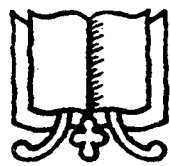


EARLY DAYS

In

Gansevoort and Vicinity



Book 3

by

Mrs. J. B. Vanderwerker

Early Days in GANSEVOORT and VICINITY



Brownville

By John W. Murphy

Brownville and Woodworth Hill were small settlements between Bacon Hill and Gansevoort. The hamlet of Brownville consisted of twenty or thirty houses. Jonathan Brown was one of the first settlers, after whom the place was named. He built a house and a saw-mill on the bank of the Cold Brook. This house was moved later to the Murphy Farm by Jones VanDerWerKer and now is the main part of Mr. Murphy's home as well as the oldest house in Brownville. Looking at the picture you can see the "ginger-bread" work over the front porch.

At one time there was a cobbler shop, also store in a little grove. Most of the inhabitants of Brownville were descendants of Jonathan Brown, among them were John Brown, Abigail Hurd, Arilla Lewis Smith, Mrs. Hannah Maria VanDerWerKer, Mrs. Susannah Robinson, and Mrs. Free-love Herrington. The six families who lived west of the school-house were Alvin Smith, Abner Brown, James Simmonds, George Ellison, Hillard Smith and Lyman Robinson. East were the Hinman family, on the north were Willards, Murphys, Welchs, Carrolls, Giffords, Pettits, Galushas and Lewis.

All the houses below the school are gone now. Above the school-house the only homes remaining of what was once a lively little place are the property of descendants of the first settlers, namely Murphy and McGowan.

The school district had an assessed valuation of thirty-five hundred dollars. Taxes were so high compared to the valuation that finally this district joined with Woodworth Hill district. Later when Woodworth Hill was annulled all farms north of Brownville school-house went to Gansevoort and still belong to the Gansevoort district.

The election of school officers was held the second of October each year. School began the first of November,

lasting all winter until late spring so the older children could attend, yet help their parents through the summer.

When Mr. Murphy went to school there were about seventy or seventy-five pupils during the winter months; today there are three children of school age in the district. Most of the scholars were descendants of Jonathan Brown (early). Teachers in these years boarded around with the parents of the pupils, receiving as wages on the average of \$2 to \$5 per week. Slate pencils and slates were used, the only writing paper were the writing books.

In regard to the grades in school, the best scholar went to the head of the class that was the grade. There was not any "home work" in arithmetic or other help, instead there were the Rules of Arithmetic which must be committed to memory. The teacher would call the pupil to the blackboard and give an example to be "worked out." When it was done, the teacher would ask why and how it was solved that way, then it must be proven by the rule which applied. Usually, before the end of the lesson, the pupil knew what it was "all about." In spelling class, the girl or boy who missed a word went to the foot of the class, the one who spelled correctly went to the head of the class.

Children were taught to obey their teacher. If they were punished in school they seldom told their parents about it for fear it might be repeated. When permitted to write with ink, which was seldom, the pens were made of goose-quills.

The school-house was used at that early day for Sunday-school, Prayer Meetings, Picnics, Writing school, Spelling Matches and Funeral Services. Apple Parings, Quilting Parties, Kissing Parties, Kitchen Dances, and Donations for the Ministers were the main Social Events of the time. Nevertheless, the old school turned out some pretty good men and women. They proved to be a rugged, jolly lot



John W. Murphy House, Brownville

of people.

Candles made of tallow were used. Mr. Murphy told that the first lamp he saw was very wonderful indeed—called a “fluid lamp.” The bowl was filled with oil on which was a burner with five prongs, in these candle-wick were used. As they burned down, they must be pulled up with a pin or similar sharp instrument.

There was the Base Ball Club, which played together for three years. They called themselves “The Jonathan R. Deyoe’s Team,” played all the other Clubs within a radius of twenty miles, never beaten a game. There were some pretty good teams to play against, among them the Victory Mills team, Fort Edward Stars, Greenfield Center, Quaker Springs, and others.

The third year the Club disbanded as some of the players had work away from home. The nine players were Nathan Hurd, Frank Hurd, Phineas Hurd, William Ellison, John Gifford, Eugene Murphy, Thomas Donnelly, Howard McGowan and John Murphy.

They traveled to different places with a two horse lumber wagon, sometimes used four horse team. Only one of the ball players is alive today and he is over eighty years old. As boys, though they did not have lights, or automobiles they had the old swimming hole, the baseball club, and with an occasional party were quite as happy.

Mr. John W. Murphy further writes to the Historian as follows:

“I knew your parents and your grand-parents, went to school with John B. VanDerwerker’s father and mother. All the people who lived at Brownville then are gone, or moved away. I am the last male of the name of Murphy.”

Brownville sometimes was called “Johnny-cake Hill.” This was the time of large families and at Sunday school the school-house would be well filled. In summer time services would be held in the yard. Children who had shoes and stockings did not wear them as they would be conspicuous with so many who were bare-foot.

The following was told me by Charles Brown:

“When I was a small boy I used to lead my Grandfather Hinman to church at the school-house. He was a very old man with long snow white hair and was blind. He had his every day and his Sunday canes. On Sunday he wore a beaver hat and used

to sit in the front seat with the leaders.” His quiet prayers are well remembered today by men who when little fellows used to listen to them. He was a very quiet, earnest worshiper and did not at all match up with the fiery exhorters and long-winded prayers at Bacon Hill, where I am told they used to say “There’s blind Hinman up at Brownville. He can talk, he can sing—but he can’t pray.”

I have also been told that Abner Brown, the storekeeper, would gather up a wagon load of eggs, butter, and other produce, driving his team to Troy to the nearest large store. Here he traded his goods for chests of tea, bolts of cloth, not forgetting a keg of liquor which at home he sold for three cents a glass or twenty-seven cents a gallon.

In those days the people of Brownville always had large well-cultivated gardens. Their cellars were a mere hole under the house with surrounding bins well filled with a stock of supplies for winter. There were no stairs into the cellar, instead there would be a round hole in the floor with a trap-door, and always a rag mat to cover the door.

Pete Shearer, who was in the Civil War, was made a prisoner in one of the large Southern prisons. When the soldiers were transferred, he came to his home at Brownville instead of returning to the army. He made a dugout under a hollow stump in the woods, living in this all one summer, coming out at night to eat. During the day the entrance to his hide-out was covered with a heavy carpet of ground pine. The following winter he lived under his house. At last, government agents caught him but as the war was over, he was not reprimanded, and in later years he drew a pension. The big stump has rotted away in the last few years but some are living who could show you exactly where it stood.

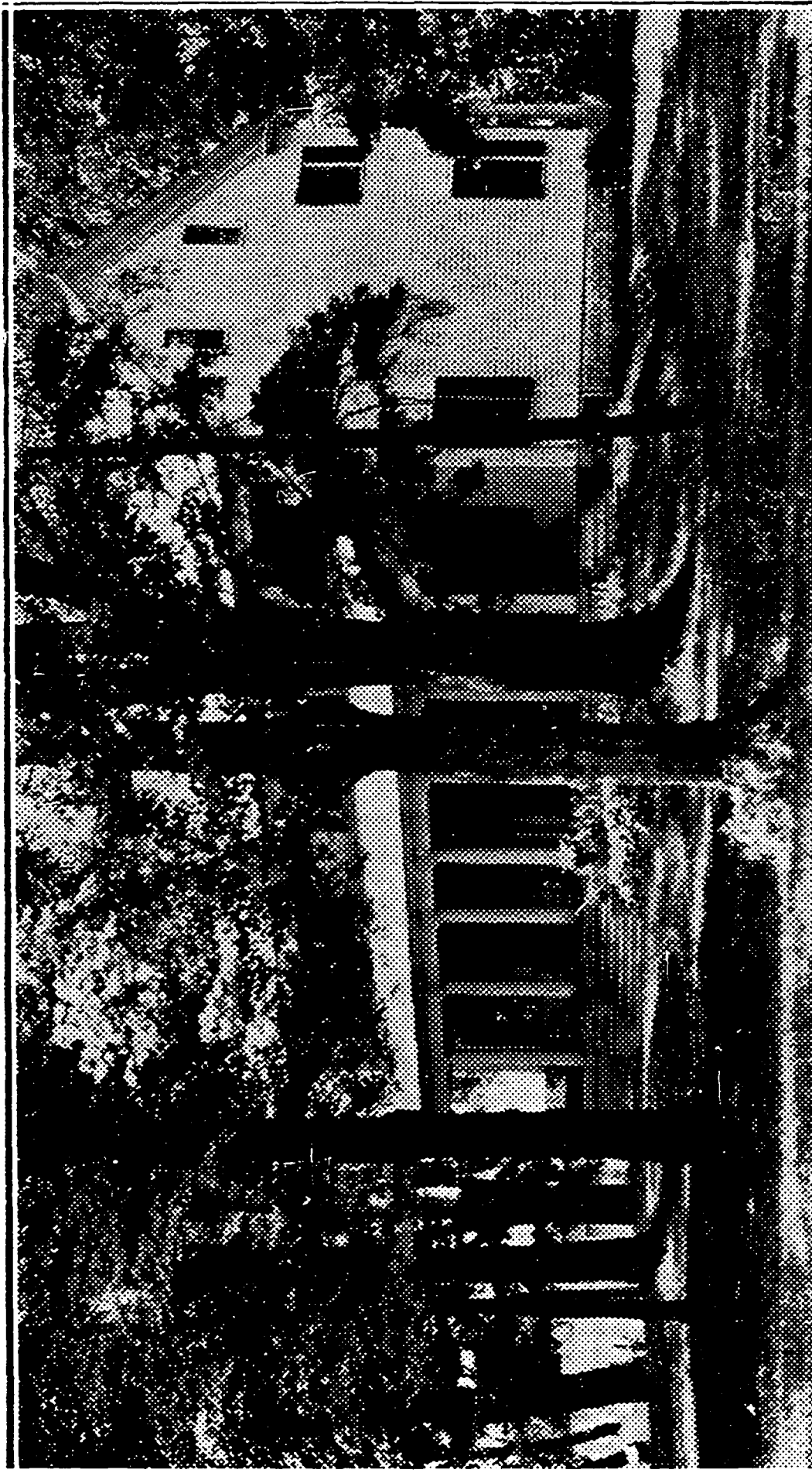
The Jonathan R. Deyoe Base Ball Team

By Henry C. Peck

Mr. Peck says he can remember the Jonathan R. Deyoe’s Ball Team, also the W. S. Deyoe’s Team.

He tells they practiced in the Henry Thompson meadow, and after playing baseball would have wrestling and running matches.

He says that Jonathan R. Deyoe



The Gansevoort Mansion

would select the two best runners of the day and taking a rail off the fence, holding it straight out in front of him, would outrun any who tried against him.

The Gansevoort Mansion

General Peter Gansevoort: Born July 17, 1748; Died July 2, 1812.

At Revolutionary War time, Peter Gansevoort, then twenty-six years old, was made Major of a Company which made an unsuccessful expedition with Montgomery to Canada. The following summer he was Commanding Lieutenant-Colonel at Fort George. The next year Peter Gansevoort had been transferred to Fort Stanwix (later called Fort Schuyler). Here, in 1777, when the Fort was attacked by St. Ledger with forces from Canada, Colonel Gansevoort sternly refused to surrender. By this action he made himself the hero of Fort Stanwix. There, in after years, his granddaughter, Mrs. Abraham Lansing, had erected a monument to honor this celebrated soldier.

At the close of the War, Peter Gansevoort was Brigadier-General in Militia and Regular Army from 1780 till his death in 1812. He held many offices of importance and trust in Albany County.

Probably because he had become familiar with this section on his trips to and from Fort George, Fort Stanwix also Saratoga, when he heard in 1783-1784 that the State was selling lands confiscated from the Tory Hugh Munro, he acquired the property.

History tells us that while the General was looking over his newly acquired property he found hidden in the woods irons and mill stones which were in the Munro mills. The General began at once rebuilding the mills, clearing the land for farming and building a home in the wilderness. A road was cut through the forests from his home to West Fort Miller, later this road was used by him to transport logs for lumber for the Old Stanwix Hotel in Albany, now razed.

Located on this property of 1800 acres, at the place which now bears his name in the Town of Northumberland, were built Saw Mills, Grist Mills, Woolen Mills, and Flax Mills. The power for operation was supplied by the stream of water passing through his land. The stream was called by the Dutch name, Snoek Kill. At present only about fifty or sixty

acres remain of the former Gansevoort Estate.

In 1778 General Peter Gansevoort married Catherine VanSchaick of Albany. The following year (1779) the eldest son, Herman, was born. When Herman was nineteen years old his father sent him to the Country Estate in Northumberland to look after his lumbering interests. So in 1798 Herman Gansevoort with his wife, Catherine Quackenboss, of New York came to the Gansevoort Estate in the wilderness and made it their permanent home.

General Peter Gansevoort died in 1812, leaving all his Estates to his widow, making her sole executrix that she might dispose of the property as she thought best. She did not die until 1830, at which time Herman inherited the property in Northumberland known as Gansevoort Mansion, although he had been living in this house for many years.

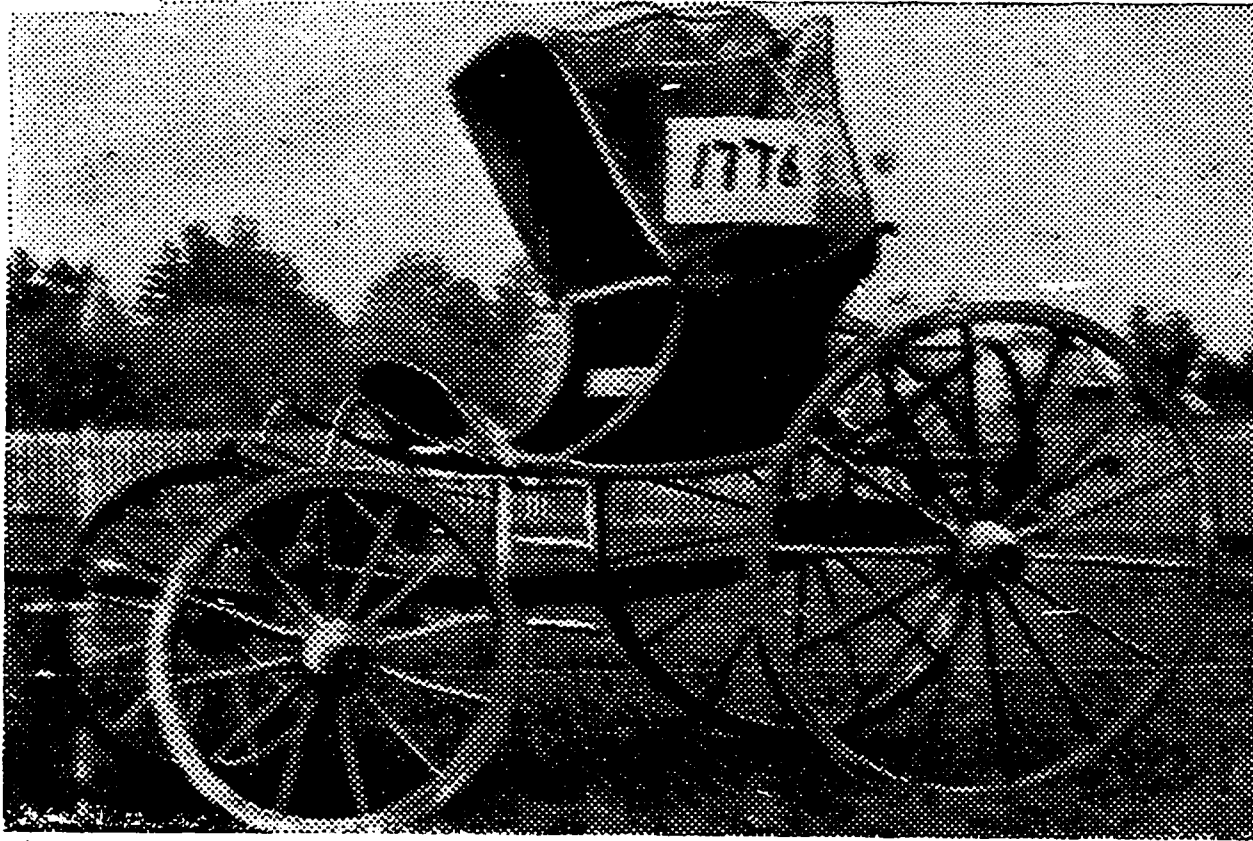
Under these circumstances, it would seem improbable that Herman built the house, as is sometimes claimed. The Gansevoort Mansion stands at the top of a gentle declivity, probably built not later than 1800, though at this time the exact date has not been found.

Gansevoort Mansion

The Mansion was built in the day when means of heating were open fireplaces, fuel was wood; when candles were the usual, if not the only means of illumination; when oven wood of a particular kind was needed for the brick oven in baking the family food.

There is no uncertainty that in the year 1835 this house was thoroughly repaired and renovated, inside and out. A new roof put on suggested it had reached a mature age to need such drastic treatment. In one of the old ledgers found in the attic is given a full description of repairs and names of the workman, from day to day.

On June 19, 1835, the family moved out, the house was raised four feet on its foundation, new walls built. Stoves were first introduced; a large chimney on the north was taken down, the corresponding one on the south end remaining. Herman Gansevoort thought he was improving his home by modernizing it, but from a historical point, he was doing great damage. On October 6th of the same year, the family moved back. Since



General Gansevoort's Chaise

there have been no major repairs.

Herman Gansevoort died in 1862; his wife, Catherine, had predeceased him in 1855. The Mansion passed into the family of his sister, Maria Gansevoort Melville (the only daughter of General Peter Gansevoort), and the wife of Allan Melville, a French Importer. Among the eight children of Allan and Maria Gansevoort Melville was the second son, Herman Melville, internationally known author, who was named for his uncle, Herman Gansevoort.

From "Herman Melville Family Correspondence" it shows that he visited many times, with his mother and sisters, the Misses Augusta and Fanny Melville, who lived here many years.

In Herman Melville's book "Pierre," there is one valuable feature, under the description of "Saddle Meadows," in reality a picture of the Gansevoort Home as in his boyhood.

Is there some manner in which the Gansevoort Mansion may be preserved as a Memorial to General Peter Gansevoort, who in his day, served our country so well?

The Chaise or Wagon of General Peter Gansevoort

General Peter Gansevoort's chaise bearing the affixed date, 1776, was in the carriage house at Gansevoort in 1879. The high seat for the coachman had rotted and fallen away. The

newspaper clippings of the Troy Times, some nine years ago when the paper was having a photograph contest, had entered by Miss VanSchoonhoven of Lansingburg, N. Y., a picture of the chaise which showed the postillion and horses attached, with three or four young ladies about to enter the chaise, though it has been said that only two persons could ride at a time regardless of the running gear being constructed stable enough to carry a much heavier load. It is presumed that its rigid workmanship was necessary for the trips of General Peter Gansevoort from Albany to Gansevoort (Northumberland) Saratoga County, where his country seat was located. The clipping further states that the dresses of the young ladies in the picture are of ante-Revolutionary period.

The chaise was lastly the property of Mrs. Abraham Lansing of Albany, N. Y., and placed by her at one time for safe keeping with Mr. Augustus Peebles of Lansingburg, N. Y. Can someone give the information as to where it can be found today?

Further descriptions relate that it was of the same pattern as the DeWitt Clinton carriage, with the body painted olive green and the running gear painted orange.

From descendants of a branch of the Melville family whose home was called "Longwood" at Brookline, Mass., who in turn were descendants

of the Gansevoort family, of local interest, there has been found a lovely old lace shawl which belonged to an early Melville lady, also a most unique solid silver bowl of perforated pattern with a cover topped by an eagle, as a handle. It has an inside container of china. We find that another branch of the Melville family were importers of French silks, laces and silver. This may account for the gifts by wills of lovely solid silver tea-sets and flat-ware to children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

With all these Historical notes showing the importance to the country of the social and military life of the Gansevoort family, also the commercial and literary life of the Melville family, it is hoped that someone who reads this article will be able to give the exact date of the building of the Mansion so it may have the well deserved marker to which it is entitled.

Gansevoort Territory

by Miss Leora Miller

Miss Miller said "The Gansevoort Mansion must have been built some years previous to 1816 as her grandfather built his frame house that year. That her grandfather had much business with old General Gansevoort but old papers had been destroyed when the Miller house was sold a few years ago."

The old Red station was in the corner lot of the Gansevoort Mansion grounds with a picket fence along the railroad. Tall trees and evergreens shut off the sight of the station from the Mansion. To reach the station from the house one would have to go down the road in front, then turn south to the station.

The water tank used for refilling the engines stood across the tracks from the station but south a little, where recently a freight house stood.

The passenger station, later sold, was moved further south down the tracks and remodeled into a home by Hiram Augustus Perkins who was employed by the Melville family after they became owners of the Mansion. This former station today forms a part of the house owned and occupied by Mrs. Abbie Hagadorn Dyer.

Practically all of the first village of Gansevoort was westward across the Snoek Kill—the Woolen Mills, Flax Mills, the Blacksmith Shop, Shoe Shop, Store and two rows of houses—one row near the road to Wilton, the

other row near the Creek. A large elm tree at the bend of the road marked the corner of the Mansion land in later years.

General Gansevoort in selling any land, always reserved the "Flood Rights" on all property so Grandfather Miller was always on the alert to see that his lands were not flooded. Thomas Pierce's store was on the west side of Snoek Kill previous to his operating a larger store on what is now Leonard Street. This last mentioned store is today the residence of Mr. Fred Gifford.

Construction of a railroad was begun in 1834, but met with many delays due to cost of building, lack of finances. It was not opened as far as Gansevoort until August 15th, 1848.

The Levi Golden and Joseph Sweet farms, now owned by Detlef Schmidt, and the Martin J. VanDerWerKer farm, at present owned by William Thomas, were all purchased from the Peter Gansevoort Estate.

Miss Miller describes General Herman Gansevoort as a very tall man, who when walking always had his hands crossed on his back.

Another story of Evart Waldron's accuracy in carpentry is told by Miss Miller. Mr. Waldron, who was blind, lived near Fortsville.

A number of carpenters, all of whom had their eyesight, were mortising timbers preparing to build a house. Evart Waldron came along where the carpenters were working. Feeling of the timbers as they lay on the ground before going into the frame-work, he said, "You have one more mortised timber than you will use." They laughed, thinking he was wrong. When ready to be placed in the framework they found Waldron was right, they did have just one too many.

Grandfather Miller built his log cabin in 1803, his frame house in 1816. The brick house now standing was made over the frame house in 1866, but the inside woodwork was the same as in 1816 until a few years ago when it was sold to Miss Lillian Walker, movie actress.

Miss Miller once had a crazy quilt in which were large pieces of uncut velvet, very lovely and expensive, in wreath design. This velvet was from the upholstering material used in covering the parlor suite of the Gansevoort furniture. Also in the same quilt was a piece from the crown of

old Mrs. Gansevoort's wedding bonnet. This quilt with an old chest made by Evart Waldron, is either with a nephew, William Miller, at Chicago, Ill., or with the Historical Department of the University at Madison, Wisconsin. Also loaned to the same University are a pair of medicine scales used by her uncle, Dr. Elijah Miller, a surgeon in General Gates' army at Saratoga. Dr. Miller used these scales in weighing medicine which was necessary to do in those days as medicines did not come in measured tablet form. These scales were on exhibition in 1877, when the corner stone of the Schuylerville Monument was laid.

Elijah Strong

Elijah Strong, maternal grandfather of Miss Josephine Ransome, lived in a small house west of Joseph Sweet's farm and owned about one hundred acres of land, afterward bought by Miss Miller's father, John Miller.

It was while Mr. Strong lived here that he went out one day and found a satchel in the roadway or path. Thinking someone would be looking for it he picked it up, carried it into the house. Later some person walking along the bank of the creek nearby found a man's body nearly hidden by brush. It was believed the man had drowned. When Mr. Strong heard of the finding of the body he was alarmed, thinking that people would believe he had committed the crime, so he replaced the satchel where he had found it.

When searchers investigated they found the grass not dead under the satchel and it looked gloomy for Mr. Strong, but his friends, knowing him to be honest and reliable, credited his story. He was never seriously accused of the crime, and the matter was soon forgotten.

Gansevoort History

By John W. Murphy

John W. Murphy, an old resident of Brownville, told me the following interesting item of Gansevoort History.

"My grandfather, Thomas Murphy, was foreman for General Peter Gansevoort. Grandfather and grandmother lived in a log cabin on Woodworth Hill, where Isaac Woodworth later lived." In those days the wolves howled near the cabin at night. For light, they dipped rags in oil in a Betty lamp; later they had

candles.

Soda was unknown in that early period. My grandmother burned corn cobs to obtain the saleratus from them.

There were no roads, only trails, so grandfather would take a bag of corn on his back, go horseback through the trail to the mill at West Fort Miller to have it ground. When this trip could not be made, he would pound the corn into powder and used that as meal.

The largest store was at Troy, N. Y., many miles away.

Grandfather often told of making up rafts in Beaver Meadows, to be floated down the Creek to the Hudson, then to New York in the Spring, when water was high. There were no dams in the Hudson at that time.

Then and until years later Woodworth Hill and Brownville were one. The people owned a community hearse, which they kept in a shed on the corner, where Roland Crowell now lives. Funerals were usually held at the school-house, burial at Brownville. It is told at one time while they held funeral services at the school-house, the undertaker rushed in, exclaiming, "Hurry up and get this over with; a big shower is coming up, and we have no time to lose."

Mr. Murphy adds this too: When he was a little boy he had to go through forest to school; he was very afraid. Once he saw a panther which had been shot about in front of where James Lynch now lives. It took three winters to cut off the first growth of pine and chestnuts from the section known as Beaver Meadows.

To Woodworth Hill where Thomas Murphy had his log cabin, later came Isaac Woodworth and William DeGarmo, who lived there and had a Cider Mill. It was operated by a "sweep" on which a horse was hitched. Later years Lewis P. Burt owned the farm, then Webster B. Moriarta; at present Urban Smith.

Gansevoort Notes

It has been tradition that the first road General Gansevoort tried to build was what was later known as the Fullerton Road. It ran east where William Gifford now lives to the Hudson River, but the General was not satisfied with this one and built the second which I told about. The second one was known as the Hartwell Road, part of which is the

present Schuylerville to Glens Falls State Road.

Beaver Meadows is a section of land east of the railroad and parallel with the Schuylerville state road. About one-half mile down one reaches a creek known as Beaver Creek. At the north-east side of the meadow on this creek was once a dam and a saw-mill.

On the Snoek Kill west of the hamlet were the old buildings of the Woolen, some say Cotton, Mills. Others say they were Flax Mills. But we read that Jonathan Fuller was head weaver for General Peter Gansevoort and at another time Seth Lawrence was the head weaver.

At a point nearly opposite the new Gansevoort Cemetery stood a log cabin in which it is said some of General Peter Gansevoort's servants lived.

Items of Interest on Gansevoort

Given me by Mr. and Mrs. Adelbert Snyder and Mrs. Frances Colton.

All of these lived at Gansevoort several years ago, Mr. Snyder until he was nineteen or twenty years old and again for a short time in later years. Mr. Snyder can well remember the old Cotton Mill across the Snoek Kill towards the (Martin J. VanDerWerker) William Thomas farm. It was a large old red frame building on the banks of the creek. The boys in his time fished from the back part of it and played "Hide and Seek" in it. Of course it was not in use then and probably had not been since the early eighteen fifties. Westward from the Mill was the barn, house and Blacksmith Shop of Judethan Hurd. It has been said that Judethan threw the ashes from his forge out of the back window into the Factory Pond, so near did it come to the shop. It was Judethan Hurd, with his son, Fred Hurd, who tore down the last of the old mills.

Loren Merchant operated the Grist Mill for Herman Gansevoort and later the Melville family. Upon leaving here he went to Grangerville, taking charge of the Grist Mill there.

The old foundations of one of the Saw Mills can yet be seen, at the north-east end of the village, on the banks of the Snoek Kill, but they are east from the present state road. As the original road was farther east of the present road, the bridge was to the right of the high bank and nearer to the water. Along this old road

were the remains of one or two log cabins, the last was used by the colored family of Ezra Jackson. Farms which are now north-east of the railroad were originally a part of the Gansevoort Estate. On the Seth Velsey farm where the owner operated a wagon shop, south-west of Gansevoort, were brick kilns and the hill at this location is still known to older residents as "The Brick Yard Hill."

The railroad wood-yard was across the tracks from the Gansevoort Mansion property and parallel to it. This yard was kept full of wood; sawing was constantly going on in order that a supply would always be ready for the wood-burning engines which were used at that time on the single track having a terminal at Moreau Station, five miles north, and a few months later at Whitehall, N. Y. Later, but previous to laying the double track, which occurred about 1889 or 1890, there was a straw barn owned by Mr. Foulke, located on the wood-yard. Here many tons of rye and oat straw were pressed, and shipped by freight. Pressing was done by means of a wind-lass and horse power. The first barn was destroyed by fire. A smaller one took its place and finally was bought by E. D. Chubb of Schuylerville. This one was torn down and removed.

The passenger and freight house were also in use before the double track was laid. These were both taken down during the summer of 1937 when the company closed the station. South of the freight house stood the coal sheds where many carloads of coal, both large and small size, were unloaded and sold each winter season. This too has been removed.

Empire Hotel

Approximately eighty-five years ago this Hotel was built by Charles Velsey. Among the owners were James Snyder, Calvin Davis, Bryce Davis, Payne Ross, John Snyder, Grant White, and Killis Herndon who now operates it. It is constructed of brick with wood additions. Formerly there was a large slaughter house in the back where all meats were prepared for use in the hotel. The old high board fence which closed the barn from the street has been taken down, much to the regret of the boys as it was a most inviting place for them to hide to play pranks on their elders.

The Union Store at Gansevoort

Among the stockholders of the Union Store were Philip Lasher and Seth Velsey, with Thomas Pierce as manager. When this company was dissolved it was conducted by the following during the ensuing years—James Chapman, Hibbard Hall and son, Otis Hall, and Bertrand Hibbard, Bertrand Hibbard and Fred L. Gifford; at the present time by Fred L. Gifford and Charles Henry. Mr. Gifford has been associated with it for the last twenty years.

In 1850, amid much adverse criticism from friends because of the vast wilderness at Gansevoort, William A. Tice came from Troy, N. Y., and opened up a store across from the Union store and gave his personal attention to the business for years. Then others looked after it either for themselves or others, namely Warren A. Blivin, Abraham Leggett and Adelbert Snyder. Socony gas pumps now occupy that site. In early years another small store stood across the tracks opposite the D. and H. station, owned by Orville Pettit. This was destroyed by fire.

The house where the late Edward Cook lived was originally the "Red School-house" which stood at the top of the hill where the new Gansevoort Cemetery is now located. There were many pupils in those days, often one hundred or more, especially during winter months. The next school, located on Catherine Street, was destroyed by fire about two years ago but a modern two-room school now stands on its site. Two teachers are employed, Donald Myers and Mrs. Rosalie Haviland Holmes.

Just south of the Cook home mentioned was once a Yeast Factory. That too was made into a dwelling, locally known as the "Pink House" because of its vivid hue in by-gone days. Beyond the Yeast Factory was the early Blacksmith Shop of Daniel Steenburgh, "the village smithy," next sheds belonging to Tice's store

because ox teams and horses must be protected from the weather.

After Thomas Pierce left Union Store he built the next store on the same side. After a time he disposed of it. At one time Isaac Cary managed it. About 1895 or 1896 the Grange had rooms upstairs in the store. At last it was purchased by Hibbard Hall, who converted it into a home. This transaction also included the house of the late Thomas Pierce, north of the store.

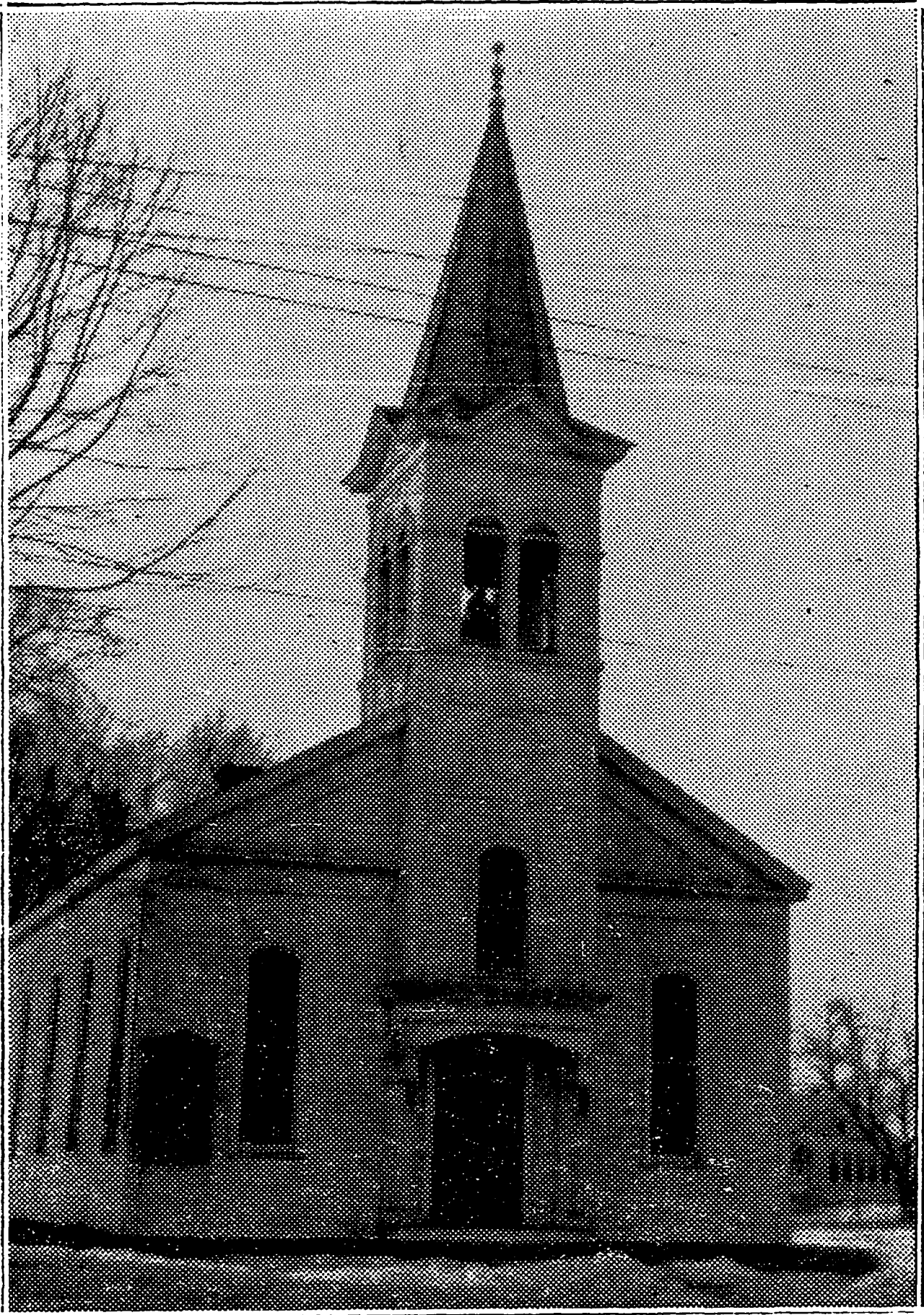
Methodist Church

By Ransom Selfridge

The land was given by General Herman Gansevoort, by agreement of deed of conveyance "Suitable and Sufficient Land for Erection of a Chapel," and to give two hundred dollars additional as soon as one thousand had been subscribed. This was dated in 1838 and the next year the dedication took place. Miss Miller relates that the Methodist Church was dedicated in a blizzard, with snow so deep that the supporting cross rails of the fences could not be seen. Her father, John Miller, attended the services.

When the church was completed there remained a mortgage of three or four hundred dollars and just before its due time a sincere member of the church mortgaged his home and last parcel of land, assuming the church obligation, which cleared it. This member was Mayhew Rice, the grandfather of Durward A. Rice, Lucian E. Rice, and the late Albert E. Rice. During the passing years funds were raised by popular subscription for the church organ, the bell, and for building the annex, many giving their services as well.

The W. C. T. U. held their sixty-first anniversary in 1935 and it is told that Mrs. Mary DeVoll was first president, and Mrs. Grace Butcher-Andress was the second. Today we have the church society, Ladies' Guild.



Methodist Church at Gansevoort



Gansevoort Dutch Reformed Church

**The Dutch Reformed Church
At Gansevoort**

The Corner Stone of the Dutch Reformed Church was laid in 1839 and the church completed in 1841; the Rev. John Birkby was first Pastor. The tablet attached to the wall inside reads as follows:

Gansevoort, N. Y.

Dutch Reformed Church

Erected by Herman Gansevoort

1841

Restored by Congregation

1891-1899

It is constructed of brick, with thick walls and deep set windows. The basement is heavily wainscoted, being used for Sunday School and social events. Church services are held in the main body, which is decorated very attractively. The long pew-seats have a mahogany-cap over the top of the back and at the entrance to the pew. This was given by Herman Gansevoort. At the rear is a balcony with stairs leading to it from

the front entrance hall.

Until 1926 there were in the church a large couch of mahogany with hair-cloth cover and two matching chairs, also an antique buffet (gifts from the Gansevoort, Melville and Lansing families) which were sold to Mrs. Smith Hubble of Glens Falls, N. Y., and the proceeds used to install electricity in the Church and Manse.

The bell for the church was purchased through gifts of money, and again in 1865 a descendant of the Gansevoort family made a generous gift in memory of another member and on his own behalf. The organ for this church was obtained by popular subscription.

About forty years ago Mrs. Abraham Lansing bought additional land adjoining the church and on it had a house of Dutch Colonial style erected. This Manse with its large rooms, halls, high ceilings, is modern in many details. It has also been said that some of the woodwork and doors came from "Stanwix Hall," removed from there when making alterations. Inside the front hall of the Manse

on the wall, is a tablet which has the following inscription:

The Gansevoort Manse Memorial
To
Peter Gansevoort and His Wife
Susan Gansevoort
and
Abraham Lansing
By his Wife
Catherine Gansevoort Lansing
1899-1900

On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the erection of the church, Mrs. Abraham Lansing sponsored a large celebration which she personally attended, bringing with her Bishop Oldham of the Albany Episcopal church. Mrs. George B. Eddy made the special anniversary cake, a very large one, which was indeed necessary to hold the seventy-five candles. Mrs. Lansing expressed much pleasure over the artistic arrangement of the cake.

The church societies are the Ladies' Foreign and Domestic Missionary and the Ladies' Helping Hand Society.

Gansevoort Odds and Ends

The house now owned by George W. Davis, formerly by Mrs. Priest, was once the property of Theodore Washburn. It was the first Dutch Reformed Parsonage.

Mrs. Frances Snyder Colton tells of a picnic which she attended on Mt. McGregor. She says, "It was held about 1844 or 1845 and was to celebrate the wagon road being opened to the summit. In order to accommodate the Sunday school of the Gansevoort Dutch Reformed church, a 'clearing' had been made on a level space on the top of the Mountain. Here tables were set. Each table was adorned by a young roasted pig surrounded by other delicious food. One can well imagine what an inviting appearance this was to the boys and girls after their slow trek from Gansevoort to the Summit of the Mountain. Miss Augusta Melville was then the head of the large Sunday school and all, who possibly could, attended the picnic. As the dinner progressed and time for dessert came, Miss Melville insisted that each member must have a piece of her 'Molasses Cake,' saying it was very simple and plain and would not be too rich at all. It would seem as if Miss Augusta (as often said) was very 'close' or else she did not understand 'sweet-tooth' craving of youth."

Alfred Davis built the Eugene and

Florence Losse house which burned some years ago. This stood just south of the house built by Hiram Augustus Perkins referred to before, the home of Mrs. Abbie Robinson Hagadorn Dyer. We gave her full name in order to show her descendency from John Robinson of Greenfield Center, N. Y., whose early ancestors arrived on one of the Famous Ships about 1620, near Boston, Mass. Mrs. Dyer related an interesting tradition about her great-great-grandmother making a trip to Albany just previous to the War of 1812, on horseback, carrying with her a six-month-old child in order to visit her husband in the army, stationed at Albany, of her returning with her child and a Bible. The Bible later proved to be the one containing the family record.

In 1848 we find a neighbor of Zebolon Mott paid thirty cents for a "Bamboo Hat." Many can recall in later years going to the storekeeper for matting that came around tea for a hat. Using cloth for a crown, the matting for a brim, binding the edge with cloth, we thought we had a wonderful sun-hat.

In 1853, Zebolon Mott's share for the teacher, Miss Dillingham, was \$6.08. In 1855, Zebolon Mott's share for the teacher, Miss Safford, was \$5.97.

At this time a calf skin weighing thirteen and one-half pounds was given to Philander D. Velsey to be tanned and made into boots and shoes, which sometimes cost one dollar for making.

Gansevoort Doctors

In 1856 Drs. H. and T. B. Reynolds were paid for services in the Mott family. Later Dr. B. J. Cornell of Moreau was paid for services in this family. Other Doctors in Gansevoort were Dr. Bedell, who lived on the site of the Leon Esmond home; Dr. Fred Carr; Dr. Berger, who moved to Mechanicville; Dr. Lewis, who moved to Argyle, N. Y.; Dr. Hamilton Holliday, who went to Fort Edward about 1876. Dr. Gustine, who later went to South Glens Falls; Dr. Kathan, there about 1890, who moved to Conklingville, N. Y., and Dr. Patterson, who still resides at Gansevoort but has retired from practice.

Another picnic held in more recent years and often spoken of was when Jesse Esmond, one of the older residents, was Superintendent of the

Methodist Sunday school. There were lumber wagons filled with people, others on horseback, returning from a day at Moreau Pond and were crossing the bridge over the Snoek Kill at Gansevoort, coming from the west. After a few were safely across, the bridge gave way. A horse was drowned, several persons were injured, but none fatally. Among those who attended were Fred Harris, Hibbard Hall, Thomas H. Pierce and wife, Daniel Steenburgh and Jesse Esmond.

Some early residents between 1837-1873 were Jacob Gailor, Phineas Smith, Michael and Mary Ready, Alexander Adams, Wm. H. Reynolds, Eliza Labrum, Asenath, Jane and George Carr, Moses and Asenath Merchant, Mariah and Wm. J. Snyder, Jonathan and Martha Fuller, James and Ann Simmons, Esther and Peter Stevenson, John and Mary Dunham, Z. and N. Famnuf, John and Mary McNamardid, William Velsey, Wm. and Phebe Toms, David E. Boyes, Phebe and Oliver Kempland, Daniel Washburn, Job Mulford, Walter Gifford, Hiram Davis. Later came Ira Wilson, Levi Golding, Jerome VanderWerker, Michael Wood, Mahalon Buckbee, Thomas Abbott, David West, Franklin Carpenter, and David Freebern.

Miss Fredenburgh taught a select school in the basement of the Reformed church about 1871. Mrs. Wm. Tice also helped considerably towards promoting a select school held either in the old Yeast Factory or the Red School-house near by. Maria Clark was the teacher, followed by Miss Nellie Clark. Wm. A. Tice gave the desks for the school—the scholars brought their own chairs.

It is said by a woman who formerly lived here, Miss Mary Tice, that she could remember when there were woods across the tracks in the vicinity of Charles D. Hurd's home, where gypsies often camped. It was quite the usual thing for the boys and girls to take salt pork over to the gypsy camp to trade for some of the Indian baskets.

At the Gansevoort Literary Society meetings, educational stories were told by the Rev. Mr. Grismer, a member. Often on Friday evenings they had debates either with chosen representatives among themselves for each side or with other societies from nearby towns. A few of the members were John and Joseph Shurter, Wm. Eddy, the Misses Mary and

Bertha Tice, Angelo and Jennie Bedell, Harley Ryalls and Wm. Harris. At one time there was a debate with a team from Schuylerville which was represented by Wm. Bennett and Joseph Baucus. Of course Gansevoort won the debate.

When bicycles were the "rage," Gansevoort had its club and bicycle paths which led to Glens Falls via Fortsville, a distance of eleven miles. Some of the members were Seymour Toms, a millwright; George Maybee, a station master, and Fred Hurd, a blacksmith, and many of the next generation.

At present there is a Masonic Lodge with rooms over Gifford and Henry's Store. This Lodge has its accompanying Order of Eastern Star. There was a Good Templars Lodge at a very early date. Later it was revived by a younger generation, but no longer exists.

We have the Snoek Kill Home Bureau, the Boys' 4-H Club, the Parent-Teacher Association, a Grange, No. 832, with their own Hall on Catherine Street.

A milk business was established by Bordens in the early nineteen hundreds. Later it was taken over by the Dairymen's League. Finally the plant closed and the large buildings were sold to the Town of Northumberland to be used for voting and storage purposes.

The present home of Cyrus Washburn and lands attached were formerly a part of the large Gansevoort Estate. It was locally known as the "Mill house" as each manager of the Grist Mill had lived there. It is a two-story house with gable roof having two dormer windows facing the County Highway. There are front and side porches. Mr. Washburn said this house was constructed with wooden beam-pins. It is situated high on the banks of the Snoek Kill with a large yard in front. Mr. Washburn's grandfather purchased it from the Melville Estate fifty or more years ago. At an earlier time it is said to have been occupied by Leonard Gansevoort and his family. Leonard Gansevoort was a brother of Herman.

Palmers Ridge

Palmers Ridge is situated in the Towns of Wilton, Moreau and Northumberland. Here is the home of Mr. Elmer H. Palmer and his daughter, Leone C. Palmer.

Mr. Palmer said that the first house was a log cabin, located down the hill, south west from the present house; that stone and brick, together with a depression in the ground, show plainly even to this late date, where the cabin originally stood. The well nearby was filled in a few years ago after a young boy of the man working there fell in the well, frightening his father and mother in no small degree.

The next house to be built, to replace the cabin, was at the top of the hill, on the west side of the road, in front of the present corn-crib. There too can be seen the place for the cellar. Barn and Cider Mill were on the east side of the road. At one time the Cider Mill would make as many as one hundred barrels of cider during the apple season. Formerly there were large apple orchards on the farm, and it seems an ideal location, as the soil is loose and of a gravel grade. The land is rolling. Trees growing on the side hills would be protected from severe north-west winds.

Again this house was torn down and removed to the Charles Selfridge farm, south of Gansevoort, now owned by Truman Robinson, and a larger, more substantial house was erected a little north-east of the former one, about eighty-five years ago. It was built by the father of the late Honorable Edgar Truman Brackett, who was then living about four miles south-east of the Palmer house.

Nicholas Palmer, grandfather of Elmer H. Palmer, was the owner when the second house was used and the present house built. A short distance to the north-east of this house is the point where the three Towns, Wilton, Moreau and Northumberland, meet. The house is located in Northumberland.

Down, west from this point, on what Mr. Palmer calls "The Flats," is the location where a colored man and his wife, Alice, lived. He worked for Nicholas Palmer first, then for Jason Palmer, father of the present owner, and for Elmer Palmer.

It was while living on "The Flats" that this Almiran Peebles and his wife, Alice, became dissatisfied with their "habitant" and sold it to a neighbor, John Crowlev, who lived a short mile south, for the " princely sum" of seventy-five dollars. They went away, but evidently the sum did not last much longer than it would

today, as Almiran and Alice soon returned, minus the seventy-five dollars also minus their "habitant," and with their customary story to Jason Palmer, then owner of the farm. Almiran was again "set up" in a twelve dollar "habitant," at a point south-east of the Palmer house, on what is now the County Highway between Gansevoort and Fortsville, yet it is just over the line in the Town of Moreau.

In due course, we find Almiran with another companion; this time it is Josephine. They lived in this last "habitant" peacefully for a number of years, until her death. Afterward Almiran lived alone until the end of his days.

His home was a small story and a half house with a lean-to shed, having a small porch over the front door. Almiran was very apt to be found resting on his porch during pleasant summer days, and inside near one of the windows during the colder months.

Each season the passerby would see a well kept garden on either side of the house, but never the garden without its generous supply of poppies, both single and double. If the passerby would stop and admire the display, Almiran was delighted and would gladly save that person a generous supply of seed for next year's sowing.

Almiran and Josephine did all kinds of heavy and dirty work for their neighbors; in fact work that others would refuse to do.

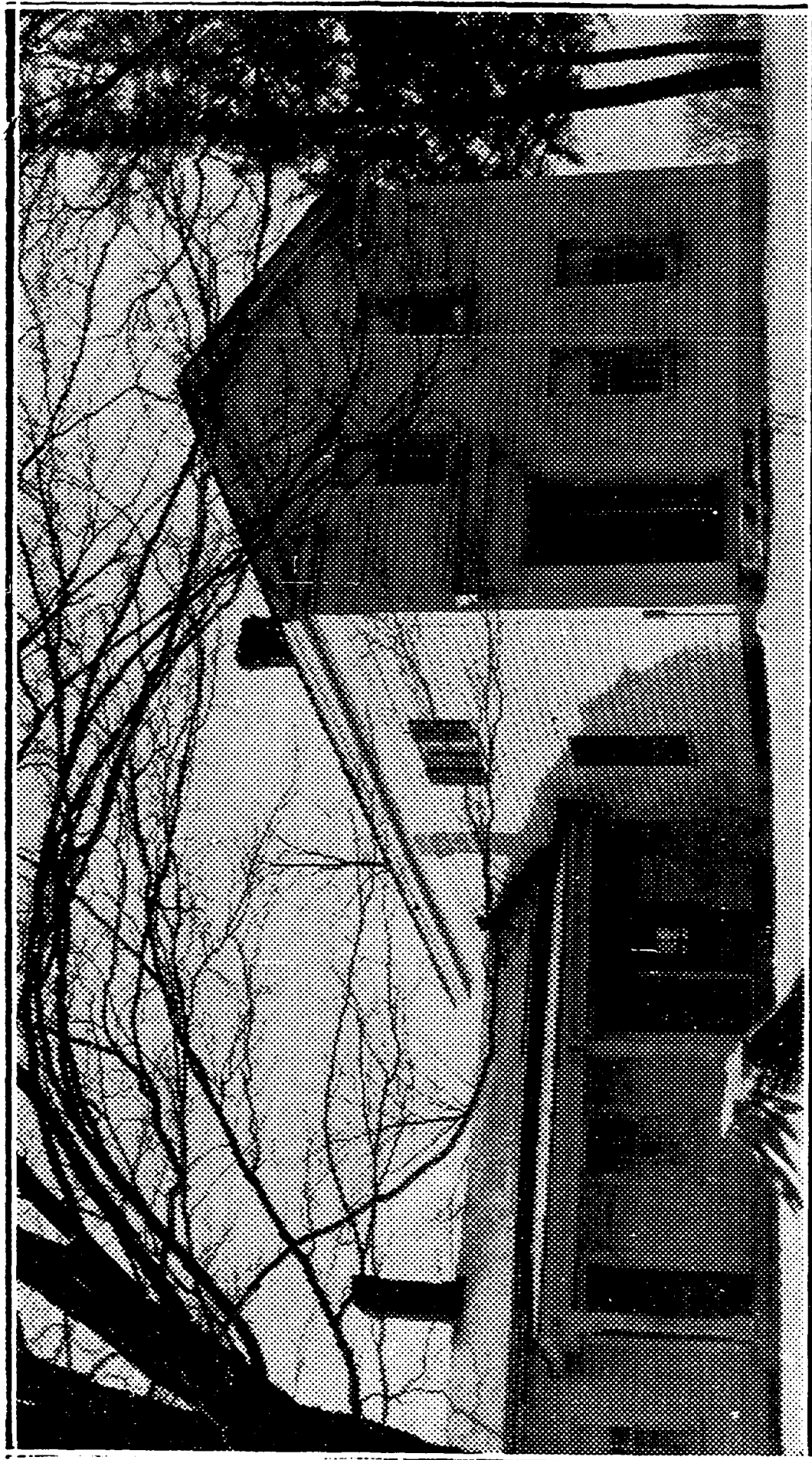
Palmer House

Between Gansevoort and Fortsville

The Palmer house sets at the summit of a gradual incline, with the gabled end facing the highway. This highway was an important artery in the Town's stagecoach days.

Eastward it overlooks the Green Mountains, the beautiful Hudson River Valley and the intervening valleys of the Snoek Kill, Cold Brook, Rog Meadow Brook, and on the south the Fish Kill; on the north-east the Fortsville Brook and its tributaries. The trains of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad can plainly be seen as they travel north and south past the former Gansevoort Station. To the west a short distance are the beautiful Palmertown Mountains, a continuation of the Adirondacks, and the adjacent lowlands with their hamlets.

As our car draws off to the side of the road, we find we have climbed



Palmer House, Northumberland

to the top of Palmer's Ridge and are in front of the home of Mr. Elmer H. Palmer and the gracious Miss Palmer.

The yard is terraced from the road level, being held in place by a two or three foot high wall of natural "hard-head" stone, topped by summer shrubbery. As we crossed the lawn to the deeply recessed front door-way, with its small panes of 7 x 9 glass over the head and down either side, we entered the hall. We find the rooms large and pleasant, the wood-work of good Colonial quality, not ornate but well executed. A small ell extends from the main house and joins a large woodshed, which is regularly filled from its own lands. There are the usual large outside buildings which the management of large farms require. These too have their hand-hewn timbers and wooden beam-pins, which again remind us of how well our ancestors built.

The time passed very quickly with our host and hostess telling us many little known historic facts of the Palmers and Palmers Ridge. They also showed us many cherished old deeds and legal papers, dating back to 1806, 1817 and 1829, and others.

The farm has been in the Palmer family for one hundred and forty years. Nicholas Palmer was the son of Captain Joseph Palmer and was born at Stonington, Conn., in 1771. He married Jane Ross when twenty-five years old and came to the Town of Northumberland in 1796.

They came in the days of ox carts and brought with them feather beds and a warming pan, and lived in a log cabin. Nicholas Palmer rafted. The rafts were made up at the mouth of the Snoek Kill, where it empties into the Hudson River. These rafts were of long, square timbers which they floated down the Hudson River to New York. In this manner Nicholas Palmer acquired enough means to buy each of his four sons a farm, and an equal amount in money for his daughter.

Sixty-five years ago Judethan Hurd and James Frederick moved the Cider Mill and barn from the east to west side of the highway. One of the timbers was of black ash, a swing beam, and was at least two feet square.

Mr. Elmer Palmer also remembered of a Hugh Sullivan who lived between Brownville and Woodworth Hill, who was an exceptionally strong and powerful man. He was consid-

ered one of the best with the cross-cut saw, and no superior with the ox teams could be found in the northern section of the town.

A Summing Up of Northumberland, Bacon Hill, Brownville, Gansevoort, Gurn Spring, Wilton and Mount McGregor.

Today at Northumberland, after a lapse of fifty years, we find much less business activity, and what there is, of a totally different nature. Where we had docks and scales for weighing produce to be shipped by canal, we now find garages. In place of canal boats, we have large auto trucks. There is a wayside restaurant, a grocery store, three gas stations, and a large, purebred Dorset short-horn sheep farm on the Jesse Billings Estate, managed by Mr. Jerome Wright of Cambridge.

Mills which did give employment to hundreds of people have either burned or been closed with the exception of the United Box Board across the river at Thomson. We have rumors from time to time that they are to reopen.

Immense gas tanks have been erected at the south end of the old Liberty Mill site which was recently purchased by the Beacon Oil Company. Of the many men employed by Jesse Billings, only one is left who could give many details of the past, Amidee Seney.

Bacon Hill has its well kept church with regular services. At present the Rev. Harvey Hoffman, pastor of the Schuylerville Reformed church, preaches here Sunday afternoons. The Old Cemetery nearby has been incorporated and is carefully cared for. We have an active Grange society, also a Juvenile Grange. The church has four active societies, Ladies' Missionary, Girls' Missionary, Juvenile Christian Endeavor, and the Ladies' Aid Society. We have the Bacon Hill Cemetery Association, the Bacon Hill Billies Boys' 4-H Club, the Start and Finish Girls' 4-H Club, Bacon Hill Home Bureau Unit, and the G. L. F. members.

In former years it was not uncommon to find stock pastured along the road. Often there would be groups of different kinds such as eight or ten oxen, the same of horses, cows, pigs and sheep. Sometimes a farmer would have one of his animals shot by some careless hunter. We learn of an instance where James

Winney's cow was shot at the "Stone Bridge" woods, similar to accidents of the deer season of today, when a farmer's cow or guinea-hen looks like the long-sought-for game "to the man with the gun." Today well kept fences keep our stock at home.

Bacon Hill has a small store doing a lucrative business, with several way-side vegetables, fruit and flower stands. Our people specialize in dairying, second-hand auto exchange, an antique furniture and glass shop, truck gardening. Some are carpenters, painters, truckmen and farmers.

At Gansevoort the farmers depend greatly on dairying as their means of livelihood. In that hamlet besides churches, stores and hotel already mentioned, there are three garages, three gas stations, two barber shops, a postoffice, two Saw Mills, and Blacksmith Shop. The Grist Mill burned about two years ago. Now the owner finds it to his advantage to buy grains at the Port of Albany and truck it to Gansevoort to meet

the needs of the community. Just south of the hamlet is a large chicken farm where eggs and chickens may be purchased, and custom hatching is done. There are several smaller chicken farms in the vicinity of Brownville and Woodworth Hill. Among Gansevoort residents we find carpenters, painters, paper-hangers, electricians and mechanics, also stenographers and photographers, dress-makers, and school teachers.

At Gurn Springs there is a store, Town hall, church and town buildings.

At Wilton one readily locates its hotel, store, tourist home, postoffice, several gas stations, two garages, school, saw mill, and only a short distance away is Mt. McGregor, which is a city in itself as it can still remain aloof for it supports its beautiful and modern buildings of the Sanitarium of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. But let us not forget that General Grant's Cottage is still the senior there.

It is with much gratitude to the hosts of kind friends who knowingly or unknowingly have aided in supplying many of these facts and interesting stories, because without their help my books could not have been written, that I close with a poem written quite a few years ago by Harlan W. Leggett, who was Bacon Hill's and Northumberland's first rural mail carrier and who, although he lives in Schuylerville, was a Bacon Hill lad and has always been very active in our Grange and social life.

I thank you.

Mrs. John B. VanDerWerKer

Cold Air Cure

By Harlan W. Leggett

Folks say that old fashioned winters,
are buried in the past,
And I thing this one's new fashioned,
by the way it seems to last.
But I just can't be complaining, it
agrees with me that's sure,
'Cause I'm delicate and needing some
of this 'ere cold air cure.
When I start out peddling papers,
and go straight out toward the
north
And the old wind gets to whistling,
like it tries to rock the earth,
And the Mercury goes a tumbling, till
old Zero's lost to view,
I believe what folks are telling, about
old winters are all true.
Perhaps changing seasons seem to
make the old kind fewer,
But I'm pretty sure I'm taking, quite
a dost of Cold Air Cure.

Then when nighttime falls they send
me, to a room that faces north,
Put the window up a trifle, so the
wind goes back and forth,
Let the old North wind come whis-
tling, in the covers round my bed,

Till it gets so cold I have to almost
cover up my head,
Say they're afraid of influenza, want
the air kept nice and pure,
Influenza germs would die sure, if
they took this cold air cure.
When I wake up in the morning, and
start out to do the chores,
And the snow drifts piling higher,
than the sins of evil doers,
When I go to draw the water, find
the pipes that lead to sewer,
Like myself have been indulging,
taking some this cold air cure.

Then my Patrons on the mail route,
place some pennies in the box,
So that when I raise the cover they
go tumblin' down kerflop,
Then it's me to go a fishing, in the
snow those cents to lure,
Guess they must think my fingers,
need a dose of cold air cure.
But if this winter's ever over and the
springtime comes again,
And the birdies in the old trees, get
to singing their refrain
And the little streams go trickling,
while the turkeys flay their wings
And all the other fancies, that will
come in balmy spring.
Pretty maidens go a tripping in the
new styles so demure,
Perhaps then I'll have forgotten that
I took that Cold Air Cure.

When the old sun gets a shinin', and
the streamlets start to run,
And Bossies kiss their sides again,
we know that spring's begun.
Soon will come that nifty June time
when we'll pick the berries red,
And old Sol will come a blistering, on
my old fat sleepy head,
While the sweat will be a pouring;
ain't it awful to be poor?
Maybe then I'll wish I'd bottled, some
of this 'ere Cold Air Cure.

The New York State Book, published quarterly by New York State Historical Society, on Page 443, in referring to Book I, *Early Days in Eastern Saratoga County*, by County Historian Mrs. J. B. VanDerwerker, says:

This Book is the product of many years of research. Starting with the Indians, the French and Indian Wars follow. Considerable attention is given to the early settlers. The Revolution receives considerable attention. The pamphlet is concluded with an account of Mount McGregor and General U. S. Grant.

* * * *

Albany, November 30, 1938

Mrs. J. B. VanDerwerker,
R. D. 2
Schuylerville, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. VanDerwerker:

Congratulations on Book II of *Early Days*. You have assembled here a mass of information of value. This is the kind of source material that Town Historians over the State should be gathering.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

A. C. Flick, *State Historian*

* * * *

No field of history is so much neglected as community history. No history is more important than that of a neighborhood because state and national histories are made up of the many units of local history. This explains why the professional historian is going more and more to regional history as a source of his materials. This explains why Mrs. J. B. VanDerwerker's *Early Days* now issued in Books I and II deserves to be encouraged by the citizens and officials of Saratoga County. These books will be consulted for generations to come by those seeking to unravel and to interpret the past.

—A. C. Flick, *State Historian*

