, named after Peter Betts, who arrived in 1802 and repeatedly represented Chenango County in the State Assembly. Another, the present North Afton, was originally known as West Jericho or West Bainbridge and later Ayreshire. A third was along Algerine Street, so dubbed by reason of a fancied resemblance between its early denizens and the Algerian pirates whom America was fighting in the early 1800s. There was likewise the 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 in the 1830s, while names of the early settlers were applied to Melondy Hill, Church Hollow and Nurss Hollow. The first Supervisor of Jericho township, in 1791, Phineas Bennett, gave his name to neighboring Bennettsville.

On an occasion like this, not only should we recall our early settlements and hamlets. We should also commemorate, at least honorably mention, certain families that settled here during the first 85 or 90 years and have since contributed in no small way to the upbuilding and welfare of this township. Among the very earliest were the Landers, the Stowells, the Bentons, the Bushes, the Churches, the Corbins, the Medburys, and the Kelseys and Bumps who gave their respective names to the two creeks that meet in Afton village. Followed not long afterwards, the Pollards,

the Farnsworths, the Barrs, the Carpenters, the Carrs, the Caswells, the Chamberlins, the Hinmans, the Hydes, the Johnstons, the Pecks, the Pooles, the Tarbells, the Wicks, and, still later, the Mudgets, the Brezees, the Doolittles, the Duttons, the Halls, the LeSuers, the Loomises, the Lords, the Morgans, the Seelys, etc. Among these I am proud to include my own family. My parents settled here nearly a century ago and I was born here 75 years ago.

Our Afton forefathers of the 1820s had a real celebrity in their midst, though at the time they didn't recognize him as such. His name was Joseph Smith, Junior. He was a tall strapping youth of nineteen when he first arrived, brought here from Pamryra by Josiah Stowell, who wanted a "hired man" for his farm—the present Nesbitt farm,—and who believed the youth's story of his possessing a peepstone which enabled him to detect buried treasure. Here then, Joe lived, on and off for five years. Here he did farm chores for 14 dollars a month, attended district school, and dug for gold in hill and gully. Here in a house on these very Fair Grounds, he was married by Squire Tarbell to a girl, Emma Hale, with who he had eloped. At her home down the river, just over the border in Pennsylvania, he dictated the famous Book of Mormon; and hereabouts he performed such dubious miracles as walking on the water, and here he obtained his first converts to Mormonism, including Joseph Knight, Reed Peck, Edward Partridge, and the ever trustful Josiah Stowell. Right here in our own village he was twice arrested and tried as "a disorderly person and an imposter." On the second, before Justice Joseph Chamberlin, he was acquitted. But less merciful Harpursville pounced on him, found him guilty, and ordered him to leave. So in August 1830, with his group of local disciples, the Founder of Mormonism finally left our countryside and headed the Mormon trek westward.

Now let us jump form one stirring event here, the expulsion of Joe Smith and his Mormons, to another, our secession form Bainbridge, the very event we celebrate today. There were several predisposing factors in this secession. At the time, the township of Bainbridge was the largest in Chenango County, extending from Sidney to Nineveh and from Church Hollow to beyond Bennettsville, and its population totaled over 2,000. 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 train or 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 or inferior place. They would be free and equal.

Particularly important 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 increasing bitterness, it was agreed in the early 1850's to hold town elections alternately in the two villages, giving all of the offices to citizens of South Bainbridge when the elections were held here. This eased the situation only temporarily. Resentment grew anew as people in Bainbridge proper 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 Pollard Chamberlain, son of a "Vermont Sufferer," and justice of the peace at the second Joe Smith trial in 1830. He was well-to-do, public-spirited, and politically minded. He had been County Sheriff, and a member of the State Legislature, and was deemed a potential candidate for State Governor or United State Senator. Afton should certainly rear some monument to Chamberlain's memory.

In the secession movement, he had able associates, chief among whom I would mention Daniel A. Carpenter, merchant and builder of the present Town Hall, Jonathan Farnsworth, Jr. farmer and grandfather of Mrs. Eva Farnsworth Holleran; Devillo Corbin Church, civil engineer, lumberman, and subsequent banker, grandfather of Helen Church; Albert C. Hyde, druggist, son of an early settler in Ayreshire and grandfather of our present chairman, Neil Hyde; and Dr. James B. Cook, a popular and long practicing physician here.

The final impetus to secession, strangely enough, came from the heavens. It came in the form of an amazing snow storm on April 20th, 1857, which blanketed this part of the State to a depth of over four feet, completely isolating most of the farmers and making it extremely difficult for them to obtain food or to salvage cattle 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 resolve in South Bainbridge to separate from Bainbridge. The latter reluctantly but fortunately consented so that there was no actual bloodshed, and separation was consummated by legal creation of the township of Afton on November 18th, 1857. The first thought of seceders had been to honor their most distinguished member by naming the township Chamberlaintown or Chamberlainville, but he firmly resisted them. As a second choice on the suggestion of Joseph Chaffee, they hit upon the name "Afton." Through the town, the Susquehanna, like the Scottish stream immortalized by Robby Burns, did "flow gently, disturbing no dreams." And Afton, as a name, had the practical and important advantage of preceding Bainbridge in any alphabetical list of towns in Chenango County.

The first election of Afton officials was held early in the spring of 1858. Chamberlain would undoubtedly have been chosen Supervisor, if he had not died shortly before 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 an Inspector of Election.

In the same year a special census of the new Afton was taken. Some of its figures may interest you. 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 amounted to 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.

Only a few of the high spots in Afton's history during the last hundred years will I touch upon this morning. For details you should consult current issues of our esteemed Afton Enterprise.

For some time after 1857 relations between Afton and Bainbridge were strained, and as if to exult in the contemptuous nickname of "Jockeyport," which Bainbridgeites had leveled at us, an "Afton Agricultural Society," organized in 1859, held a series of annual fairs in which horse-racing was the star attraction. They were a forerunner of the fairs which were renewed on these grounds in 1890, and which still go strong. They had for years the expert management of Harry Horton, and happily in recent years they have come to symbolize close cooperation between daughter-Afton and mother-Bainbridge, for citizens of the latter are now prominent in conduct of the Afton Fair and glad to share in the sport of "Jockeyport." The old quarrel had long since been forgiven, if not 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 for assurance of local freedom, and self-respect, and in the latter case for retention of slavery. To the Union cause Afton certainly contributed its full share of men and means. A goodly number of Afton boys never returned from the war. Yet after it, there were as many as a hundred local veterans here to form Vanderburg Post of the G.A.R. 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 organizations: Clifford-Holmes Post of the American Legion and its women's Auxiliary, Afton's D.A.R., W.R.C., Boy and Girl Scouts.

An Albany and Susquehanna Railroad had been projected through Afton before the Civil War, and for it our township raised \$30,000. Construction was delayed by the war, however, and it was not until 1867—90 years ago—that it reached here from Albany, and not until two years later that it connected us with Binghamton. It was leased by the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, which built the link from its Pennsylvania coal mines up to Nineveh Junction in Afton township. The railroad proved a boon. It lessened the valley's isolation by stimulating 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 drygoods and novel farm machinery. For years the depot here was a very busy place.

Almost simultaneous with the completion of the railroad, was the building of a new bridge across the river. Previous bridges had been covered toll bridges, owned

and operated for profit by private companies. The new bridge was an open suspension bridge, beautifully designed and constructed, and, most notably, it was owned by the town and free to everybody. It lasted until the automobile age, when it was replaced by a less handsome but heavier iron bridge, and this in turn is now superseded, as you know by the present wider span of steel and concrete, the sixth river bridge here.

In 1870 an Afton Academy (equivalent of the later "High School") was opened on Spring street, and four years later it was combined together with district schools on east and west sides of the river, to constitute the "Afton Union School and Academy." A new building for it was erected on the present school site. As I knew it, it was a graceful two-story white frame structure with simple columns out front and neatly balanced wings on either side. It looked like a bird which might fly away at any moment. It didn't however, until 1908, when it was replaced by a new and larger structure of brick and stone, at a cost of \$25,000 and this, in turn has now in Afton's centennial year, been much expanded and re-equipped at a cost of three quarters of a million. Quite an advance on South Jericho's log-cabin school of 1790!

In the 1870's the first Afton newspaper was published, and the first bank—a private one—was opened by Enos Johnston and Devillo Church. In 1884 occurred the "great fire" which burned to the ground a whole row of wooden shops, hotels and stores along Main Street. But this disaster proved a blessing in disguise. For the merchants spent little time in mourning their losses. Instead, they promptly cleared away the debris and rebuilt in brick with stone and marble trim, thus endowing Afton village with the unusually neat and attractive business section it has since had. In the same period, Afton, for its size gained an enviable reputation throughout south-central New York for its school, for its music both band and vocal, and for its baseball teams.

In 1892—sixty-five years ago—Afton village was formally incorporated, with my father, Dr. P.A. Hayes serving as its first President, or Mayor. He and his friend, Morris J. Mudge, Jr., were prime movers moreover in providing the village with its fine water system. They insisted from the start that this should be village-owned and village-operated, accruing to the benefit of all the villagers. At about the same time, street-lighting was introduced in the village, first with kerosene oil, subsequently with electricity. An Afton Telephone Company was formed, later to be merged in the Deposit Company.

Of more recent developments, I can only refer to the installation of a National Bank in a dignified new office building; the acquisition of the Village Hall, largely through the efforts of the Women's Home Bureau; the ensuing purchase of fitting quarters for Town Supervisor, Clerk, and records, and for the Afton Firemen; the flourishing and housing of the local Grange; the founding of the Chamber of Commerce; the establishment of the Afton Free Library. There have likewise been the consolidation of surrounding district schools into Afton Central School and the recent notable home-building developments around Afton Lake and along the river on the east side.

Amid details of Afton's history we should not lose sight of two fundamental

happenings. The first, a major effect of the coming of the railroad, was an almost revolutionary change in the 1880's and 1890's from diversified farming to concentration on dairying. In other words, agriculture in this area became specialized, and the farm much less self-sufficing. Afton was made dependent on the west for its grain, and on New York City for income for milk.

The second and more recent happening has been the supplementing if not supplanting, of steam by oil, of the railroad, by the automobile, truck and tractor. The tractor, with attendant machinery (combines, balers, corn-blowers, hay driers, etc.), has further affected local farming. Applicable to fairly large valley and plateau farms, it has prospered these, while many a less favored hill farm has been abandoned or transformed by the State into forest preserves. Nowadays, in a considerable part of our township, the land has reverted to primitive condition, roamed over again by wild animals, and with only an occasional dilapidated building or decaying apple orchard to indicate it had once, in the days of Jericho, been cleared and tilled.

One result is that, while residents of Afton village have increased in number, the population of Afton township as a whole is less in 1957 than it was a hundred years ago. 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 has declined from 40,300 in 1850, to 39,100 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 the town, but very seldom does anybody board the one remaining passenger train. Everybody now uses automobile or motor bus. In 1907 hardly anyone 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 in Florida. Schoolchildren make trips en masse by bus to Washington. Family auto tours to California are not uncommon. On Sundays 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 had 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 checked. An example of the newer ten-

dency 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! 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 shops or factories some miles away. They thus are re-enforcing the residential character of Afton and are taking a lively interest in its civic and social welfare. The present and preceding mayors—Richard Holdrege and Alden Mudge Jr., and other members of the village governing board are all ex-G.I.'s, and they are doing a fine 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.



Dr. Carlton J.H. Hayes

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