

Cayuga County, New York

by

HENRY M. ALLEN, Auburn

1 9 5 8

Foreword

Since there has been no record of our county since Storke's History published in 1879, it has seemed worthwhile to bring the narrative up to date, if only with a brief account. Storke relates in much detail the events in Auburn and the twenty-three townships. A good description of the geology and a rather full account of prominent persons also are included. However, eighty years have passed, of which there is very little record. Some villages have their own histories and recently Richard T. King of Port Byron has written a series of articles which appeared in the Auburn Citizen Advertiser. These are to be found in the Seymour Library. Melone's One Hundred and Fifty Years of Progress gives interesting data. In an outline such as this, it is of course possible to present only a few broad features of progress. Space is entirely lacking for any but the most brief description of either Auburn, the county seat, or of the townships which in many respects are somewhat similar. However, it may be hoped that such an article may be of some value as a bird's eye view of our own Cayuga County. Mention may be made of a separate article by the author on the geology of the county.

A Story of Cayuga County - Henry M. Allen

Our county is named after a tribe or nation of the Iroquois League which once inhabited our state. This area, with hills, valleys, woods and lovely lakes, is mostly a rolling terrain and is favored with a pleasant temperate climate and fertile soil. No wonder that the veterans of the Revolution and other settlers, moving westward, and lured by its advantages, were eager to make their homes here.

We may first mention briefly the geological past. Cayuga is situated in the so-called Erie-Ontario Plain and the South-West Plateau, being about equally divided between the two sections of the state. The northern part belongs to the rock strata of the Silurian Age and the southern to the Devonian. It is supposed that sediments were washed into ancient seas to become rock. Across the eastern part of the state runs the Onondaga (Helderberg) limestone escarpment and outcrop which continues west of Auburn. Millions of years later the great ice sheets or glaciers overspread the whole state. It is supposed that these masses slowly moving helped to carve out the long valleys, to create the lakes and to form our soil. In addition, they left many moraines or glacial deposits with plenty of sand and gravel. Some of these which extend from Syracuse to Rochester are the curious hills called drumlins. They resemble upturned boats with the northern end rounding off sharply and the southern end sloping gradually. Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn is part of a terminal washout moraine, the other part reaching into Pomeroy Park. In at least one place in the county near Cayuga Village formerly were glacial scratches cut by the rocks imbedded in the ice. The rock layers which dip gradually as one goes south are of various kinds; in the northern part are red sandstone, shale and dolomite; in the central limestone, and in the southern, limestone, slate and shale. The soil was formed by a glacial action and the weather. In places the rocks abound in fossils, among them the tiny crablike trilobites; in other localities there are countless shells. Near Lake Ontario runs a long vein of hematite iron ore near the surface; it continues from Utica to Lockport. This ore has never been mined to any great extent, though it is of excellent quality. Vast beds of salt lie deep down, and once there were salt springs here. Near Aurelius gas was found some years ago but it has never been used. In some places sulphur springs have been found, and gypsum was once mined near Union Springs. All over the county is the debris of the glaciers, sand and gravel, with large boulders. An esker or glacial ridge has been located in Owasco. This soil contains bits of granite and sandstone carried from farther north. Along the lakes many gulleys have been cut, some since the glaciers. It is interesting to note the quite recent discovery on the Colgan farm near King Ferry of the bones of a mastodon. Eons ago these creatures roamed over the state, where several specimens have been found.

Brief note may be given on the terrain of the county. It is bounded on the north by Lake Ontario, on the east by Oswego and Onondaga counties, Skaneateles Lake and Cortland County; on the south by Tompkins county and on the west by Cayuga Lake, the Seneca River and Wayne county. It's length is some fifty-five miles from North to South; the width from

about six to twenty-three, with an average of fourteen miles, the narrower part being near Lake Ontario. The elevation is 247 feet at the Ontario shore and the land gradually rises to the south, the highest point being 1790 feet in Sempronius. The ridges in the south rise from 600 to 800 feet above the valleys; Owasco Lake, eleven miles long, has an elevation of 705 feet. In the area are several small lakes and nearly everywhere there are many streams which add to the beauty of the scenery. The woods in various places are of considerable extent, areas of the original forest which were not cleared when the county was settled. The beech trees in Fort Hill Cemetery, perhaps two or three hundred years old, remain from the "Forest Primeval". There is a great variety of trees; besides the spruces and pines are maple, oak, hickory, willow, elm and chestnut. It has been said that there are over fifty different species on South Street in Auburn, alone. The elevation at the Auburn Post Office is 705, just equal to Owasco Lake. The three Finger Lakes here are Skaneateles, Owasco and Cayuga, all most attractive. Yachting on these has long been popular. At one central New York regatta the fleet of 193 sail afforded a thrilling sight to sailors and landsmen alike.

This land of the Cayugas was once indeed a happy hunting ground. Here they lived in their bark houses, not too comfortable in winter time, there being several villages along Cayuga Lake, with one or two some distance from the water. They subsisted in part by hunting and fishing, there being fabulous supplies of game and fish close at hand. In addition they cultivated corn, vegetables and possessed fruit orchards. They were one of the six tribes of the Iroquois who had come from the St. Lawrence area or from the west about 1200 A.D. and had driven out the Algonkins.

Much of the time the Iroquois were at war with other tribes and with the French in Canada. The Iroquois, because of their compact organization and fierce fighting qualities, have been called the Romans of the North. The territory they controlled lay far beyond the area of our state. For many decades, because of a wanton attack in 1609 by Champlain, there was deep hostility toward the French. In the wars from time to time the Indians raided Canada, once the Iroquois nearly ruined the French colony, and were a factor in its final conquest by the English. In the wars between England and France the Iroquois sided with the English and the American colonies.

The Jesuits endeavored to convert the Iroquois and other tribes. The work of these missionaries is a tale of hardship, intrepid service and sacrifice. The Jesuits kept daily records of their work, called Relations, some of which has been translated by the Rev. Charles Hawley, a former pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Auburn. These are to be found in the Annals of the Cayuga County Historical Society. For this work he was recognized by the Pope. Dr. John G. Shea continued the translation of these to 1679. They started their work here with six missions among the Onondagas. Father Rene Menard in 1656 was the first to come to the Cayugas. Chief Saonchiogway received the Jesuits cordially and was converted. Father Menard found the Indians unfriendly, partly through the hostility of the Hurons. However, the leading men had their slaves build a chapel of bark near the Cayuga village. Some seemed interested at first and he baptized a few. However, there was much doubt and hatred in the

tribe. He was accused of being a sorcerer and of causing the death of some whom he had converted. Before long he left the mission, returning later for only a short time. After a while the Cayugas asked for the return of the missionaries. Father Lemoyne stayed with the tribe a month; then came Fathers Milet and de Carheil. Some converts were made and two other stations were started near Cayuga. The latter remained for sixteen years (1668-1684). Father Raffeix replaced Father de Carheil for a year as the latter was worn out with his labors. He noted that he baptized secretly on account of the hostility of the natives. Missions at other places resulted in some conversions. After this the missionary work came to an end.

On the whole the indifference and antagonism of the Indians could not be overcome. Parkman stated that one reason for the attitude of the Indians was due to the fact that they had guns, so that they did not fear the French. These highly educated missionaries, coming from civilization, cast their lives among the savage tribes of the wilderness. They learned the language of the natives and endured the privations of life in the rude villages. They suffered not only hatred but torture and death. Parkman, quoted in Storke, says "the Jesuits saw their hopes struck down and their faith sorely tried. Their virtues shine amid the rubbish of error like diamonds and gold in the gravel of the torrent."

In the Revolution the Iroquois, except for the Oneidas and the Tuscaroras, unwisely adhered to the English side. On account of the terrible raids by the English and Indians, especially in the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys, Washington sent an army of some 3,000 Continentals under Generals Sullivan and Clinton, which invaded the Iroquois country and crushed their league. Still even after this campaign there were several more bloody attacks on the patriots.

After the Revolution the whites gained possession of the territory beyond Utica, partly through cession and partly by purchase. In time a few Indians crept back to their lands, some in our county. Later the Cayugas sold their reservations along Cayuga Lake and were moved to places in the western part of the state. At first the national government planned land bounties for veterans, but the state finally carried out the project. The area, 1,800,000 acres, known as the Military Tract, comprised the counties of Onondaga, Seneca, Cortland and parts of Wayne, Oswego and Steuben. Each soldier received about one square mile, larger allotments going to the officers. The plan was carried out and Col. John L. Hardenbergh, who had served with Sullivan, helped make the survey. This was completed by 1790. The Auburn area comprised six lots of about a square mile each in tiers of two. The engineers did not understand about compass variation, so North Street runs about three degrees west of the true line.

The early routes in our state used by the Iroquois were the forest trails and the lakes and streams. The latter, with which the area was especially favored, included Ontario and Erie Lakes, the Mohawk and Seneca Rivers. The trails were used also by the trappers and pioneers. Many in time were made into rough roads. In summer much of the travel was by water and in winter by the trails when the snow made going easier. An early path ran across the state starting from Albany, touching the northern ends of the Finger Lakes. Part of this was called the Genesee

perhaps named from the river, and ran from Skaneateles, coming into Auburn by Franklin and North Streets. In 1790-91 General Wadsworth and a party of wood choppers widened the trail. By means of a lottery the state raised \$45,000 to improve the road from Utica to Canandaigua, also other roads. West of Auburn the Genesee ran originally to a point about a mile south of Cayuga where Col. Harris' ferry took passengers, freight and cattle across. Later the route was changed to Clark Street, crossing the Seneca River on the old Free Bridge. In 1800 the Seneca Turnpike, six rods wide, was built from Utica to Canandaigua. In part this followed the Genesee road, now routes 5 and 20. On this were toll gates every ten miles and the charge for each section was a shilling for a two horse team and two shillings for a four horse outfit. About the same time the Cherry Valley turnpike was built in the eastern part of the state. The Cayuga bridge, after two failures, was completed in 1800. It was built by a local stock company which made handsome profits. This longest wooden structure in the world was about a mile in length and was located near the line of the New York Central railroad. It was wide enough for three teams; the toll was 56½ cents. Over this the vast horde of pioneers moved into our state and beyond into new territory. Across this also marched the 3,000 men with their artillery in the War of 1812; it was stated that the heavy guns injured the roads. The soldiers had a camp and storehouse in Auburn near the site of the Christian Science Church. The Erie Canal, about 1825, took away this traffic, though the bridge was used until about 1840 by pedestrians. At low water the piles may still be seen. One wonders if the tolls were enough to replace some of the capital invested. By 1804 stage lines were started, carrying the mail. The first line was that of Parker and Stevens and the coaches ran from Utica to Canandaigua. Isaac Sherwood had his own line but later joined the other firm. In this migration much freight was carried along the roads. There were caravans of wagons, so that the men might help each other when stuck in the mud or going up hills. There was competition between the stage lines.

Several Iroquois trails ran north and south in the state and some of these were converted into roads; perhaps the earliest ones are now the state roads in our county. The long trails ran east and west, but between Skaneateles and Cayuga Lakes these were shorter, being blocked by the lakes. The old Owasco road bringing people up from Pennsylvania was located east of the street of the same name and crossed Genesee near Trinity Methodist Church, thence running west to North Street. Bundy Avenue is supposed to be part of the old road. A plank road was built along the west shore of Owasco to Moravia. At present there are three classes of roads in our area, the state roads, county roads and town roads. Today we have the numbered highways, a great convenience, and very recently in our county all the roads have been marked, so that the fire companies can easily locate a burning house. Doubtless this arrangement helps also in the rural mail delivery.

In the state, especially along the line of migration, taverns have always been of importance. During the great movement westward in the early days a great many sprang up along the Genesee turnpike. Storke states that there were fifteen between Skaneateles and Cayuga, one nearly every mile. There were taverns in the villages and Auburn had a goodly number. The

so-called Hunter Tavern on East Genesee Street near Hoopes Avenue, according to a descendant of the family, was only a private house, perhaps on a farm. Noted among Auburn inns were the American Hotel and the Western Exchange. The former stood on the present site of the Big Store; it was burned about 1885. The latter was located at the west corner of Exchange and Genesee; it was built by William Bostwick, whose first tavern was across the street. This was followed by the Smith and Pearson hardware store building of brick in 1860, which in turn has been replaced by the Grant Store. The old barn in the rear was used for many years and demolished when the new store was built. It has been said that there were seven taverns between Auburn and Cayuga. On the site of the Dunning Farm there was once an Indian village and an old mill; of the latter Frank A. Barney made a fine painting. Near the new General Electric factory stands the Huggins tavern of brick. At Half Acre there were: one near the Russian cemetery, this a brick house burned long ago, another the present Riford residence and the third the house to the east of it. There does not seem to have been one at Harris' ferry. Probably there were one or two taverns beyond the Wait farm house. This latter place, not a tavern, was built by the contractor, Brigham Young, who became a great leader of the Mormon people to the "Promised Land" in Utah. This has been considered by architects to be the finest example of Colonial style in this part of the state. There were two inns in Cayuga, one still standing. There were probably taverns on the other roads in the county. Sometimes the people in a lonely cabin would "take in" travelers. The men may have had tents or turned in under the wagons while the women and children were crowded inside. It has been said that the cows and sheep ate away the grass a mile or two back from the road. Doubtless most families had the protection of a faithful dog. The pioneers carried much of their food and cooked their meals in the open. The wagons seemed to have canvas tops, though the famous Conestoga wagons from Pennsylvania may have been made at a later time. One of the old stage coaches of the Wells Fargo Express Company has been preserved at Wells College, where it is brought out each year at Commencement. The old vehicles had very wide tires needed in slippery and swampy places.

Though the Iroquois had left, there was still danger from wild beasts; for all the bears, wolves, wildcats and panthers had not yet been driven out of the country. Even about 1800 wolves still lurked in the woods and for years a bounty was offered on them. Hall in his history of Auburn tells the story of a boy who fell asleep under a tree out East Genesee Street; when he awoke a panther was lying on the branch above him. The neighbors, hurriedly called, drove the "varmint" into a swamp, but did not kill him. A settler, who had not finished the door of his log cabin, one evening found a bear sleeping peacefully under his cot. A great event was the triumphant journey of General Lafayette in 1825. The old carriage in which he rode is still in Geneva. He was royally welcomed everywhere and in Auburn there was a parade, a dinner with speeches and a ball in the Western Exchange Hotel (on the spring floor.) He departed that evening to pass the night in Skaneateles.

In 1799 the county was separated from Onondaga, Seneca being included. At first Aurora was the county seat, but this was moved to Auburn

in 1804 and a courthouse of logs was built, the jail being in the upper story. In 1836 the present building of Greek architecture was erected and a small building for the clerk's office in similar style added.

The veterans quickly took up their bounties, though those in the city did not hold them long. It has been said that over five hundred made their homes in the county. In about three decades this district was settled, the land cleared and planted, becoming a pleasant country with good farms and villages. Among the latter were Cato, Port Byron, Montezuma, Weedsport, Scipio, Union Springs, Cayuga, Moravia, Genoa and Locke. With the beginning of the century came the great migration. Thousands of pioneers from Massachusetts and New York moved into the western part of the state and into the new country beyond. Storke states that by 1800 the county had 15,000 inhabitants.

The canal system of our state was destined to take most of the traffic from the highways. About the time work was started on the great Erie Canal (1817), a firm, known as the Seneca Lake Navigation Company built two short waterways. These were the Seneca, which starting at Geneva was located in the river (at least in part) and ran into Cayuga Lake. From there the boats could go into another canal, the Cayuga Canal, which began at the village of Cayuga and running just east of the Seneca River, connected with the Erie at Montezuma. When the Barge Canal was constructed the Seneca Canal was improved and the old Cayuga abandoned. Today one can see from route 90 an old bridge across the Cayuga Canal.

The Erie, state built and operated, was begun about 1817 and was a great enterprise. It was 363 miles long with 72 locks, and had as branches the Black River, the Chenango and Champlain canals. The depth was at first four feet, soon changed to seven, with a width of 56 feet on the bottom and 70 on the surface. Of the locks, fifty-seven were double, all being 110 feet long and 18 feet wide. There were several aqueducts and part was cut out of solid rock. The cost was \$7,602,000, a vast sum for those days. It was finally completed in 1825, when the first boat with Governor Clinton and other officials were drawn from Buffalo to Waterford and down the Hudson to New York. The Erie carried an enormous load of freight and passengers and proved to be a potent factor in developing the still unsettled forest wilderness, many villages springing up along its banks. In our county it crossed the Seneca at Montezuma on a huge stone arched aqueduct about 750 feet long, the largest work of its kind in the country. At one time an attempt was made to bring the Erie to Auburn. There was a lock at Montezuma and from that village the canal ran in a straight line to Port Byron, where an aqueduct took it across the Owasco River. At one time the route of this in the village was changed. Thence the canal was continued to Weedsport and beyond to Syracuse. The writer can remember the barges moving slowly through the square in that city; this route is now the Erie Boulevard. In early years there was much freight traffic on this water and on Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. Plaster was formerly mined and shipped from the vicinity of Union Springs.

We may mention briefly the government of the county. With its organizations of school districts, townships and county, Cayuga is similar to the other units of the state. The township were established early, some

changes being made later. At present we have twenty-three; beginning at the north, Sterling, Victory, Ira, Conquest, Cato, Montezuma, Mentz, Brutus, Throop, Sennett, Aurelius, Springport, Fleming, Owasco, Ledyard, Scipio, Niles, Venice, Moravia, Sempronius, Genoa, Locke, and Summerhill. With the varied patches of color of the farm, forest and lake, the landscape presents a lovely mosaic of countryside, hills, valleys and long ridges. From this area came Millard Fillmore (1800-1874). He was born near Moravia, a poor boy; after holding several political offices, he became the 13th president on the death of Zachary Taylor.

The agricultural and industrial activities of Cayuga are in general similar to other areas in this part of the state. The county is mostly devoted to farming, with corn, wheat and other grains, dairy products, fruit and vegetables. There are several small manufacturing plants in the villages. Partly on account of the water power from the Owasco River, Auburn has always been an important manufacturing city. At an early date, near Moravia, Jethro Wood invented the iron plow.

There have been several railroads crossing the county. The Auburn and Syracuse (1839) and the Auburn and Rochester (1841) in time were combined. In 1851 a "direct line" was built between Syracuse and Rochester. Finally the short roads across the state in 1853 were united in the New York Central. The West Shore, a rival of the "Central" and parallel to it, was taken over by the latter and is still in operation. The Southern Central, after several unsuccessful starts, was opened from Sayre to Fair Haven in 1871, the branch line from Ithaca to Auburn being completed later in 1879. In time this road became part of the Lehigh Valley system. Two lines were operated down the center of the county, occupying at different times almost the same right of way. There were the Ithaca, Auburn and Western (1881), and Central and New York and Southern (1909-1924). They were unsuccessful and were continued only a few decades. The Ontario Shore Railroad (1879), crossing the northern part, is now controlled by the Central. Later the trolleys came and went (about 1890-1930), being crowded out by the automobiles. However, in their time they filled an important place in the county. Besides the local lines in the city and those to the lake, the inter-urban Auburn and Syracuse was established. From Auburn a branch road to Port Byron connected with the main line of the Rochester and Syracuse.

The pioneers were God-fearing people and soon established churches. At first some meetings were held in public halls, houses and even barns; in early times missionary preachers came on horseback. The denominations included Baptist, Dutch Reform, Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal and Roman Catholic. Probably many of the original buildings in the county are still in use. In the field of philanthropy there were no early societies. The sick and unfortunate were cared for at home or with relatives or friends.

In the educational and cultural fields our county was similar to those in other parts of "up-state". In the population, all classes of society were represented, laborers, business and professional men and farmers. Most of the newcomers had a fair education and there was a sprinkling of ministers, doctors, lawyers, teachers and even architects. The slaves, not very many, by 1827 were all freed in our state. The schools were of the usual single room red school house type perhaps many were painted white,

though some building were of brick or stone. Two of these are still standing, one on the west side of Owasco and the other out Genesee near Half Acre. Wells College for women was opened in 1868. Many of the pioneers had considerable culture. There were singing societies, debating clubs and a few small theaters, called opera houses in deference to Puritan feelings. The first piano brought here at an early date, is now in the Cayuga Museum. The lowly fiddle appeared at dances and probably there were a few small groups playing the usual instruments, perhaps also the guitar and banjo. By 1850 Auburn began to have artists, some became nationally famous. Many citizens brought with them small collections of books, the Bible, of course, and Shakespeare; and in those times Scott's poems and novels were read eagerly. In 1806 the county Medical Society was formed at Aurora; it still is carried on. The first Masonic society was chartered in 1797; the original lodge is still standing in Aurora.

The annals of Auburn should be briefly noted here, though in part that is another story. Col. John L. Hardenbergh, liking the area, built a log cabin on the site of the fire station in 1793. The four small settlements grew into a village, first known as Hardenbergh's Corners, and in 1805 renamed Auburn; in 1848 it became a city. The government was of the usual type. The state prison was started in 1815; it followed the English plan and later initiated the harsh "Auburn System", long to be continued. In early days there were several volunteer fire companies with bucket brigades and hand pumpers. Alarms were sounded on the church bells. Auburn lawyers, William H. Seward and Enos T. Throop, became governors, the former serving as Secretary of State under Lincoln.

After the Civil War the city continued to expand in area. The number of wards was increased from four to ten and the population grew from about twenty to thirty-seven thousand. In 1935 the government was changed from the old aldermanic system to the council-city manager Plan C. The council now consists of the mayor and the four councilman elected at large. This plan, more business-like, was supposed to eliminate some defects of the old system and to be bi-partisan; in practice, however, the candidates are chosen from the main parties, so that political influence remained. On the whole, the arrangement seems to have worked fairly well. The great world wars came, affecting in some ways the life of the community, especially along the industrial lines, since there were large government contracts for war materials. The filtration and disposal plants were constructed about 1920 also the new city hall (cornerstone 1929), and police-fire departments buildings (1931). The state prison was re-built (1928-41) with many modern features. The new buildings were of brick; the dismal cells were replaced with larger and more comfortable ones, an encouraging improvement. The state armory (1873) long outmoded, is being succeeded (1958) by a new brick structure out South Street. Auburn may well be proud of the handsome new steel bridge across the outlet at Lake Avenue with ample four lanes.

The fine water power of the Owasco River made possible many industries — at first grist mills — one of them Colonel Hardenbergh's. Wadsworth & Son (1819) turned out scythes at the limestone dam which is still standing. Textile and shoe factories soon followed. About the time of the Civil War our city began its great agricultural machinery industry.

Several plants manufactured farm machines and tools, including steam tractors and threshers. All of these but Osborne's were closed many years ago. The labor-saving reapers were of great importance in the Civil War, releasing many men for the army.

The industrial activities of the city comprise many concerns; only a few may be listed here. For decades the great firm of D. M. Osborne (1859), makers of harvesting machines, was outstanding. In 1903 it was merged with the International Harvester Company and in 1950 the local affiliate was moved west. In a short time, however, other plants were brought here to use the buildings and to fill the industrial gap. At present important firms here are the Columbian Rope Co., Dunn & McCarthy, shoes, General Electric (1950), Alco Products (at first McIntosh, Seymour and Co. later the American Locomotive), the Remington Co., (air-conditioning), Hammond & Irving Steel Co., Nye & Wait (carpets) Firth Carpet Co. and the Auburn Button Works (now plastics). Also in the past there were rolling mills, wagon works and textile mills. The third quarter of the last century was one of the greatest industrial expansion for our city. Some fifty or more plants, large and small, sprang up. A much more detailed account of these is found in the author's *Chronicle and Narrative of Auburn*. Owing to the water power of the Owasco River, Auburn has always been a manufacturing city, and usually has been prosperous. Nearly always there have been smaller plants.

Auburn early started churches and schools, while the charitable institutions began to be organized about 1860. In this century several new denominations have taken root. The Presbyterian Theological Seminary was opened in 1820; in recent years (1939) it was transferred to New York. At first the schools were not on a high level, but in time they were raised to a high standard. The Auburn Academy, a private school for boys, was organized in 1812, and years later, about 1856, the famous Brown's School for Young Ladies was started. These offered both grade and secondary courses. In 1866 the High School took the place of the Old Academy. The Seymour Library was opened in 1875. In our city, Theodore W. Case, about 1927, invented the movie-tone. Auburn has long been noted for its charitable institutions, covering nearly all fields of charitable endeavor. For some years we have raised money for philanthropy through the Community Chest. Recently this has been replaced by the United Fund of Auburn and Cayuga County.

Our public schools for a long time have been maintained on a high standard; the Roman Catholic Churches have their own excellent parochial schools. Our city built three new high schools and the Catholics started a high school for the Holy Family Church and recently the new Mt. Carmel High School. As a capstone of our system we are now fortunate to have the two year Auburn Community College, started in 1953; the low tuition makes it possible for many more young people to have the benefit of a higher education. There are now over two hundred students. There is a wide selection of courses and both day and evening classes; the college grants the degrees of associate in arts and applied science. The contracts have been let for a new building near the East High School. The former evening school with various courses, continued many years, is now succeeded by the more comprehensive plan of adult education.

In cultural activities Auburn has been as active as most places of its size. Many societies have aided in promoting music, the drama and literature. We have been favored to have so many talented people, artists, musicians, authors and others to help create an atmosphere in which the higher things are appreciated and enjoyed. Our Cayuga Museum of Art and History (1938) in Auburn should be mentioned as a valuable asset to both city and county. Many groups of city and rural young people enjoy the exhibits. In recent years several other societies have been organized.

We now return to the annals of Cayuga. The political organization has not been changed much. In 1922 the old Court House burned in a spectacular fire, the great structure with its Greek columns falling in ruins. In a couple of years it was restored with out the drum and cupola. Both city and county have grown somewhat; about 1900 the population of the entire county was 66,234 and that of Auburn 30,345. By 1957 Auburn has reached the 37,000 mark, the county 70,136. Within the last decade the rural fire department system of mutual aid has been established; each township has its own fire company with motor-propelled pumpers and some have water tank trucks. All companies stand ready on call to assist the neighboring localities, Auburn fire department headquarters serving as the center of communication. It has been a success. New departments of child welfare, board of elections, children's court, probation department, county laboratory and civilian defense have been established in the last few years. Recently a new garage for the highway department has been built on York Street, and the county has purchased the Chamber of Commerce building for extra room. Some years ago a new steel structure replaced the old Free Bridge across the Seneca on routes 5 and 20. It was named Menard in memory of a Jesuit missionary who worked among the Cayugas.

On the whole the business picture in the county has remained the same. As elsewhere, there are still some tiny settlements with half a dozen houses and one general store. Such is the small hamlet of Emerson about four miles north of Port Byron in Conquest. Here to the east one can enjoy the beautiful long view of the rolling countryside. The big flour mill at Port Byron still carries on the milling activity and in the village are several small plants. At Fair Haven the old harbor and shipping port have long been abandoned and the Lehigh no longer carries coal to that place. Still there is the big pier and the lighthouse, also the spacious state park with a good beach. The part of the Lehigh north of Cato has been given up lately, since it is no longer profitable. In the east many railroads are suffering a decline, especially in passenger traffic.

In farming and industry there was some progress. The farmers have on the whole nearly always prospered, though there were the usual ups and downs incident to agriculture. In later years, owing to the help of such institutions as Cornell School of Agriculture, the Experiment Station at Geneva, and the various government agencies farming methods have been improved. Then, too, the introduction of power machines has lessened greatly the heavy labor on the soil. Electricity came to many farms and even small gasoline engines used in various ways provide convenient power. The automobile and tractor are welcome aids.

The villages did not grow much. The old "general store" gave way to

those of various lines, while small banks made their appearance. The telephone, radio and television are of value for communication and entertainment. In 1920 the Beacon Milling Company at Cayuga started in a small way and soon grew into a large factory and experimental farm. It processes animal food of high quality, advantage being taken of scientific knowledge. Throughout the area there are still many small plants.

In modern times in the county the religious, educational and cultural activities have not advanced as much as in the city. Still there has been progress. In the past seventy-five years not many churches have been given up or new ones started. Duplication has been reduced by the organization of several federated churches, these being located at Port Byron, Sennett, Kings Ferry and Throop. In each case one of the old edifices has been taken for the consolidated society. One of the few new churches is the Sacred Heart out on Melrose Road, near Auburn, which will have a sanctuary, school and rectory. The school was opened in the fall of 1957 and the building is now being used for services. The County Council of Churches, established a few years ago, is a central organization of the Protestant societies. Recently in the Presbyterian denomination the presbyteries of Cayuga and Syracuse have combined. The Friends (Quakers) have a congregation at Poplar Ridge and the Seventh Day Adventists one in Union Springs and a rather recent one in Auburn, which has just purchased the Seminary Chapel and Welch Memorial buildings.

Education in our county is making progress. Many of the small schools with one room buildings have given way to the imposing central schools. Of these there are now eight, all located in or near the villages; Cato-Meridian, Port Byron, Weedsport, Union Springs, Sherwood, Moravia, Genoa and Kings Ferry. Nine districts in Sennett, Owasco and Fleming have just joined the Auburn system; so that, in a way, our city might be said to have established a central school. These schools have large brick buildings and a broader curriculum than would be possible in the districts. Also it would seem that a stronger faculty could be secured; they comprise both the elementary and high school departments. Through bus transportation, it is possible for all students in the area to attend, even though they live at some distance. These schools are well-equipped and able to provide instruction in the fields of agriculture, home economics and industrial subjects. Athletics have been developed much more than was possible in the small districts, and includes many of the various sports. It is interesting to note that a new grade school is being built near Owasco Road for that area, and rather recently new buildings have been constructed in Port Byron, Cayuga and Sherwood. In higher education in our state we have had in addition to the colleges, the state normal schools, now colleges with four year courses. For our county there is Wells College and nearby we have Cornell with its agricultural and home economics schools. As time goes on more students in the county can look forward to a higher education; many are already taking advantage of the Auburn Community College.

Cultural activities have gained ground, though perhaps somewhat slowly. Interest in books, music and pictures has been kept. Radio and television make life in the home more interesting and the movies have also reached the country. The Grange is everywhere and wields a great influ-

ence in many ways. The churches offer opportunity for social meetings and activities. There have always been leaders who have helped to stimulate and enrich rural life. New sources of enjoyment are the state parks, situated in lovely surroundings and suitable for small and large gatherings. Our county has two, at Fillmore Glen and Fair Haven; not far away there are two more on Cayuga Lake. Also there are two good parks at the foot of Owasco, which are easily accessible. The scout movement has extended into the country, and the "4 H" clubs, well adapted to rural needs, have taken a firm hold nearly everywhere. These latter have encouraged and trained young people in practical farming, including vegetable crops and stock raising. These projects are recognized at the State Fair with prizes for the young farmers, both boys and girls.

It is interesting to note that, although there has been a great deal of building in Auburn, outside the city limits many homes have mushroomed in new developments. These neighborhoods are in the Sand Beach area, West Lake Road outside the city, Oak Ridge Road, Franklin and State Streets, and East and West Genesee Streets. While the lots seem rather small, the residences are neat and attractive, some in the popular new ranch style. These "colonies" possess many advantages of the city itself, especially in the field of education. They might be thought of as a Greater Auburn. While taxes in the county are less than those of Auburn, they are steadily creeping up on city rates.

The new system of migrant labor is becoming more and more an important factor in rural life and economy. It brings also serious and difficult problems. Large numbers of negro laborers with their families each summer are brought from the South, replacing to a great extent the local farm hands. This change came upon us rather suddenly and brought many unpleasant features. The living quarters are on the whole make-shift and wretched; the care of the children presents difficulties. In the camps there has been some lawlessness. The fact that the workers remain here for so short a time makes betterment work difficult. Some help in solving the problem has been gained from new laws. Naturally the farmers are interested in harvesting profitable crops; but they have not been uncooperative. Church organizations have taken a hand in improving social conditions; the camps now have ministers and social workers to aid. Though the whole problem is still a matter of concern, one feels that progress is being made. However, it may take some years, for the whole question still requires much consecrated study and effort.

Many families have been prominent and influential in our county. Mention may be made of business and professional men who have amassed fortunes and devoted much of their money and interest to philanthropic and educational projects. Among these are the Cases, Willards, Osbornes and Fred L. Emerson of Auburn — the Morgans and Henry Wells of Aurora, who founded the college named after him. The Morgan family of Aurora may be noted as an interesting example. The first Christopher Morgan lived in Connecticut. His son, the second of that name, in 1800 rode into New York State on horseback. Chancing to stop at Aurora, he decided to settle there. He prospered in business and boatbuilding and became wealthy. At that time there was much commerce on the Finger Lakes. He had six sons; Christopher III became a lawyer and statesman. To his

fine stone house on Genesee Street in Auburn, the present site of the Palace movie theater, came noted persons; when Jenny Lind sang here the Morgans entertained her. Col. E. D. Morgan followed his father in business, then branched out into political life and philanthropy, also serving in Congress. He gave liberally to Wells College and the Auburn Theological Seminary, and helped found the famous Wells Fargo Express Company. Henry also engaged in business and was interested in mining in California; he helped start the U. S. Telegraph Co. Lewis Morgan, probably a relative, who lived in Aurora, became interested in the Indians and wrote his noted work, the League of the Iroquois, an exposition of the political organization of that people. Edwin V. Morgan, served as ambassador to several countries, including Brazil, where he was honored with citizenship and lived for many years.

In conclusion we may state that in many respects our county is a rather typical urban and rural community. The citizens have developed a flourishing grain and dairy area and a prosperous industrial city. There are fairly sufficient opportunities for our young people along many lines. Altogether the country people are not now far behind the city folk in the numerous fields of civilized activity and interests.

