

Of the first Missionary Society, Miss Betsy Goodrich was president, Rebekah Putman, Treasurer, and Elizabeth Spencer, Secretary. The ladies of these societies met together irrespective of church or creed and worked with heart and hand for the advancement of religion, education and social improvement. The names of thirty or forty of these persons are before us, but want of space forbids our transcribing them to the limited column allotted us. Many of them are still with us, working, praying, hoping, and many more have fallen asleep. Thus with limited resources we find a great work progressing, money raised, garments bought and made for the destitute at home and abroad, and a current set in motion which the lapse of fifty years has been unable to repress, and which was in truth the parent of the liberal institutions we enjoy. Strangers are prone to remark upon the public and private charities, with the general thrift of the town which is hardly equaled by places of twice its size.

During the years 1815-16-17, the demand was loud and frequent for the establishment of a Presbyterian church, accordingly in the latter year, Rev. Nathaniel Dutton, of Champion, with Deacon Matton and others founded a church of six members, which number was speedily augmented by additions from every side. The first person admitted upon profession of her faith was Mrs. Elizabeth Spencer, and the first children baptized were those of Mrs. S. There being no settled pastor at this time, religious services were only occasionally held, but at such times parents brought their children for baptism, and in many ways illustrated their zeal for the enlargement of Zion. A proof of the perfect harmony which existed among the settlers is that these sacraments were often administered at the house of Isaac Austin, a leader of the Baptist church, and who having a capacious room hospitably opened it for the use of his brethren of the Presbyterian church. On the 13th of April, 1820, the first Congregational or Presbyterian society was organized. The trustees were John Spencer, Rockwell Barnes, Richard Kimball, William Cleghorn, James Parker and William Colton. A church building was commenced during this year, but was not finished until 1824. The cost was about fourteen hundred dollars, and much of the work was done by subscribers, Mr. Rockwell Barnes, we believe, being the principal contractor, and performing much of the labor. Considerable difficulty was experienced in securing a lot for the new church. Dr. John Spencer negotiated with Mrs. Morris through Judge Kent, her agent, for the gift of the present site; the road was then crooked, and the location badly defined, but by the removal of one grave, that of Mrs. Kimball — the lot was squared, leveled and rendered a desirable spot for building upon, the house was long enclosed before the inner part was finished, though services were sometimes held there. One who has often sat within the unfinished wall relates how the wind whistled through the crevices, and how with benumbed hands and feet the listeners sat the long day glad of the privilege thus dearly bought.

What a contrast to our comfortable houses, now resplendent in paint and frescoes, cushioned seats, carpeted floors, furnaces and stained glass, scarcely behind the temple of Jerusalem of old, yet we look in



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND MANSE — The second building built in 1844 by the Presbyterian church replaced a small, rough building started in 1820 and completed in 1824. The house to the left of the church was the manse. The Presbyterian churches have all been on the same site.

vain for the devout worshipers of other days, and it is a question if pure religion flows as readily through our carpeted aisles as over the rough flooring of fifty years ago.

The first regular ministry was that of James Murdock, covering a period of five years. Mr. Murdock was an old man, but genial and active and much beloved by his people. His salary was small, scarcely equal to the support of his family; but his excellent wife so managed the larder as to throw an air of thrift and comfort over her household. We hear of the good man riding over wood and common visiting and instructing his flock, amid the privations of pioneer life, with the hardihood of a good soldier. Mr. Murdock related with great gusto his various experiences with humanity in those parochial visits. Calling upon a lady twenty miles distance from his house, he was fed with the best of the house, the supper moistened with good raspberry tea, and sweetened with molasses, upon expostulating with his hostess, for the excess of the latter ingredient, he was smilingly assured "that nothing was too good for the minister." In connection with the above, the old man tearfully related his reception at another place where he was offered the coarsest fare "that he might learn how poor people lived." Mr. Murdock instituted the Friday meetings of the church which have only been lately transferred to Saturday. He was also the father of the monthly concert for prayer.

Mr. Murdock has been succeeded by Revs. Richard C. Hand, Jonathan Hovey, Robert H. Lawrence, Simeon Bicknell, B. B. Beckwith and N. J. Conklin, the present pastor. The old church was removed and a new one erected in 1844, which has been remodeled and repaired from time to time, and it is now in a



MINISTER'S STUDY — The study in the Baptist parsonage in the 1890's, showing typical late Victorian carpeting, curtains and decorations. The minister was D. D. Monroe.

good condition. The society is large and flourishing and the membership considerably exceeds two hundred. A parsonage with convenient adjuncts has been erected upon the church property, but public buildings have so infringed upon the location that we believe the day is not far distant when a new church and ground will be demanded to secure the quiet of public worship.

CHAPTER XIII

Four or five of the years following 1820 were marked by a declension from the former prosperity of Gouverneur, the scarcity of money together with the low prices of all produce and marketable materials, became a source of discouragement to the settlers; the late comers were indebted for their lands, and many were even unable to pay the interest thereon. For hay there was no market, grains were scarcely in demand, butter brought only six and eight cents per pound; and eggs were so low that no hen possessing ordinary self-respect could be induced to lay more than enough for home consumption.

An occasional emigrant came in and purchased land, but the vitality of the settlement was for a season paralyzed. During these years, we notice in 1822, the arrival of Daniel Keys and family from Vermont; of these but the father and eldest son survive, the former now in his nineties, and with faculties hardly blunted by time — is often at our side dictating some passage or furnishing some required date. He took up two farms, cleared and fenced them, and now cultivates a garden, sports with his great-grandchildren, and for aught we can see, bids fair to see the present generation off the stage. 1824 brought to the settlement one to whom Gouverneur owes much of its present prosperity; of course we refer to Harvey D. Smith, a man identified with every movement secular or religious, which looked for the advancement of civilization and the benefit of mankind. He came to Gouverneur when all hearts were heavy over the palsied state of affairs, and the losses and privations which had fallen over the settlement. Although engaged in mercantile business, he so thoroughly entered into the plans and interests of others that he was seized upon as the organ and exponent of their affairs. Every office of trust or responsibility in the gift



The brick school house at Church and John streets, built in 1826 for elementary grades and immediately enlarged by the addition of a second story for the first Gouverneur High School.

of a grateful town was offered him. To him were matters of dispute referred, and by him they were peaceably adjusted. The school, the church, and every public movement received from him a helping hand, and for many years he was the pillar of our domestic edifice. Hundreds looked to him for counsel, which was wisely and freely given, until borne down by the labors of a long and toilsome life, he fell asleep September 28, 1864, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

We are indebted to Mrs. H. D. Smith for a manuscript prepared by her late husband, from which we have gleaned many items of interest.

During the year of 1826, the irrepressible desire for a high school or Seminary, was gratified. The subject had long agitated the gravest minds, parents were anxious for the future of their children, and having left homes where these privileges were enjoyed, they could be satisfied with nothing less in the new colony. Some there were unable to keep pace with the times, who were afraid of fostering feelings of arrogance in the community by this upward movement. But in the words of another they lived to be ashamed of their fears, and became the firmest supporters of the new institution. The people were still poor in purse, but privations had become familiar, and a judicious leader was all that was required to render the plans feasible. The Baptist and Presbyterian churches were enclosed and a brick school house in course of erection. Elwell E. Austin was contractor for this building, at \$873.00 The masonry was done by Samuel Rounds, and the carpenters were John Robertson and Levi Tanner. The old clock dial was painted by a man named Havens, a cabinet maker then in town. That the work was well done, can be attested by a glance at the premises forty-six years from the date of its completion. After enduring the batterings of teachers and scholars, the building is still in a good state of preservation, and having lately been sold to Oliver Sprague,



JOSEPH HOPKINS, first principal of Gouverneur High School, 1834.

Esq., he has fitted it up as a grocery and dwelling, and the old brick walls have still a comely look, though somewhat antiquated in style.

A second story was added to the original plan by private subscription, and by this means more than five hundred dollars were raised, and late in the year the top of the edifice was devoted to academic aspirants, and called "The Gouverneur Union Academy." The first teacher upon the ground floor was Mrs. A. Z. Madison, formerly Maria Vary, who died in Fredonia, N. Y., about one year since. In a letter from Mr. Elwell E. Austin, kindly furnished us by Mr. George Miller, we are informed that masons, carpenters and painters are all dead; the contractor alone, with his ancient land mark, survives. The old dial is now in the possession of George Miller, Esq., and hangs near his place of business, reminder to many a passer-by of olden times and olden days, of school life and school sports, and of many who are forever fled from the early circles of Gouverneur.

The academic department was first taught by a gentleman named Ruger, a brother of William Ruger, compiler of Ruger's Arithmetic; and we may here say, if the gentleman proved as knotty as his brother's arithmetic, we have at this late date a fountain of sympathy for the unfortunate students placed under his tuition. In 1828 the school was re-christened under the title of "Gouverneur High School." Nine trustees were elected in April of that year. Dr. John Spencer, who with his family had been foremost in the interest of the school, was one of the first officers of the institution, and the first of the trustees. The others were H. D. Smith, David Barrell, Aaron Rowley, Josiah Waid, Alba Smith, Robert Conant, Joel Keys and Almond Madison. Isaac Green was the second teacher of the institution, but it does not appear that he made it a paying affair, although the school prospered under his care. The room in the brick school house did not long prove adequate to the demand, and a second building was soon thought necessary for the wants of the community. As in the proverb, "The wish is father to the thought," so in Gouverneur, "The want is ever realized." In 1829 the Regents of the university were petitioned for a share in the

literature fund, which was granted and has ever been a source of profit to the school. In 1830 efforts were made to raise funds for a new and larger building, which might accommodate a greater number of students and where more teachers might be profitably employed. We can not better inform our readers upon this matter than by quoting a brief history of the school, kindly furnished for our use, from one of the earliest catalogues in existence. This little document contains the names of fifty-five ladies and one hundred and two gentlemen, many of whom are among us fighting the battles of life, and many, very many have laid off the armor. We would there was room for all the names, but a few must suffice. The Austins, Barnes and Bownes head the ladies list. Of the gentlemen, quite a number are familiar to us all. Loren Austin, Erwin S. Barnes, Almond C. Barrell, F. M. Beardslee, Erastus Cole, Ezekiel Fosgate, John Goodrich, Benjamin Leavett, C. A. Parker, Aaron Rhodes, Henry Sheldon, I. P. Smith, and others are standard bearers of whom we need not be ashamed. The catalogue reports the years of 1832 and '33. The trustees of this time were Wm. E. Sterling, Edwin Dodge, L. B. Parsons, Sylvanus Cone, Jas. Averill 3d, Alba Smith, A. Z. Madison, Ira A. Van Duzee and H. D. Smith. The teachers were Joseph Hopkins, A. Z. Madison and Mary A. Hopkins. The first report is drawn up by H. D. Smith, secretary and is in his usual terse style. His own words are, "The school originated in the urgent necessity for such an institution in this section of the country; was established in 1827, and incorporated in 1828, and has ever since been in successful operation. Until recently it has labored under great disadvantages, from the want of suitable accommodations. This evil has been remedied by the liberality of individuals in this and adjacent towns, in contributing four thousand dollars for the erection and completion of a substantial and elegant Academic building, containing such and such apartments," the details of which are here unnecessary. Mr. Hopkins had at this time had charge of the school for four years, and his services proving acceptable, he was engaged for a



HARVEY D. SMITH — "He held many positions of public trust and died in 1864, mourned by everyone who knew him."



MARY PRESTON SMITH, second wife of Harvey D. Smith.

longer period. The terms of tuition were three dollars for children, in the common branches, four and five for those of mature years and the higher or classical studies. Board was from ten to twelve shillings per week, extras furnished. The catalogue of 1834 and '35, contains a cut of Gouverneur Academy, an upright front and belfry, with wings at either side. The officers and teachers are nearly the same, and we notice an increase of students, many from a distance. The name of Chas. Anthony appears first on the gentlemen's list. Edwin Bond, Isaac Foster and many familiar names follow. The school is reported as in a flourishing condition, and "The government of a mild parental character."

In March, 1836, Mr. Hopkins resigned his position, and the school, with certain conditions, passed into the hands of the Methodist denomination, who agreed to pay off the debts of the institution. Rev. Jesse T. Peck was the first principal under the new regime, and things were comparatively prosperous until on the night of January 1st, 1839, the building was burned with all the apparatus, cabinet and bell, the latter the only one in town.

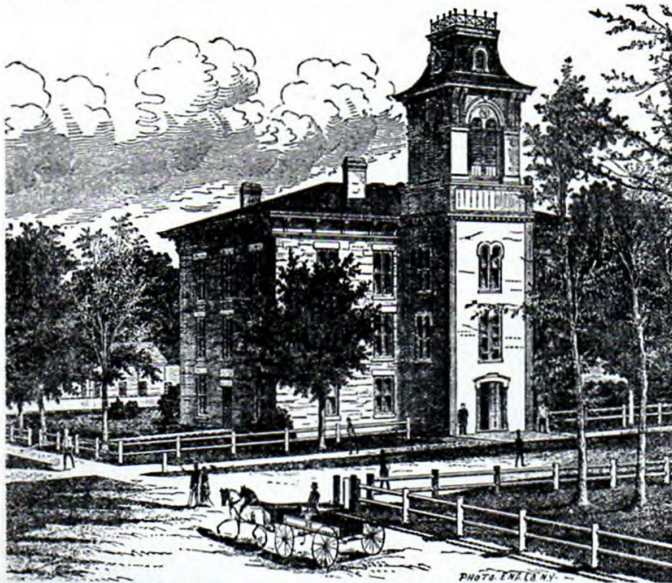


Corner of Main and Clinton Streets. The two story house at the left of the picture was the home of Harvey D. Smith for many years. Evidence seems to support the belief that it was the first frame house built in Gouverneur for Dr. John Spencer.

CHAPTER XIV

This calamity however was not allowed to impede the progress of the school. Rooms were at once fitted up in the old place — namely the upper story of the brick school house, where things shortly assumed their former course, and matters went on as quietly as though no interruption had taken place. But busy hands and resolute hearts were by no means idle, and measures for erecting the present edifice were immediately put in force. The institution was at this time heavily in debt. The insurance in the Jefferson County Mutual Company was wholly repudiated, so that the small sum of five hundred dollars from a New York company was all that remained of their generous benefactions to the ruined Seminary. But the blessings flowing from a Seminary of learning were too largely appreciated to admit of failure, so that scarcely a day was lost in useless repining. At a town meeting held soon after, it was voted that the legislature be petitioned for a loan of two thousand dollars to be refunded in four years. This loan was soon made, and subscriptions immediately solicited for pushing forward the work; while the man, woman or child who had no stock in the new building was looked upon as among the unfortunates of the community.

A building committee, consisting of Harvey D. Smith, Wm. E. Sterling, Edwin Dodge and Jesse T. Peck, was chosen, and the site for the present edifice selected a few rods north of the old ground. The work was well and rapidly carried on and completed in the year 1841. The cost amounted to nearly six thousand dollars — somewhat beyond the original estimate — but was cheerfully assumed by the contractors. Owing to the stringency in the money markets, more than the lack of prosperity in the school, the institution was for many years in debt, but a timely and judicious appropriation from the state relieved this pressure in the year 1851, and the school at once felt the result. New instruments were purchased, the library enlarged, repairs made and an air of thrift



THE GOUVERNEUR WESLEYAN SEMINARY — This building was opened in 1841 and demolished in 1894. At first it had a long flight of exposed steps in front, later covered by the tower and belfry.

soon pervaded the whole atmosphere.

It is not our purpose to notice the denominational changes which have taken place during the existence of the institution. Suffice it to say that the officers have been men of principle who have been governed by the purest of motives, and who had the interest of the community in view. Of the gentlemen who have successfully filled the office of principal, we have the names of Joseph Hopkins, Jesse T. Peck, Loren B. Knox, A. W. Cummings, John W. Armstrong, William W. Clark, E. C. Bruce, Andrew Roe, George G. Dains and M. H. Fitts, the present incumbent.

Although many an adverse gale has blown upon this institution in the form of private, select, district, and opposition schools in all directions, it has ever held a prominent place in the hearts of the community. Good teachers have ever been furnished, and a large and respectable number of students have always been in attendance. From its portals have gone forth missionaries, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, and artisans of every craft, and we hazard nothing in saying that the Gouverneur Seminary stands to-day among the first of like institutions in our land. Its able corps of teachers have so won upon the hearts of the community that we give them the entire charge of our sons and daughters, relying upon their zeal and fidelity, as upon old and tried friends. May the noble old structure stand until our children's children shall arise and call her blessed.

But we have digressed in this detail, and must return to Gouverneur as it was in the years of 1828 and 1830. Business had long been prostrated by the uncertain state of markets and the questionable title of lands, so that late purchasers relinquished their claims rather than hazard the loss of their investments. Trustees of the public lands realized quite a sum from the sale of lots which legitimately accrued to the churches of the town, but was subsequently relinquished in favor of schools. The taxes at this time were mostly paid by non-residents, as many of the owners and proprietors then were. We are again indebted to a record made by H. D. Smith Esq., for items which follow. He says, "In the year 1829, Edwin Dodge came on as agent of the Morris estate, by which most of the land was owned. The liberal and forbearing policy which he adopted as agent, and subsequently as owner of considerable portions of lands, encouraged purchasers, and induced the location of a highly respectable class of emigrants from the east and from Scotland. The example and skill of the Scotch introduced a better style of farming, and dairying brought substantial profit." The town gradually overcame these depressing circumstances, and after its prolonged infancy arose to a perfect and complete manhood. The population at this time somewhat exceeded fourteen hundred persons, and as property increased in value, new purchasers arrived, while the markets far and near told of renewed activity. The country was rapidly cleared up, manufacturers secured water privileges for their operations, one or two merchants commenced a limited business in dry goods, groceries, drugs and medicines, while the roads of the surrounding country were improved by grading and working, and new ones cut to open communication with other points of interest. Trade



This pleasant grove occupied the area between Grove and South Gordon Streets, extending to the railroad. The Dodge residence was back of the present post office, the land office was on South Gordon about where Dodge Place is now.

still consisted much of barter, as money was scarce and only used for making payment for lands or some absolutely indispensable article.

Gouverneur has ever been known as one of the healthiest localities upon record. The death rate as compared with neighboring towns is truly wonderful, being scarcely half the number, and at no time has any epidemic disease prevailed. The medical profession has usually been well represented, and for the period of sixty-four years, but ten or twelve physicians have been permanently settled; of these we have the familiar names of Drs. John Spencer, Murdock, Griffin, Orfis, Wait, Williams, Parmelee, Merrick, Carpenter, Fisher, and Wilson. It has been playfully remarked that the inhabitants of Gouverneur enjoy an immunity from the common diseases of mankind, so that life is measurably secure unless imperiled by accident, or extreme old age. Of this we have only to remark that we believe no place of its size presents such an array of stalwart, healthy men and women.

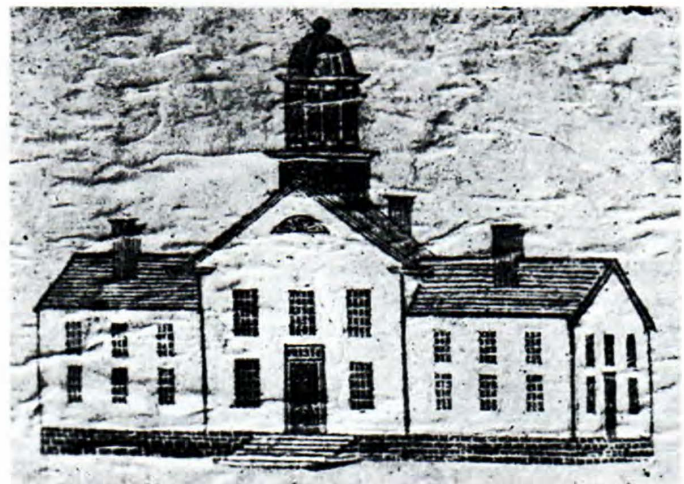
The legal profession has had but a small number of representatives. Edwin Dodge, Edward Fowler, Charles Anthony, C. A. Parker, W. H. Andrews and E. H. Neary have been the principal practitioners covering a period of more than forty years; other parties have from time to time studied and practiced in the town, and afterward found positions in different portions of the county, where they are a credit to themselves and the profession which they represent.

Although many clearings had been made in and about Gouverneur, the forest proved a formidable obstacle to the extension of neighborly visits and juvenile rambles. In the year 1830, two small boys were lost over night, the whole population joining in the search for the little wanderers, who were found the following morning fast asleep, but ready and willing to return to their homes and the comforts of civilized life. Other parties were often benighted, but a prompt action of the citizens usually brought them to light before serious results occurred. Cattle, too, strayed from their owners by some unaccountable infatuation. One farmer relates that he has often been through the woods to Antwerp after his missing cows. This mischief was soon ended by the further clearing and the building of fences. An improvement was also



EDWIN DODGE, county judge and agent of the Morris estate he was a leader in the business life of the community, active in bringing the railroad to the North Country and in developing its mineral resources.

made in the erection of barns and out-houses, for the shelter of cattle. Bells were provided for animals given to undue disposition for exploring, and we have seen some of these articles in a perfect state of preservation, there being no longer a demand for their cheery music. The mischievous Indians sometimes took advantage of the bell-bearing cows and furnished their families with milk and cream therefrom; indeed the settlers suffered at this late date more from these petty thieves than at any former period. It was not unfrequent for a neatly dressed lamb to appear at the owner's door, backed by a sober faced Indian who unblushingly offered it as "wenson;" nor was it always safe to question the identity of the meat, which was usually paid for without further parley. Chickens, green peas, corn and like commodities were considered public property, and it was better policy to attribute their loss to bears, coons, and the like, than to indulge in personalities. One lady has assured the writer that her father's family for many years almost wholly maintained a company of these savages rather than lose their good will. As lands were sold these strange people receded into the forest, until the place which knew them, soon knew them no more.



An artist's drawing of the new high school built at the eastern end of the park in 1834. It had the only bell in town, described as silver-toned.

CHAPTER XV

The year 1831 was marked by the death of two of the early settlers of Gouverneur: Namely, Mrs. Benjamin Smith, of Little Bow, Jan. 14th, aged about fifty years, and Aug. 29th, Mrs. Isaac Austin, at the age of sixty. The latter lady had, as before noticed, been confined to her cradle with a spinal affection and rheumatism, for more than thirty years. She was a woman of wonderful energy and perseverance, was often carried to church in her cradle, and by example and counsel incited many to follow her bright course of christian patience and cheerfulness.

The town at this date had received a new impetus, and was making rapid strides toward its present position of independence and affluence. A tannery which is still standing near the river on the premises of Mrs. John Barroll, was opened by the Goodrich brothers, Chauncy, Allen and Thomas, all tanners and shoemakers of the first order. Indeed, the Goodrich family can to-day make a shoe equal to the best workman in the place. Boots and shoes were manufactured upon a large scale, many were exported to less favorable localities, so that it was aptly suggested that the village might be named Bootville. A common mode of shoeing a family was to adopt the shoemaker, bench and all, into the household, and lodge and board him until every member thereof was neatly shod for the season, all rents occurring within the first three months to be repaired free of cost. Would our present manufacturers could be bound to the same terms. Farmers carried pelts of animals to be tanned upon shares, thus securing a good article for themselves, and fixing the responsibility of its quality upon the party preparing it.

Two or three dry goods stores were open at this time, one kept by the late L. B. Parsons, Esq., who built the store with a brick front now occupied by Messrs. Boardman and Cutting, for the sale of hardware, cutlery, machines &c. Woolen cloths, linen, hose and mittens were early manufactured in private families and exchanged for such goods and groceries as were needed at home. Luxuries were even now thought of, and two or three carpets graced the floors of the more forehanded. Carpets at once became the rage; stripes of every rainbow hue were invented, and poor, indeed, was the housewife who did not possess a covering for her floor, of yarn or rags, as her means would allow. We have seen specimens of this handiwork exhibited by the manufacturers, which quite surpass anything of later attempts in the same line.

On the 29th of October, 1834, Pardon Babcock, another of the old settlers, died of consumption, at the age of fifty-seven. He had long been an invalid, bent and feeble, but pursued his business — that of a blacksmith — until within a few days of his death. He was a man of cheerful spirit, full of humor, and never allowing his failing health to interfere with his business or amusements. Almost the last evening of his life he rallied his wife upon her despondency regarding his precarious condition; and bounding into bed, from which he never arose, he remarked upon his unimpaired strength of body and limb; but disease had done its work and a few hours only remained to the man who had so nobly helped to carve the future

of our beautiful town.

In 1836, the population of Gouverneur was about two thousand, and the valuation of property eighty five or ninety thousand dollars; but a division of the town in 1841 essentially diminished it in population and valuation. It, however, soon assumed its former prosperity and again went on in the old path of advancement and improvement. Stringent laws for the protection of public peace and morals were enacted, and pound masters were ever on the watch for straying or mischievous animals, neglected farms were marked for complaint, and few weeds were permitted to raise their insolent heads above the growing crops. Nor were the children of over-tender parents omitted in the general lookout for wrong doing. "How often," says one with whom we sometimes counsel, "how often when about to perpetrate some misdemeanor have we looked out to see our way clear from the schoolmaster or the tidings man. Not a walk by moonlight with the girl of our choice, not a boat-ride upon the river, or the gift of maple candy or spruce gum, but was reported to our parents and guardians in detail, until the schoolmaster himself was found in a distant grove, saying the sweetest of soft things to his lady-love, when we came out in open rebellion, and were never afterward molested." Many lasting friendships were made in these days, and many pleasant family ties cemented. The village swarmed with strangers, come hither to avail themselves or their children of the advantages of the flourishing schools, or to model others after them.

Several anecdotes connected with the then boys of our town are at hand, but lest their sons should take example therefrom we must omit some of the best. Boating was at one time the principal amusement of the young people; but a ponderous boom heading several thousand logs, proved a serious inconvenience to the water spirits, as no boat could thread the disputed passage. Accordingly one night the obnoxious hindrance disappeared and the pent up logs were set at liberty; the workmen at the saw mill were treated to a holiday, while their neighbors at Natural Dam were kept busy sorting logs for a fortnight to come. One of the perpetrators of this act lived to do good service as colonel in the Union army, and was killed at Antietam while fighting the battles of the late war.

The pretty sweet-heart affianced to one of the professors of the Seminary, was so often enticed away from her lord and master-to-be by some of the gay young men of the school, that the forlorn professor thought best to marry her at once, in order to render the property secure.

We now come to an important event affecting the interest of the town, and which bears largely upon the present and future of many souls; namely, the formation, growth and prosperity of the Methodist Episcopal church. The spirit of Wesley has never been at rest, but has sought out new fields to conquer; none so rich but it approaches, none so poor but it descends thereto. Several persons of this communion resided in Gouverneur, but quietly worshiped with other denominations, until the time should arrive for an independent organization. Occasionally an

itinerant preacher passed through the place, and held a service in some private house or school room. Meetings were assembled at the district school house in the neighborhood of Emery Eager on the Somerville road, as early as 1822; and a society is supposed to have been organized at that time under the ministry of Benjamin Dighton. There were preaching stations at Fowler, Antwerp, OxBow and Gouverneur. The clergymen were mostly young men, and of course poor; their whole stock of wealth consisting of the horse on which they rode and the clothes upon their backs. They were wholly dependent upon the hospitalities of the families where they stopped, who were expected to wash, iron and mend for them as occasion required; these items with one hundred dollars from the conference in those days of honest simplicity, kept the minister respectfully housed and clothed; and who will say that the man of God was less useful, or less respected than the recipient of a ten thousand dollar salary who solemnly rolls to his gilded temple in a comfortable carriage, and mystifies his hearers with wordy nothings, until they are ready to perish for one unadulterated portion of the living word.

We have hardly time in the present chapter to notice the organization of the Methodist society in this village, for the particulars of which we are indebted to Rev. J. T. Hewitt, who has at much cost of time and labor prepared it for us, and Dr. E. S. Beardslee, who has furnished many items of interest, and supplied many a missing link in the chain.

About the year 1828 the service at the district school house was abandoned, those worshipping there retiring to Somerville, and stated preaching commenced, first at the house of Dr. Richard Townsend, on the Johnstown road, Rev. Godfrey Bomey officiating. In 1832, meetings were held at the school house, which then stood on the corner lot adjoining the present Baptist church, the Rev. Lyndon King preacher. The first class was formed about this time, of which Isaac Smith, Joseph Smith and Moses Kenyon, with their wives, were the first members, and later were joined by Dr. E. S. Beardslee and wife. Dr. Beardslee is, we believe, the last of the class, and the oldest member of the church. About three years later the little congregation removed to the chapel of the Gouverneur High School, where they remained until the burning of that building, when they again returned to their old quarters in the school house, like Noah's dove, finding no rest, but ever bearing the olive branch before them.

In our next we shall continue this subject, which we can assure our readers will be full of interest.

CHAPTER XVI

As before noticed, the present Seminary building was completed during the year 1841, when the Methodist congregation, journeying like Israel of old, commenced stated worship in the chapel of that building. The church was yet small; "so few in number," remarks Rev. Jesse T. Peck, "that I have entertained the whole church at my table in a small dining room, and there was room to spare."

The annual camp meetings were for several years held on the farm of Jas. Clark, Esq. "There," remarks an aged friend, "we expected and received great blessings." Quarterly meetings, prayer meetings and other services were well attended. They went with ox-teams from place to place, compelling men to come in and hear the word of God. Thus with accessions from various sources, this indomitable little band pursued their way until the year 1863, when under the ministry of H. A. O'Farrell, they purchased, at a cost of one thousand dollars, the building known as the Second Congregational church of Gouverneur. This was an event in the life of the little church and caused such emotions of joy and gratitude as cannot well be described. For seven years they met in this modest building, until it became evident that the time had arrived to "Lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes." At a call from the pastor and trustees, it was unanimously decided to erect a new and more commodious house of worship. C. W. Brooks at this time ministered to the people, and with characteristic zeal, he pushed the enterprise. The old church was removed to a lot donated by H. S. Randall, Esq., and when no longer required for meetings was sold to Messrs. Grinell & Co., for the sum of twelve hundred dollars. This amount added to the subscriptions now rapidly flowing in made a very respectable fund. The committee traveled far and near, soliciting and receiving subscriptions. An experienced architect, Jas. Hegeman, was secured and plans at once made for the new house. The basement was excavated, and the walls built of fine sandstone. The corner stone was laid May 10th, 1870, with appropriate ceremonies, the pastor, C. M. Brooks, officiating. The immense frame and tower went up as if by magic, and was so nearly completed that it was found expedient to dedicate the house to the worship of Almighty God, Feb. 9th, 1871. The day will long be remembered, not alone by the Methodists of Gouverneur, but by all of its citizens who laid aside the work of the day and repaired to the new church until every seat and aisle was crowded, and numbers were obliged to leave,



THE METHODIST CHURCH built of sand stone in 1871, was remodeled and faced with marble in 1891.

unable to gain an entrance. After the usual singing and prayer, Dr. — now Bishop — Jesse T. Peck, arose and announced his text, Ephesians, 4th, 5th, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The sermon was probably one of the finest ever preached in Gouverneur, and says one, "The nearest approach to inspiration we ever heard from mortal tongue."

The crowd of clergymen inside the altar were unable to express the usual "Amen," but with bowed heads and tearful eyes they listened with the rapt audience to the eloquent words which fell from the speaker's lips.

At the close of this discourse it was announced that before the service of consecration would take place, it was desirable that the remaining debt should be canceled. Rev. B. I. Ives, of Auburn, acting with his usual tact, took the matter in hand and announced the entire cost of the structure to be in round numbers, sixteen thousand dollars, and that the arrears should at once be raised, first by subscriptions of five hundred dollars, several of which sums were assumed by parties present; next, two hundred and fifty dollar pledges were given, then sums of the one hundred, fifty and lesser donations down to one dollar were taken until the church was freed from debt, and dedicated a perfect offering to the living God. Thus one of the finest ornaments of Gouverneur stands today a beautiful monument to the liberality and perseverance of a handful of earnest christians. We would wish the community would further the interests of these zealous friends by contributing a good bell, as a finishing touch to their beautiful edifice.

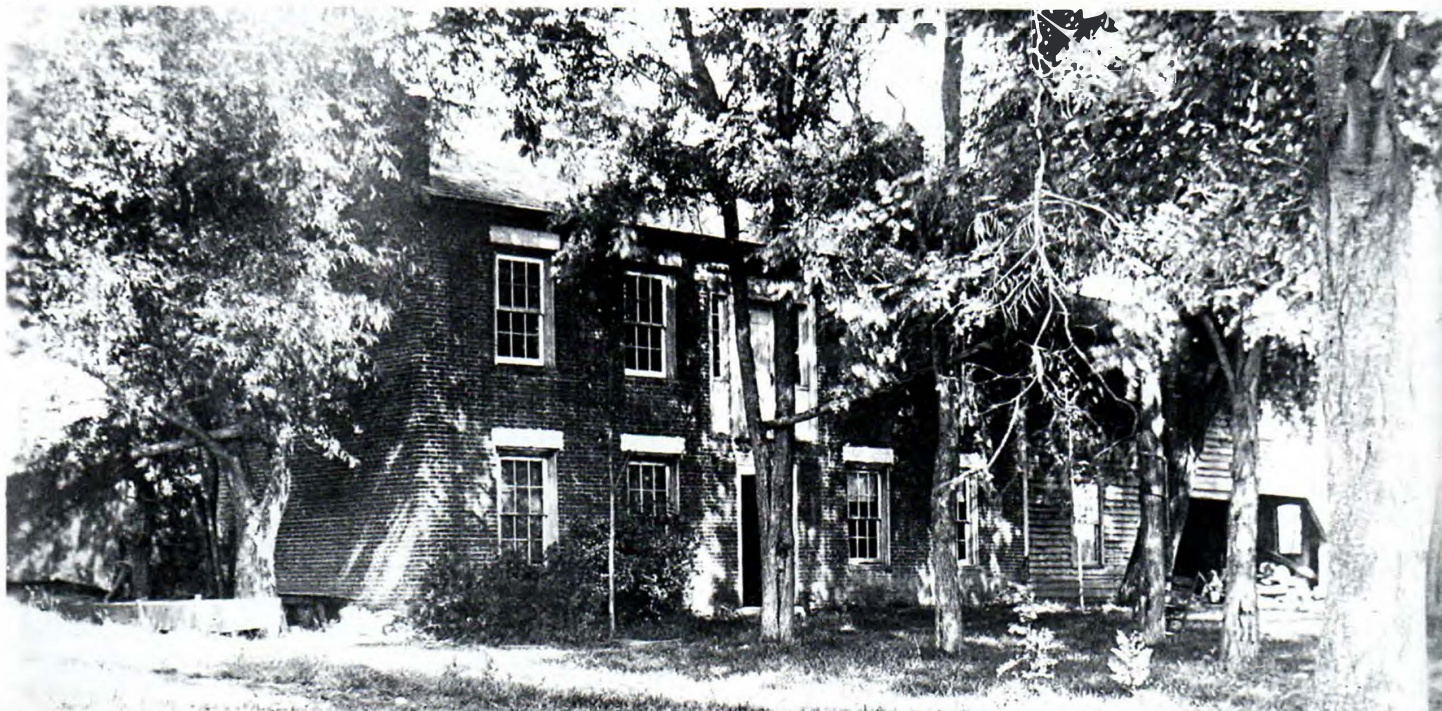
Of the many clergymen who have served in the Methodist church at this place, we have the names of Benjamin Dighton, Godfrey Barney, C. W. Leet, Manson Reuben Reynolds, Gibbs Lyndon King, John Wallace, L. L. Adkins, Harvey Chapin, Jesse Penfield, Geo. C. Woodruff, Lorenzo Stebbins, John N.

Brown, B. S. Wright, Hubert Graves, W. Armstrong, Hiram Shepherd, S. Slater, J. C. Vandercook, Benjamin Paddock, Allen Castle, E. E. Kellogg, Josiah Zimmerman, H. A. O'Farell, B. E. Whipple, Darius Simonds, A. J. Copeland, C. W. Brooks, and John T. Hewitt. The record may not be perfectly in order, as we are obliged to depend on the memory of friends, but we believe the list is not far from correct.

Upon the accession of the present pastor, Rev. J. T. Hewitt, in May, 1871, there were ninety-six members, with several on probation. At the present writing, October, 1872, there are one hundred and forty-six members, with ten on probation. Connected with the church is one of the liveliest working Sabbath schools we have ever known, consisting of over three hundred scholars. In the words of the present pastor, "It is under the very efficient superintendence of William Whitney Esq., to whose able management and untiring diligence much of its prosperity may be ascribed."

We have been thus minute in our history of this society, because we believe, as before remarked, that its influence in connection with the Gouverneur Seminary and the religious bearing upon the community can never be fully realized; and we can only regret that the system of itinerancy will so soon deprive us of one of the most noble and eloquent of her preachers.

A Congregational church was founded in this town in February, 1843, and in March of the same year, it was incorporated as the Second Congregational church of Gouverneur. The trustees were John Leach, Mathau W. Smith and Rockwell Barnes. It is neither our intention nor province to enter into the particulars relative to the formation of this church; suffice it to say that the movement was undoubtedly prayerfully and conscientiously made, and when after



THE BENJAMIN SMITH HOUSE, Little Bow, built in 1822. Benjamin Smith fell while building the house, suffering injuries that caused his death a few years later. The house is at present being restored by Mr. and Mrs. Ray French.

years of struggles and misfortunes the scheme was abandoned, most of the members returned to the parent church, willing workers in the fold, wherever their lot might be cast.

Some busy agitators were ever ready to move, no matter where, and after the previous division of the town, were forward for another and another, so that through the years of 1841-42 and '43 the community was constantly in a ferment regarding the matter. A new town was proposed from parts of Hermon, De-Kalb and Gouverneur; what the parties expected to gain from this proceeding no one has ever yet been able to explain, but that the thing failed can never be regretted, since a more flourishing townslip cannot be found in St. Lawrence county. The village was formally incorporated December 7, 1849. The officers we believe have been before mentioned; but from the date of its existence as a village public improvements commenced. At this period scarcely a sidewalk was to be seen, and the deep yellow sand was a serious impediment to foot travel. In a future number we shall speak of these improvements, the grading and graveling of the streets, with the water works and other adjuncts of civilization. We have also the promise of a full account of the mineral resources, lumbering operations and other matters of interest pertaining to our great and growing town.

CHAPTER XVII

Growing towns are anxious to avail themselves of all the privileges their neighbors enjoy, and Gouverneur is no exception to the rule. Watertown, Ogdensburg and Canton each boasted their printing presses, and each issued weekly one or more newspapers. A newspaper must be printed in Gouverneur; there were the daily details of fire, robbery, runaways of men and horses, accidents, deaths and marriages; advertisements, local poets and prose writers who must find vent for their pent up thoughts and impress the world with their growing genius. The Seminary, too, furnished many a full-fledged essayist, whose powers must lie dormant, unless some pitying printer could be prevailed upon to emblazon his sheet with the brilliant coruscations of their sparkling thought.

Several attempts had been made to start a newspaper in Gouverneur, but until the year 1849 nothing definite was accomplished. The first printing press was brought into town in April, 1849, by W. M. Goodrich and M. Wilson, and the first paper was issued April 19th of the same year, and entitled *The Northern New-Yorker*. We have before us one of the earliest of these sheets, and the familiar names of those days call up many a tender association. The visitor's report of the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary by Rev. B. B. Beckwith is particularly interesting. The order of exercises for the annual exhibition contains the names of many long since gone to rest, and of others, whose furrowed faces and silvered temples bespeak their ardor in the battle of life.

The same copy contains the death of ex-President Polk, and business cards of firms long since dissolved by death, or by mutual consent, speculations regarding the career of Louis Napoleon. Hungarian losses

and gains, and many other matters forgotten by the participants themselves, and only furnishing a moment's amusement to the readers. The *Northern New-Yorker*, after running a very respectable career, passed for a time into the hands of Nelson Bruet & Co., and was discontinued during the year of 1851.



REVEREND B. B. BECKWITH,
long time pastor of the Presby-
terian Church.

On the 20th of July, 1852, a paper entitled *The Laborer* was issued by Martin Mitchel, of Fowler, N. Y. This office was located in Conklin's block, a building now occupied by Messrs. Barney & Bowne as a hardware store. The *Laborer* was a plucky little sheet, and we have often smiled as it reached our hands, the paper being so folded as to conceal the first syllable, rendering the title "The Borer." by which it was always playfully called. But the little messenger was anything but a bore to its numerous readers; for in those days of rustic simplicity we had neither railroad, telegraph nor news office; so that the whole country must be weekly sifted to supply its patrons with readable matter. Before us is the first number of the *Laborer* with an article by Dr. Franklin B. Hough, concerning the first settlement of Gouverneur, all of which we would like to transcribe had we space, as it contains and verifies much of the matter we have from time to time noted in these sketches. A paper from the pen of Dr. P. O. Williams, formerly of this village, also gives a prophetic view of the, then, future of Gouverneur. This we may at some time lay before our readers, as it could scarcely have been more correct had it been written at the present date. Although the political principles of the *Laborer* were adverse to many of its readers, the paper was largely patronized; but the investment not proving remunerative it was deemed expedient to secure an assistant, enlarge the sheet, and change the name; all of which was accordingly done. A Mr. Mason was chosen associate editor, and the paper christened the *Free Press*. Harley Mitchel, Esq., eventually succeeded Mr. Mason, and the paper received the additional title of the *St. Lawrence Free Press*.

The health of the elder Mitchel failing, Mr. Armstrong was associated with the paper until 1854, when it became evident that a newspaper could not be sustained in Gouverneur unless the list of subscribers could be enlarged, advertisements multiplied and

funds furnished for its managers. At this juncture J. J. Emmes, of Hammond, N.Y., assumed the control of the paper and attempted an organization for liquidating the debts of the concern, and also for raising a reserve fund for future operations. Quite an amount was subscribed to this fund in sums of five, ten and fifteen dollars; but little, however, was realized from all this, and newspapers were pronounced for the time a failure in Gouverneur. We well remember with what reluctance we recognized the fact, but all surrendered with becoming grace, and saw the printing press depart without a tear.

In a short time Mr. Emmes lost what he had invested in the unfortunate sheet which after an evenful career was buried beside its predecessors. Various expedients were suggested for the remedy of these defeats, and inducements were held out for other publishers to fill up the broken ranks of newspaper failures. But not until the year 1864 was one found willing to undertake the enterprise, and retrieve the fallen fortunes of newspaper publishing in Gouverneur. The *Times* was started in Sandy Creek, Oswego county, N. Y., November, 1862, F. E. Merritt, editor and proprietor; and at the urgent solicitation of parties in Gouverneur, was removed to this village in July, 1864, and continued under the head of the *Gouverneur Times*. We well remember the modest little sheet, whose welcome face weekly greeted us, and we have ever rejoiced in the success of the enterprising proprietor, whose subscription list now reaches eleven hundred, and who has without additional expense to his patrons enlarged and improved his paper until it compares favorably with any issued in the state.

The *Gouverneur Recorder* was established in 1866, Miss M. M. Smith, editress, and has, we believe, a circulation of six or seven hundred copies; it is an eight page paper, and is usually well stored with interesting matter.

We have before had occasion to remark that as a reading community Gouverneur cannot be surpassed. The private libraries are a credit to any village, and we doubt if any of the surrounding cities or villages can exhibit a better class of books than those which adorn the shelves of many book cases. Almost every publisher is here represented; our Scotch farmers seldom fail to receive a package from "Bonnie Scotland." Some German and Welsh papers find their way hither, while nearly every publication of any worth can be found upon our tables.

The incorporation of the village in 1849 led to many public improvements which have before been noticed; until that time little had been done by way of straightening the streets, or grading the thoroughfares for the convenience of pedestrians; a few feet of sidewalk here and there greeted the traveler; but with the growing importance of an incorporated village, came the desire for village conveniences, which were not far behind the time of its reaching its majority.

No extensive conflagration has ever visited Gouverneur. In 1825 the flouring mills of Israel Porter were destroyed by fire, and later one or two dwelling houses of no particular value. In 1848 the brick hotel of Peter Van Buren was partially burned, and in 1854

the saw and flouring mills near the bridge with a part of the bridge itself were destroyed. A competent fire department was long since organized, and the water works, of which we shall hereafter speak, seem to render us comparatively safe from the devouring elements, though a few hundred additional feet of hose would throw protection over a greater extent of territory.

In January, 1849, a Universalist society, embracing in its broad charter the whole world, but more especially Gouverneur and Hailesboro, was formed, with James Sherwin, Addison Giles, Francis Farmer, Hull Tuttle, Sanford Betts and Isaac P. Smith as trustees. Their places of meeting were at the old Town hall of this village, and the school houses of Somerville and Hailesboro. Later, a Union Church was built at the latter place which is often used for worship. Clergymen from Canton and other towns officiate, but no stated preaching is expected, and the society, we believe, is not in a growing condition.

The mineral resources of Gouverneur demand an entire chapter, and we had promised our readers a prolonged account of the mines and quarries of the town. But so conflicting are the reports of the owners and operators, that we shall only glance at the facts themselves until the mining interests of the town shall fall into the hands of honest and responsible parties, who intend to develop its riches, and erect permanent works for the employment of home laborers, and the investment of home capital. Red iron ore is found in large quantities and several rich veins are worked with good returns for the outlay. Two or three varieties of marble and granite bid fair to attract future operators, and it is presumed that the day is not far distant when the quarries of Gouverneur will challenge the world for an equal. Serpentine, fluor-spar, chalk and Rensselaerite are found in large quantities, and no more interesting field for the minerologist or scientist can be found in the same compass of territory.

CHAPTER XVIII

The next important event affecting the interest of our model town was a railroad; the thought flashed like a meteor over the inhabitants, and with many was quickly dissipated; farmers whose property could be summed up in hundreds, immediately saw that an open market with ready transportation would enhance the value of their farms, as well as double the price of produce; yet many clutched their purses the tighter, selfishly awaiting the liberality of their neighbors. The lumbering interests, too, demanded an opening for their surplus matter, while the flouring mills and mechanical manufactures called for a larger circulation. Merchants received their goods by the slow and expensive transportation then in use, and one has informed the writer that every pound of salt used within an area of fifty miles was brought by boat to Ogdensburg, and from thence distributed by horse power to the various places of sale.

Taking into consideration the extent of territory to be reached by a railroad from Watertown to Potsdam, and the many channels which must necessarily flow

into such road, a few foresighted individuals from the various points upon the way took the subject into serious consideration, the result of which was the formation of a company to look over the route and report upon the expediency of the project. The investigation proved satisfactory, and a goodly interest enlisted, a company was organized under the general railroad act of the state of New York, in the year 1852. A glance at the route was first made by a few skillful observers, and later a full survey under the control of Edward H. Broadhead, a practical engineer, and a man of large experience. His report upon one or two routes was favorable, the grades and curves were not difficult, and the line very direct. It was accordingly resolved to prosecute the work without delay, and the road was put under contract in October, of the same year. Grading commenced at both ends of the road, bridges were projected at the most available points, and rocks and hills were levelled without delay or mercy. It seems but yesterday since a posse of stalwart Hibernians with cart, spade and pick, invaded our village, and commenced operations. Old men and children, old ladies and invalids turned out by scores to witness the novel exhibition, while an occasional blast of powder from some stubborn ledge of rocks caused the weaker portion of the crowd to stop their ears, or utter the faintest screech over the deafening charge which sent showers of stone in every direction. Long before the grading was completed, rails were laid at either end of the road, engines were run first to Evans Mills, then to Philadelphia, Antwerp, and at last to Gouverneur. It was about nine o'clock of a summer morning that the old Chicopee majestically stalked over the Oswegatchie at the same point where the present bridge now stands. Hundreds of persons watched its course, as it went forward, and returned in triumph to the opposite shore, when such a shout arose as to drown the wheezing steam horse with its echos. A railroad in Gouverneur! A railroad with all the concomitants of shanties, boarding houses, mud barns and sod heneries; a railroad with its rapid transportation almost annihilating space and bringing distant friends within reach of friendly greeting, it was almost too good to be true, but we soon became accustomed to the sounds, and the novelty is a thing of the past. Our road was completed within the space of three years, the capital of two millions of dollars was nearly expended, station houses were built, and the whole line of seventy-six miles was neatly fenced by the company or by the owners of lands adjoining. The first officers of the road were, Edwin Dodge, President; Zenas Clark, Vice-President; Henry L. Knowles, Secretary; Daniel Lee, Treasurer; and Jonathan Adams, Chief Engineer; thirteen directors were also chosen, and the road was pronounced in good running order within three years from the date of organization.

Of the subsequent losses sustained by the company, and of the transfer of the property to the Rome & Watertown corporation we have nothing to say. The movement was deemed expedient, although the loss to some parties was large. The latter company immediately built a branch road from Dekalb Junc-



OLD RAILROAD STATION

tion to Ogdensburg, which has proved a good investment for them, and the road is largely patronized. Trains still run from this point to Potsdam, taking Canton and other places in its way.

The poor old Chicopee deserves a passing notice before we drop this subject. It exploded in Montreal a few years since, injuring several persons and shattering to atoms everything within reach of its broken fragments.

That property in Gouverneur has more than doubled in value since the introduction of a railroad, has never been questioned and the mutterings of those who supposed themselves depreciated in pocket, have long since been hushed by the music of crisp currency which they received for their produce, wares and merchandise.

The Gouverneur Agricultural Society was organized in the year 1859, and in September last held its fourteenth anniversary. The first grounds were leased from the Averils for the term of five years; these lots are now occupied by dwelling houses, and the ground at a great expense has mostly been raised to a level with the main street. About the year 1865 the society purchased of Benjamin Smith twenty acres of land lying near the northern extremity of the corporation of Gouverneur. The land was valued at about thirty-five hundred dollars, and buildings erected at a cost of twenty-five hundred more. A high fence encloses the whole, with seats, stands for judges, dining-hall, and rooms for the transaction of business. The trotting course is a half-mile in length, level, and said to be one of the best of its kind. The yearly attendance is large, and the interest seems unabated. Persons from all parts of the county and state are in attendance, and the premium lists are open to all. Good speakers are yearly provided, and their addresses would form a volume of intense interest. Thus far we have heard from Judge Clark, Horace Greeley, Edward Everett, Judge Nott, Luther Tucker, George W. Bungay, L. J. Bigelow, S. H. Hammond, Horatio Seymour, Calvin T. Hulburd, X. A. Willard, T. G. Alvord, A. B. James, and again X. A. Willard. The society is reported in a flourishing condition, with few liabilities, and a property valued at ten thousand dollars.



THE NEW FAIR GROUNDS, PURCHASED 1865 — Picture was taken in 1898. The old Fair Grounds were between Gordon, Rock Island, Main and Barney Streets on land leased from the Averells.

During the last ten or twelve years, farmers have turned their attention to dairying interests, and the raising of grain has been nearly suspended. Little of the wheat or corn here used is grown in Gouverneur, but is imported at considerable expense from the western markets. This we believe to be mistaken economy, as the yearly cost of feeding more stock than a farm can support has in many cases completely swallowed up the proceeds of the whole farm. True, our large and numerous cheese factories do an immense amount of business, thereby relieving farmers' wives and daughters of much labor. In this town we have four of these factories, each turning out thousands of pounds of cheese of the finest quality, and which commands the highest market prices; but in the name of the charity which begins at home, we must ask that a supply of our boasted good butter be kept on hand to meet the demands of the summer months. Many farmers are obliged to purchase their own tables, and many times (we do not speak for ourselves, as we manufacture the article in sufficient quantity for home consumption,) there is not a pound of good butter to be had in the village. Although the discussion of this subject may not legitimately come within the scope of these articles, our attention has been so often called to the matter that we cannot forbear dwelling upon it. Some of our most successful dairymen have assured the writer that with care in the manufacture of their cheese, they have obtained the same price offered for factory cheese, secured a large amount of butter, and have realized from three to five dollars more per cow than when they have carried their milk to the factories.

Great improvements too are yearly making in the stock which produces the milk for butter and cheese. We believe the Ayrshires are by unanimous consent acknowledged to be the largest milkers and the most profitable for making cheese, while the Alderneys are in demand as butter producers. Messrs. Patterson, Burts and Carpenter have imported numbers of the former, and are to be credited with much zeal and perseverance in this department.

We now approach the period of the great rebellion when Gouverneur sent the richest of her blood to

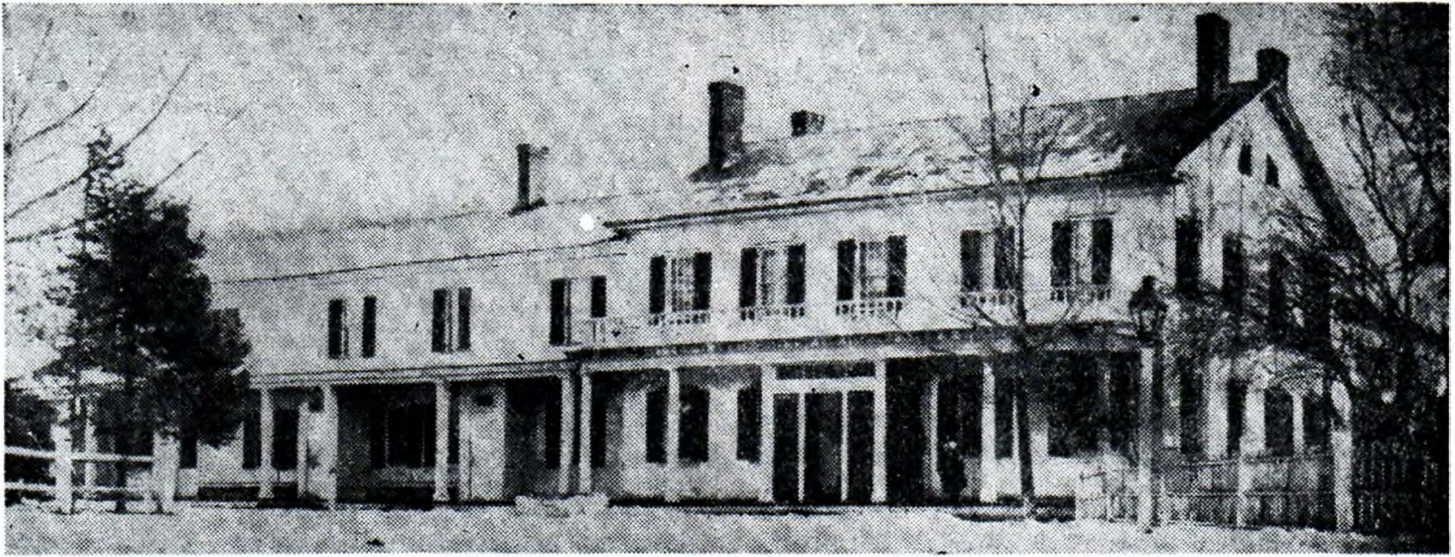
quench the fires lighted at Sumter, and to sustain the nation in its attempts to maintain its ground against one of the most terrible charges ever aimed against a great and noble government. Many instances of personal valor are recorded of our soldier boys, but we shall only be able to glance at the subject which also must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

A few military organizations have existed in Gouverneur, but after a short career were disbanded. Such was the peaceable spirit of our townsmen that when the war of 1861 burst like a thunderbolt athwart the land, we hardly believed a full company of soldiers could be raised in the neighborhood. Party spirit, too, ran high, many being in principle opposed to the war upon any terms, believing that it could and should be avoided. But when the stubborn fact became manifest that the Union was threatened and a consequent dissolution of the states imminent, men flocked to the ranks in numbers far beyond the quota demanded from Gouverneur.

The first company was mostly enlisted by Geo. Parker and Albert M. Barney, who with Robert P. Wilson and William H. Walling, were chosen first officers. Forty-one of this company were Gouverneur boys, men of every profession and craft, whose faces were familiar in our houses and upon our streets, and who were missed, sadly missed, from the circles where they moved. Many who read these lines will recall the shudder with which we received the tidings that a friend or relative had joined the band of patriots now upon the eve of departure. Yet brave mothers and sisters wrought upon garments necessary for the comfort of "our boys," and many resorted to the house of Daniel Sharpe, Esq., where we manufactured a beautiful silken flag, the gift of generous hearts and the work of willing hands. Every stitch seemed a memento of affection and a reminder of the trembling fingers which plied them. And so the brilliant colors were blended, stripes of red and white with a bright blue ground, and all the stars were fastened there — not one was missing — and thanks to our own and thousands of other noble patriots, all shine in the constellation of our sacred constitution, brighter we believe for the bloody eclipse through which they have passed.

The first company of Gouverneur was mustered into service May 2d, 1861, and two days later, May 4th, left the village on the afternoon train. It requires no active imagination to recall the scenes of that day; partings, some of them forever, were exchanged at home; and the whole company were drawn up in front of Jas. M. Spencer's hotel where prayers and tears, addresses and admonitions were offered, and the beautiful flag was presented by Miss Carrie Sharpe with an appropriate address, which, had we space, should appear in the present article. Captain George Parker received the flag in behalf of the company, touchingly alluding to the hopes and determination of himself and men that its folds should never witness an act of cowardice or treachery, which promise we know was never broken, as the mortality of the company can attest.



The Spencer House, on the south side of Main Street at the corner of Depot. Built in 1828-30, it played a part in the "underground railroad" during the Civil War and burned in 1889.



SPENCER HOME — Home of Col. James Spencer; of his son, Dr. James Spencer; and of his son and daughter, Albert and Julia Spencer. It is now the home of Mrs. J. Manley Spencer at 29 Trinity Avenue.



COLONEL JAMES SPENCER, son of Dr. John Spencer.



CASSENDANA BULLARD SPENCER, wife of Col. James Spencer.

The first death was that of Solomon Burr, at the battle of Gaines' Mills, June 27th, 1862. Although Mr. Burr was not a Gouverneur man, his name deserves a record in this place as one of those who never for once departed from the line of duty, and at the request of Capt. Parker, from whom we have gathered many of these items, we give him a place upon the roll of honor with our boys. The captain would fain we should name all his men upon this noble list, but time and space forbid. Erwin H. Barnes was mortally wounded upon the same day, but lived to see his parents who visited him in the hospital, where he died a few days subsequent. Although a mere boy he was a

true soldier, and when his body was brought home to rest in his native soil, hundreds of tearful eyes looked upon the youthful form, and the church where the funeral services were held was thronged with sympathizing friends and relatives. Rev. B. B. Beckwith preached at this time a rousing "war sermon," and did full justice to the merits of the young hero.

On the 14th of September of the same year was fought the bloody battle of Crampton's Gap, at which Andrew J. Lee was instantly killed and James H. Robertson was mortally wounded. Robertson, too, was brought home and buried with other members in our own "Riverside." At the same battle Chas. H.

Conant of Fowler, color-bearer, was killed; although he was not a native of Gouverneur, he was well known among us, and with all the heroes of that terrible fray deserves more than our feeble pen can award him.

This company was only enlisted for two years, at the end of which time they were formally mustered out of service, though many re-enlisted and served until the close of the war. Twenty-five were killed or died from other causes during the period of their enlistment, and it was a meager handful of war-worn men who met in front of P. Van Buren's two years from the commencement of the war.

At this place a banquet had been prepared, which fair hands distributed in no meager morsels. Welcoming poems and addresses were read, and though many were missing, we know not which were happier, those who received their living friends, or those who owned a buried hero.

It is impossible in an article like the present to enumerate the various deeds of valor which are recorded of our boys, nor let any feel himself forgotten, as we may at some future day enlarge upon this subject and give each one his meed of praise.



CAPTAIN GEORGE PARKER, Company D, 16th New York Volunteer Infantry, organized the first company to leave Gouverneur.



CAPTAIN GEORGE B. WINSLOW, Capt. Battery D, First New York Light Artillery.

Late in the year 1864 arrangements were made for attacking Fort Fisher through New Inlet, the eastern entrance to Cape Fear river. For the immediate defence of this inlet the rebels relied mainly upon Fort Fisher. Admiral Porter, who had visited Malakoff during the siege of Sebastopol, says: "This was a more formidable stronghold than that place, taking of which gave the death blow to the Confederacy." A letter from General Butler, dated Dec. 25th, 1864, gives us another view of our boys in the most hotly contested battle of the campaign. After asserting the almost utter impossibility of reducing the fort, Gen. Butler says, "Gen. Weitzel advanced his skirmish line within fifty yards of the fort, and while the garrison were kept in their bomb proof by the fire of the navy, three or four of our men ventured upon the parapet, captured a horse, killed an orderly who was bearing dispatches, and brought away a flag from the parapet while the shells of the navy were falling thickly about the heads of the daring men." Later, Admiral Porter

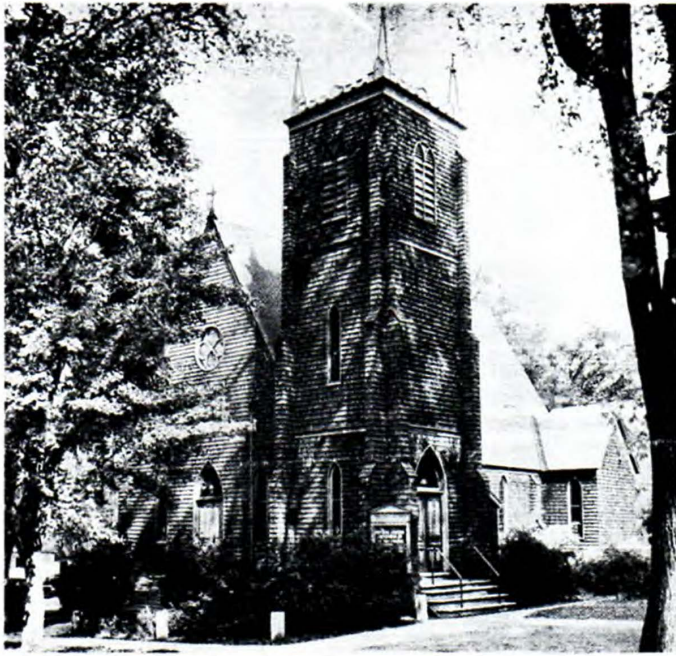
writes General Butler, "I wish some more of your gallant fellows had followed the officer who took the flag from the parapet and the brave fellow who brought the horse from the fort." The officer here referred to is Capt. W. H. Walling, another of "our boys," who has been brevetted for his valor, and who to-day carries a rebel bullet in his bosom, a leaden keepsake from his southern friends. Gen. N. M. Curtis, though not a son of Gouverneur, was so intimately connected with the capture of Fort Fisher that we must not forget his name in connection therewith. On the 15th of January, 1862, the fort was finally taken, Gen. C. being wounded about the head and losing an eye in the engagement. We might fill pages with the noble deeds of our town boys, but enough has been written to prove that they were brave and true, and every way worthy of the confidence reposed in them.

Many have returned and are pursuing the ordinary avocations and duties of life. Some rest from their labors on their native soil, and some lie in graves unmarked save by the eye of Him who watches over the dust, and who will gather it at the last. Many are disabled for this life by wounds or disease, and many have tasted the horrors of starvation in southern prisons. The war of the Great Republic is ended and we are still a happy, united country, forgiving and forgiven. Hundreds of cities and villages can boast of their heroes and recount their valiant deeds; but none, we believe, can present a more thrilling record of bravery or a more interesting chapter of events than our own Gouverneur. Would a more capable hand had undertaken the recital.

CHAPTER XX

A large number of persons favoring the worship of the Protestant Episcopal church had long and quietly assembled with other denominations until a fitting opportunity offered for resolving themselves into a corporate body. The first Episcopal service held in Gouverneur was late in the afternoon of a summer Sabbath, in the year 1862. Rev. Wilbur F. Paddock, now of St. Andrew's church, Philadelphia, Pa., was the officiating clergyman. The trustees and pastor of the Presbyterian church of this village, kindly opened its doors for this purpose. To many the service was strange, and some looked on with curious eyes; but the solemn words and appropriate responses soon won the favor of all, and the beautiful and eloquent discourse of the young clergyman from the words, "Who will have all men to be saved," so enlisted the attention of the audience that the service will not soon be forgotten.

On the 16th of April, 1866, the Protestant Episcopal church of this village was incorporated, now known as Trinity church. The first wardens were Benjamin F. Skinner and Aaron B. Cutting. Eight vestrymen were chosen, namely: Wm. H. Bowne, John S. Honeycomb, James D. Easton, A. E. Norton, A. M. Barney, A. S. Egert, G. E. Burt and Thomas Jones. The rectors thus far have been Jedediah Winslow, Edward Dolioway, John H. Babcock and W. M. Ogden, the present incumbent.



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Simultaneous with the organization of the society, a subscription was started for raising funds for the erection of a church, the congregation at this time worshipping in the chapel of the Seminary which was kindly tendered them by the trustees of the school. Never was a paper more industriously circulated, and each day witnessed an increase in the amount subscribed. The ladies, too, united their efforts in no feeble measure, for the advancement of their beloved object. Festivals and sewing societies were held, with weekly sociables for the raising of funds for furnishing the new church.

On the 10th of September, 1866, the walls were so nearly completed that the corner stone was laid with appropriate ceremonies. The list of deposits is too long for this place, but embraced all the subjects of the day, papers of the county, catalogues, officers of the churches and town, with other necessary information for the curious should they ever be exhumed from their resting place.

Early in the fall the frame was raised, a neat Chapel finished in the basement, with vestry, chancel, entry and audience room above. Stained glass windows were purchased in Buffalo, N. Y., a furnace introduced, carpets were laid down, and the furniture put in place, making the whole one of the most finished structures in town. But one mistake marred the enterprise and that was the purchase of a cast iron bell, a mistaken economy, which soon manifested itself in a cracked jargon, reminding the donors that withholding more than is meet tendeth to poverty. The lesson, however, we believe has proved salutary, and cast iron bells will in the future be at a discount in this neighborhood. Later a fine toned bell of proper material has been hung, and now calls a goodly number of worshippers to the house of God. The church was dedicated free from debt July 29, 1869, with appropriate religious ceremonies. It was provided in the original subscription for the building of said church,

“that the pews or sittings are to be equitably assessed from year to year, for the contingent revenue of the parish;” thereby wisely avoiding the rock upon which so many societies have split, and which even in our own midst has been the cause of much unhappiness and ill feeling. A parish school has much of the time been in operation in connection with the church, and a flourishing Sunday school is also attached thereto. Perhaps no organization of the kind has ever attained a more rapid growth in Gouverneur than this church, and we are glad to believe it a power which will leave its mark for good upon the future of the town.

In the year 1868, the Gouverneur Water Works' Company was incorporated with a capital of \$20,000. This enterprise was the labor of a few individuals, the original company consisting of but seven persons, namely: Charles Anthony, Augustus E. Norton, Edwin Dodge, Peter Van Buren, Stephen B. Van Duzee, Lyman Litchfield and Charles E. Clark. In the same year the company purchased a water power on one of the islands in the river a few feet below the Main street bridge, where they erected a water house and put in machinery propelled by water, by which they run three force pumps upon what is known as the Holly System, by which the water is forced up through a main pipe extending from the water house to Spencer's hotel, and from which pipes can be readily taken to other portions of the village. A portion only of the cross pipes have been laid and water introduced into private residences, although nearly every place of business upon Main street is supplied with running water. A trough cut from solid stone is placed just below the public park, where a continuous stream of living water bubbles into the basin which is always full no matter how great the draught upon it.



The watering trough that was installed in 1868 when the first water line was run from the river through Main Street to the Spencer hotel at Depot street.

We have often seen a half dozen of teams standing at this public fountain, and during the business hours of the day scarcely a minute passes without a call upon its never-failing resources. The pipes are laid in Rosendale cement and the machinery is capable of forcing the water for extinguishing fires to the height

of eighty or one hundred feet, and it is to be hoped that the day is not far distant, when every house in the corporation will be secured from fire by the introduction of water upon the premises, The town has been so heavily taxed for other purposes, that it has hardly been deemed expedient to assume the additional expense of the water works so that this may be attained, although the whole is only a question of time.

Reference has before been made to the hose and cart which have been purchased by the village for use in case of fire, and also for drenching the streets in hot or dry weather. An efficient fire department also exists, but thus far they have had no opportunity for testing their powers in this direction. It is generally believed that much of the hose on hand is not adequate to bear the pressure which must necessarily come upon it in case of emergency, and the purchase of a few hundred feet of a stronger material is earnestly recommended.

For the history of the water works, we are indebted to Chas Anthony, Esq., who kindly furnished the items, for which he has our thanks; and while upon the subject, we must be pardoned for calling the attention of builders and owners of buildings, to the unsafe proximity of barns, sheds and other wooden edifices. In most incorporated towns there is a law limiting the distance between such buildings. If such a law exists in Gouverneur, it is almost daily set at defiance, and it is the observation of those who have watched the progress of fires, that a large per cent of them are propagated and fed by the cheap rear buildings, which are always attached to stores and dwellings. The observance of this fact, with suitable action upon the matter will doubtless sooner or later prove the salvation of our village.

Another matter also deserves attention in this connection, namely, the clearing of paths in winter, and the unsafe condition of many of our sidewalks. Many private families never open a path about their premises from the falling of the snow until its departure under the spring rains, and the unfortunate pedestrian who is called over the way may wade it at his leisure. Several ragged and broken sidewalks still challenge the traveler to a struggle for life and limb, and the owners of one or two sections have been advised to open an accident insurance office upon the premises.

To our own relief and perhaps to that of our readers, we have but one more chapter to write of Gouverneur. In this we shall recapitulate some matters, look over the events of the year, and leave the history of Gouverneur for the present.

CHAPTER XXI

For nearly one year, dear readers, we have walked hand in hand about our beautiful town and village. Many who commenced the journey with us have stopped by the way, weary with toil and travel and are resting from their labors. Five of our early settlers have removed to another and we believe a better country; "Where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick;" and they tread the everlasting hills rejoicing in eternal peace.

With the present chapter our task is finished; in the pursuance of our labors we have formed many pleasant and lasting friendships; nearly all have responded to our inquiries in a cheerful and kindly manner, not a few have brought us items of intelligence and have evinced a lively interest in the work. Occasionally one has questioned our recitals with a knowing shake of the head that, "I could have told her better." But we know that all statements of importance have been corroborated by one or more witnesses, and nothing which is written would we have otherwise. An apology is due the reader for the unfinished appearance of some of the papers. We make no pretensions to rhetorical finish, but amid the cares and duties of a household and severe domestic afflictions, the series bears the marks of haste, which may in the future be corrected, should we rewrite the whole as has been suggested.

Other towns have their histories, tales of privation, of self denial and the relinquishment of private good for the general weal; yet we hesitate not in saying Gouverneur led the van in the march of public improvements in St. Lawrence County, and it is the remark of strangers that we are scarcely behind towns many times larger than our own. When our village is lighted with gas — which may not be far in the future — we shall be in possession of every convenience enjoyed by the principal cities of the United States, unless we except navigation which is fully supplied by our busy rail road and the rapid river which furnishes all needed hydraulic privileges.

We have been requested to call attention to one or two topics, which, although not directly connected with the history of Gouverneur, may well be classed among its necessary improvements; of the two bridges which span our rivers, one is known to be wholly unsafe, and the other is a cumbrous pile of lumber which must be watched and stayed during high water, and may yet be the occasion of untold damage. Many of our sister towns have iron and stone bridges, which, although more expensive at the first, are expected by their permanency to cover the original cost. With our unusual facilities for building a structure of this kind, it is to be hoped that an improvement in this direction will at once be made.

Much has already been said of our Seminary, select and district schools; and we would approach the matter in the kindest possible manner, knowing the various opinions held respecting them. We have within the corporate bounds of the village an attendance of six or seven hundred scholars. The free school system is unquestionably one of the greatest benefactions of the age; but the lines here are too loosely drawn for general good. While we have in the Seminary one of the ablest corps of teachers it has ever been our good fortune to secure, we have in addition to the quarterly tuition, an enormous school tax which many are compelled to pay without reaping the advantage of one dollar's worth in their own families. If we must support a graded school, let it be one in reality, with a competent board of education and teachers who can impart instruction in the languages and higher branches. Surely a tax-ridden community have a right to ask a reformation in this direction.



JANE WILLIAMS PARKER

Another item demanding attention — and which can be readily remedied — was noticed by Judge James more than a year since in his excellent address before the Agricultural society of this village. We refer to the unkept appearance of our beautiful shade trees, and we confess to a remissness on our own part, which shall be corrected at an early day. It is absolute ruin to bonnet, hat, coat or dress, to pass under our trees on a rainy day. A few hours given to the judicious pruning of the lower branches, would greatly add to the comfort of pedestrians, as well as to the general appearance of our thoroughfares.

We have seen a goodly town arise from the wilderness, crowned with every gift which the hand of industry or civilization can bestow. Our homes have been built upon ground consecrated by other hands, and we may believe our actions watched by many who have passed before us to the spirit world. Let us cherish the institutions they reared, and follow their sacred injunctions. Humanity is always the same, and unless sanctified by higher and better aspirations, we



DR. CARPENTER'S HOME at 29 Grove Street.



MRS. PARKER'S HOME — Home of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius A. Parker; later of their son and daughter, C. Arthur Parker and Miss Sarah Parker, at 42 Grove Street.

shall only sink to a level with those whose pathway is downward — whose end is destruction.

Ours is a noble heritage; with industry and care, the day is not distant when Gouverneur shall take her place among the cities of the state, "Beautiful for situation, on the sides of the north."

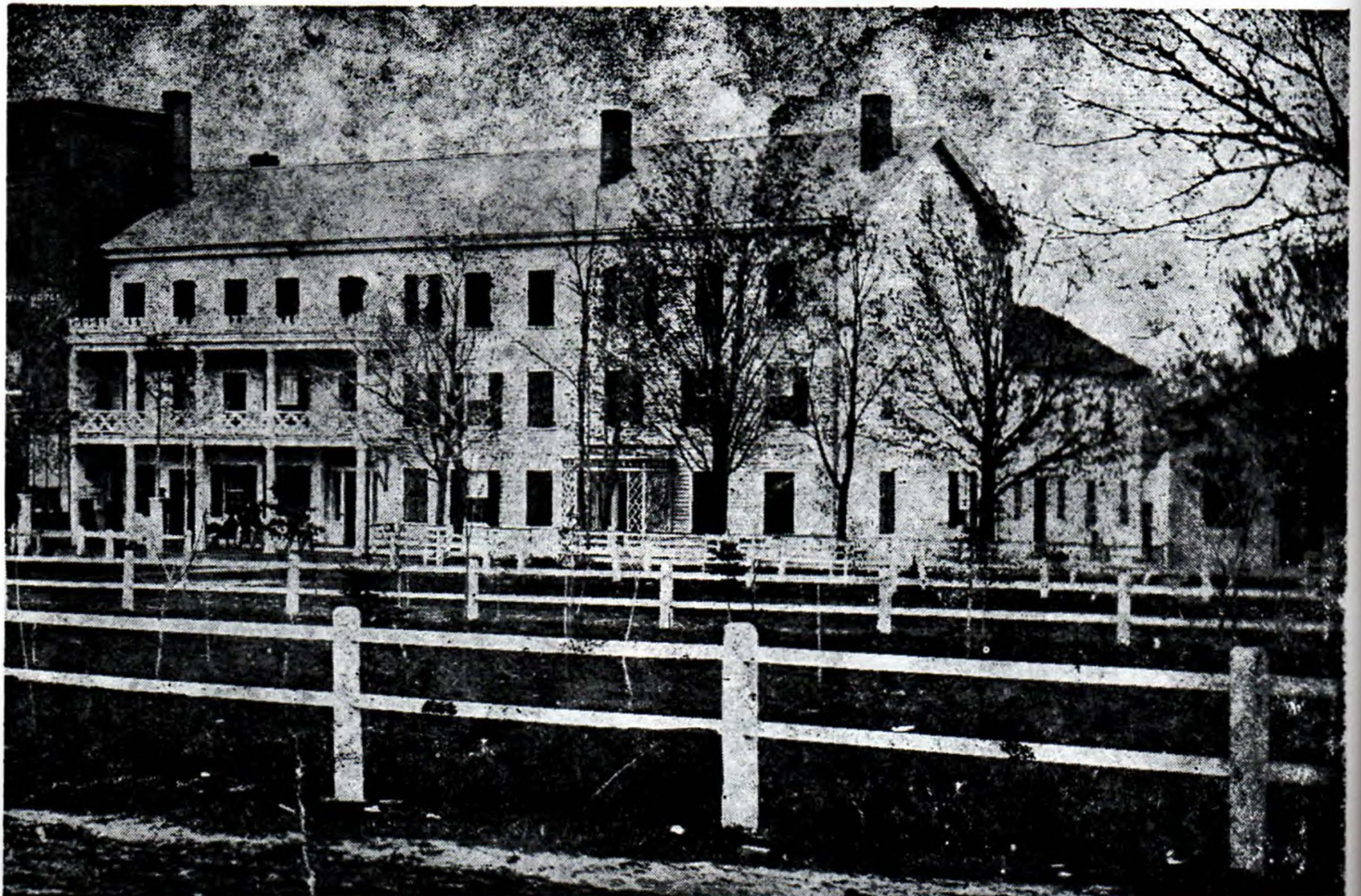


The William E. Sterling house, 174 East Main Street



The first brick building on this site at the corner of Main and Wall Streets was operated as a hotel, first by Dr. John Spencer (probably from 1818 to 1822), then from 1831 to 1848 by Peter Van Buren. After it burned in 1848, Peter Van Buren rebuilt it as the family residence which it remained until 1927 when it became the Red Brick Tavern. It was demolished in 1954.

PETER VAN BUREN



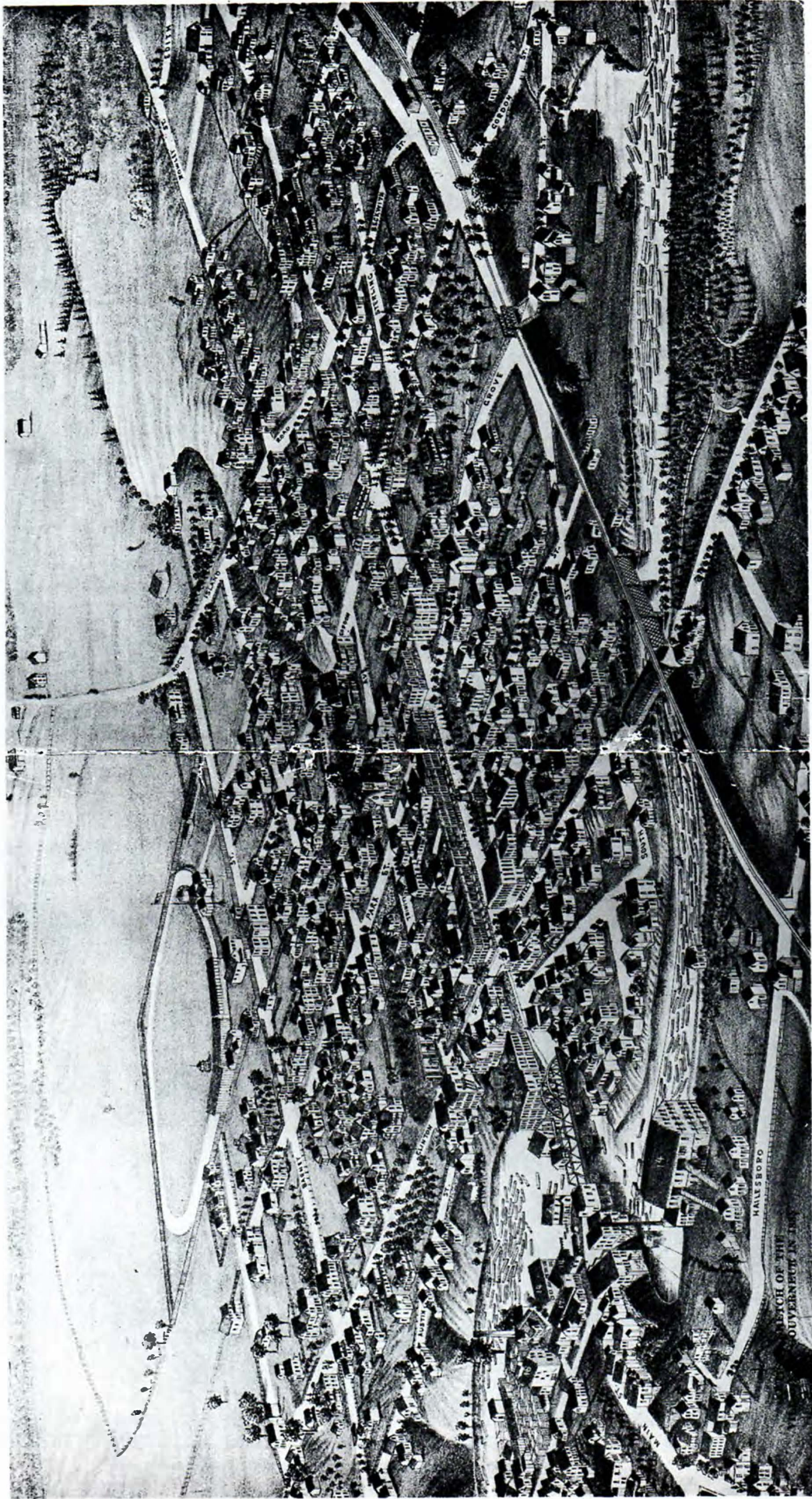
Van Buren House built in 1848 after the brick one at Main and Wall Streets burned. This one burned in 1881 and a second one was built in its place.



VAN BUREN HOUSE 1882



This picture of the park, taken after 1900, shows the old bandstand.



Artist's Sketch of the Village of Gouverneur in 1865.