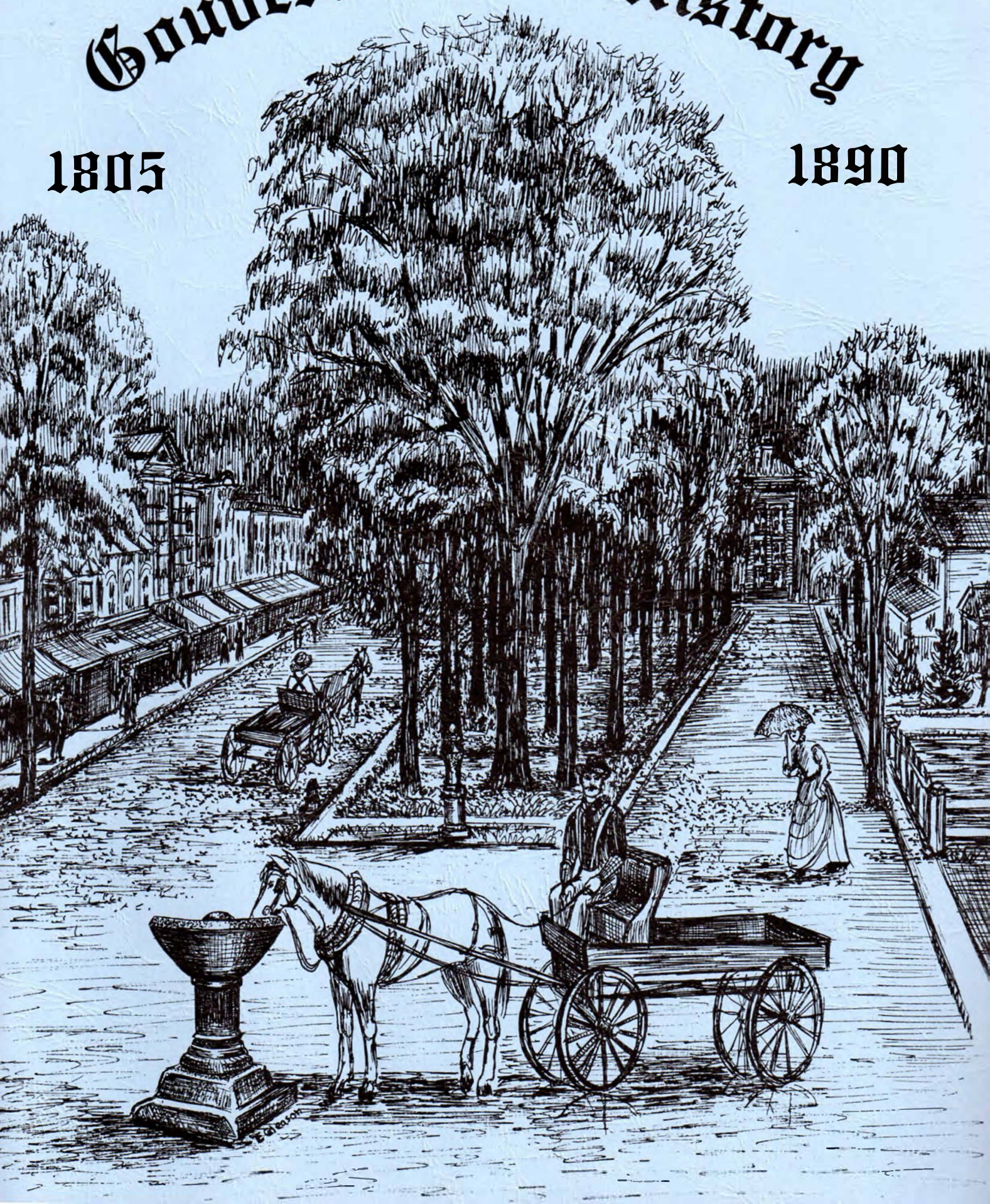
Gouverneur, A History

1805 1890



Gouverneur, A History, 1805 - 1890

Jane A. W. Parker

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PREFACE

Most of the histories of Gouverneur were written in the last century — **Hough's History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties**, Everts' **History of St. Lawrence County**, Gates Curtis' **History of St. Lawrence County**, and Mrs. Parker's **History of Gouverneur.** In 1905, Jay S. Corbin wrote an important monograph on Gouverneur as the core of the centennial volume that appeared that year. Mr. Corbin, unhappily, was not given time enough to do the task he was assigned; but, in spite of errors and poor editing, it is a valuable reference. The only accounts of Gouverneur written since 1905, so far as we know, are Clarence Webster's **History of Gouverneur** and Julius Bartlett's condensed **Highlights in the History of Gouverneur** in the small sesquicentennial publication of 1955. It is a pity that the latter does not provide a more thorough coverage of the period since 1890. Certainly Mr. Bartlett, who had devoted years to the study of Gouverneur's past, was uniquely prepared to do it. This task remains a challenge to some future historian.

As for the period from the settlement of Cambray to the apogee of Gouverneur's life as a community, at about the turn of the century, Mrs. Parker's **History** is altogether the most detailed and reliable account. It is so packed with information that one can read and reread it, and still go back to discover something he had not noticed before.

We have made no changes in the text. Examining it, the reader is made instantly aware that it was written by a keen-minded woman of the late Victorian period. So a certain formality of style is expected. What is unexpected are the sparkle and humor, the sympathetic likable human being. We have added an index which Mrs. Parker did not provide. Reluctantly, we have decided against an appendix, which, to be useful, would occupy more space than the text. Neither those who have done the research on this edition, nor anyone they could consult, could possibly answer many of the questions that arise. It is an appalling fact that events unrecorded are lost for all time and that the people who could answer our questions are long since dead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have assisted in this project and, especially, to thank the hundreds of people, many of them far from Gouverneur, whose financial help and encouragement have made possible a long-cherished dream — the establishment of an historical museum in Gouverneur.

Eugenia Huntress, President
Gouverneur Historical Association

FOREWORD

The Gouverneur Historical Association is honored to present, at the nation's Bicentennial, a new edition of Mrs. Parker's **History of Gouverneur.**

The author of this history, which covers the period from the first settlement to 1890, was born Jane Ann Williams in Onondaga County, in 1827. She died in Gouverneur in 1912. Her husband was Cornelius Adam Parker who was born in Gouverneur in 1821 and died in 1899. They had two children — Cornelius Arthur Parker (known as "C. Arthur Parker") and Sarah Parker. The son, like his father, was for many years an attorney in Gouverneur and will be remembered by older citizens as a tall, large-framed man with short-cut, snow-white hair. Miss Sarah Parker, tall, slim, and straight as a ramrod, usually dressed in black and lived with her brother in the family home next to the former Methodist parsonage on Grove Street.

Mrs. Parker wrote other prose and some poetry, mostly of an historical nature, all of which, so far as is known, has been lost. The late Miss Helen Potter, who as a child knew her well and frequently visited her, described her as "tall, slender and dignified. . she was always very kind and gracious. . . . . .and very fond of children."

Mrs. Parker based her writing on personal interviews and conversations with older citizens who remembered the early days of Gouverneur and who, in spite of "the treacherous memory of the aged," were her first and most valuable resource. She gathered her information on numerous trips with her husband, who represented land agents, into the country around Gouverneur. She asked questions, took voluminous notes and filed them away for future use. Several of the original settlers were still living as well as a number of second generation people. It was a time-consüming undertaking, but to Mrs. Parker it was a labor of love. She had no researchers, editors, photographers, artists, or clerical staff. The writing is her own and it has a freshness and an authentic ring that was lacking in later histories of Gouverneur. Her monograph is generally regarded as the definitive account of early Gouverneur. Part I covers the period from the original settlement to 1872. Part II completes the record to 1890. The complete **History** was published by the Gouverneur Free Press in 1890. There are probably fewer than a score of these original copies whose whereabouts are known, and they are, understandably, in poor condition.

The families, segments of whose genealogies appear in Appendix II, were arbitrarily selected for two reasons: first, they were prominent in the life of the community during the period covered by Mrs. Parker; second, they have descendants either living in this area or known to residents of Gouverneur today. They by no means represent all the families falling into these categories. We were simply limited by considerations of space. Others, like the Kinney and Noble families, whose benefactions have been important over the years, are not included because they belong properly to the period since 1890.

The genealogies, as you will discover, are fragmentary and are based on information from the families and on readily available records. For space reasons no dates are included except for the progenitors. In a few cases it was even impossible to establish dates for them. We regret that we were unable to trace any lineage for Pardon Babcock, although Mrs. Parker implies that he had children. The Babcock families of latter-day Gouverneur do not appear to be related to him.

The editors would like to thank all who assisted in the preparation of this manuscript - in particular, Mr. Harold Storie, for many years historian of the town of Gouverneur, for information, documents, pictures and maps he put at our disposal. We are indebted to the families of some of the early citizens for information that appears in the genealogies; to Mrs. Mary Beth Wade for suggestions regarding genealogical research; and to Mrs. Mary Biondi, county historian, for help in searching records. The Shakespeare Club of Gouverneur made available to us Miss Potter's vignette of Mrs. Parker, a charter member of that organization.

The errors which are certain to appear are our own.

Margaret H. Gleason
Margaret E. Nulty
Editors

PREFACE

MRS. PARKER

The following pages embodying the settlement and growth of Gouverneur with the principal events of its more than four-score years, were commenced in the "long ago" when in our early womanhood we came to the place making its interests our own and seeking the friendship of its people.

Many of the early settlers were then alive, and it was our pleasure to listen to the tales of olden time, of the lights and shadows of pioneer life, the successes and discouragements attendant upon it, and the unfading hope which like an inspiration dwelt in every heart. Our object has been to perpetuate family legends and to place on record the names of those to whom we are indebted for the existence of this goodly heritage. Too often the benefactor is lost in his benefactions while others enjoy the fruits of his industry.

With the exception of two or three dates, a residence, and some trifling mistakes in orthography which are corrected at the errata of the work, we believe every statement to be correct. When there was any conflict as to dates of facts, the whole has been carefully sifted and the results given. The work makes no claim to rhetorical flourish or elegance of diction; indeed the moods and tenses may have been occasionally ignored in the haste of preparing manuscript for the hungry printer. Aside from our own notes made from time to time as events occurred, the files of the *Herald—Times* and *Free Press* have been generously placed at our disposal, while the various officers of church, school, corporation and society have kindly submitted to the tiresome interview.

With our aged friends we have had many a season of delightful intercourse. Often would the tears start and the lips quiver as they rehearsed the experiences of those trying days. Now it was a story of want when the cruse of oil was low and the measure of meal was well nigh exhausted. Again it was a tale of alarm from some wild animal or the wilder savage. Sickness too, invaded the little settlement and death occasionally claimed a victim, though immunity from either was striking apparent, the simple habits of its people offering no invitation to disease.

Many matters of personal interest have been omitted, our aim being to give a continuous history of Gouverneur. As a volume of reference we think it will be found invaluable to all. The work might have been swelled to twice its size had we burdened it with the details common to such a narrative; but this has been scrupulously avoided, knowing the interest would in no wise be enhanced thereby.

The labor of preparing these pages has not been small, and it is but justice to the writer to say that the work is a gratuitous offering to our townspeople, who we hope will appreciate its neatly finished typographical appearance, if not the work of

THE AUTHOR.

The earliest picture of Main Street in the files of the Gouverneur Historical Association. Since the buildings are of wood, the picture must have been taken before the series of fires described by Mrs. Parker in Part II.

GOUVERNEUR — A HISTORY

PART ONE 1805 - 1872

CHAPTER I

An old man, over whose head the frosts of ninety winters have fallen, sits by my side. He is still upright, sprightly and genial; and like Moses of old, his eye is not dim, nor his natural force abated. His errand is briefly told; the printer has attacked him and there is no discharge on that warfare. "Now for a tale of olden time; tell us of other days before the forests were modeled into houses, when this lively town was a thing of fancy, and men carved their own fortunes by the unaided work of their hands."

In vain the veteran of years remonstrates; there are older settlers than he, his hands are stiff and his writing uncanny; memory is dull and thought comes not at his bidding. Cannot a compromise be effected? Now a bright idea strikes my aged friend, and with eager steps he hastens to my door, lays his case before me, and I cannot say him nay; would a more ready pen had been selected to perform the office. But I am to write of our beautiful town and village, of its early settlement by a hardy race — now mostly resting in the quiet cemetery which crowns a neighboring slope. I shall write of other days, when men and women ignoring the softer pursuits of later times, put hand to the plow and fingers to the loom, and sat down after the heat of the day to enjoy the fruits of honest labor.

In the forthcoming chapter of Gouverneur there will necessarily appear errors of date and location, as we have often to rely upon tradition and the treacherous memory of the aged. Time too, has removed many of the ancient land-marks; streams have been turned from their original course, or dried by the open clearings; hills are leveled and swamps drained, forests have been cut away and streets intersect the country, with railroads and telegraph, so that the network seems almost too tangled to unravel. Still we hope to keep near the bounds of truth and shall rely upon such assistance from our friends as they may be able to furnish. We want adventure, anecdote and any matter of interest they may have in store. Let nothing be omitted, so that every link in the chain may be complete and each take his place in the ranks as they pass in review before another generation. From the old settlers we have gathered a large amount of matter, and shall compile it as these sketches proceed.

During the year of 1805, some surveys were made in the township then known as Cambray, but not until February, 1806, were any lands occupied. About the middle of that month, four families left their pleasant homes in Hartford, Washington county, to try the perils and excitement of pioneer life. Their names stand first on the roll of settlers in Gouverneur. Pardon Babcock, Willard Smith, Eleazer Nichols and Isaac Austin. The latter gentleman seems to have planned and headed the expedition ,having prepared provisions for their sustenance, until the party should be enabled to provide for themselves. Eleven hundred pounds of pork was boned, salted and packed; sacks of sugar, packages of tea, coffee and spices, were purchased, with all the necessary adjuncts of larder and cellar, while eight bushels of beans accompanied the pork barrels to their destination, so that the settlers were in little danger of starvation.

The wife of Mr. Austin, though a helpless invalid, was carried the whole distance in a small crib prepared for the purpose, never shrinking from the hardships which awaited herself and family; a rheumatic affliction confined her to her couch for more than thirty years, from which she dictated the affairs of her household, and guided it with discretion. But little furniture was brought to the new home, as everything must be packed in the smallest possible compass. Eight straight-backed chairs with one small rocker started upon the journey, but these with one exception were broken on the way; an elder daughter occupied this for holding the baby and thus saved it from destruction.

The females and younger members of the party rested at a log shanty in Antwerp — held and kept by one Jershom Matoon, as Hotel — with provisions for man and beast, while the fathers and husbands proceeded to erect houses for their reception. The first building was an open shed, into which the sun and moon shone without opposition until a corresponding one was raised in front, leaving room for a fire at each end for the triple purpose of light, heat and a defence against wild animals. But four of this party now remain — Mrs. Willard Smith, Mrs. Rufus Smith, daughter of Eleazer Nichols, Elwell Austin and Mrs. Josiah Waid, children of Isaac Austin. The writer is largely indebted to Mrs. Waid for particulars concerning the infancy of the town. She enjoys a green old age attended by a loving daughter and still resides near the home of her childhood.

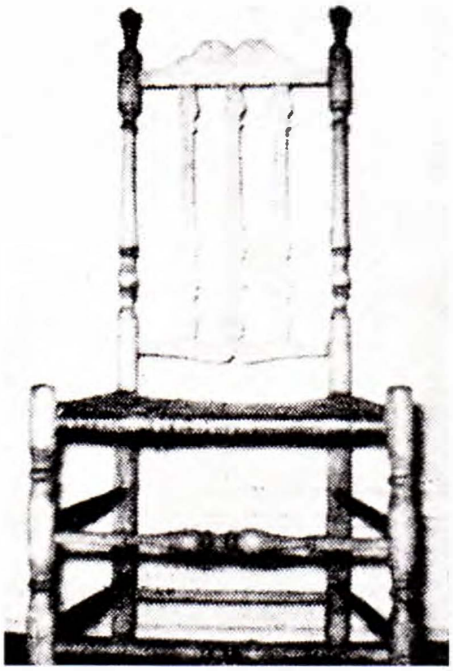
The settlers drove before them seven cows and four yoke of oxen, their only shelter being some leaning hemlocks with the under branches trimmed away, and their food mostly boughs cut for browsing. Messers. Smith and Nichols built a second shanty near the river below the present residence of James Maddock, and Stephen Babcock erected the first four-sided building where Joel Key's house now stands and which has lately passed into the hands of James Duffie. The following season considerable land was cleared for planting and sowing, some log houses and barns built and the settlement assumed quite an air of civilization and prosperity. Six or eight bushels of potatoes were purchased in Antwerp, the seed-ends carefully saved and their eyes dug out for planting. Grubbing hoes were used for opening the ground both for potatoes and corn.

On the last day of March, 1806, Isaac Morgan and wife from Vermont, joined the settlement, and while assisting them over the river, an ox belonging to Mr. Austin, broke through the ice and became so chilled

that a fit of sickness ensued during which he was tenderly nursed by his owner who walked to Richville with a bed-tick, which he backed home full of hay for the poor animal, and was soon rewarded by seeing him restored to health and service; a few months later, the foolish beast in exploring a miry spring, lost his life, leaving only a valuable hide as legacy to his protector.

NANCY NICHOLS SMITH, daughter of Eleazer Nichols and wife of Rufus Smith.

PATTY AUSTIN WAID, daughter of Isaac Austin and wife of Josiah Waid.



AUSTIN CHAIR

During the following summer the journey to Antwerp was shortened by a more direct route, and a road cut through to Richville by voluntary labor. Four pigs were purchased at the latter place and backed home in bags, also a few hens and two pairs of geese. Moose meat, venison and partridges were often obtained of the Indians in exchange for tobacco, bread and any trinkets they fancied. In the immediate neighborhood were many wigwams of the St. Regis Indians, who, although proving harmless, were a source of anxiety to the settlers. Their friendship, however, soon exhibited itself in gifts of maple sugar, baskets and berries, with an occasional call for rum and tobacco. One squaw pleaded sleeplessness as the result of being without the latter commodity; and a young Indian begged of Mrs. Austin a few gills of whiskey to quiet a joint tooth-ache held by himself and wife. The good stuff was given him in a small tea pot; but he soon returned for more saying: "It come so easy he got not home before all was gone." The latter application being refused, he sat down by the fire and was soon in a glorious drunken sleep. As other parties brought on a small quantity of spirits, complaint was made that it held too much river water and did not produce the desired and delightful sensations of former libations.

The Sabbath was always sacredly kept, and of the religious services we shall speak in our next.

CHAPTER II

Whatever our settlers left behind, it is certain they brought their religion with them; and not a Sabbath passed but services of some kind commemorated the day. Prayer meetings were held during the week, and sermons were read from time to time. The children were early taught to sing, and with their parents, formed a choir, whose harmony was re-echoed by the surrounding forest as their notes were wafted homeward.

Stephen Patterson, an intelligent layman, read and expounded the scriptures; he is reported a godly man, and one thoroughly versed in Bible lore, so that his teachings and exhortations were listened to with a lively interest. Mr. Patterson was not at this time a resident of the place, but with his family removed hither the following year.

Early in the spring of 1806, Messers. Pettengil and Nichols, missionaries from Connecticut arrived, and made a short sojourn in the settlement. They were ferried singly over the river, and while the boatmen were after the second member of the party, the former critically surveying the home and surroundings of Mr. Austin, remarked upon the impracticability of holding a meeting in the place, which Mrs. A., construing into a slight of her humble quarters, replied with some spirit, "Our Saviour was born in a stable and you can preach in our shanty." It is needless to add the preaching was done before a very respectable audience. The text was from Mark, VI, 12. "And they went out and preached that men should repent."

Mr. Heath, a Methodist clergyman from De Kalb, occasionally officiated, but no church was regularly organized until 1810, of which we shall speak in a future number.

As before remarked, provisions for two years had been provided for the settlers, but the addition of other families and the frequent calls from the Indians, so reduced the store as to call for the most rigid economy; corn was pounded for bread and pudding, and the precious wheaten loaf was daily dealt out to serve as an antidote to the evils arising from the use of corn alone. The muddy roads being impassable for loaded teams, it was late in December before any movement could be made toward replenishing the empty flour bins of the neighborhood. Just before Christmas, Mr. Isaac Austin, with an ox-team started for Coopers Falls carrying corn for grinding and bringing

home a quantity of flour for himself and others. He was absent three days, a blinding storm making progress almost impossible. At home, but two quarts of hoarded flour remained, and his anxious family had well-nigh given him up for lost. The little ones had seasoned their homely fare with scrapings of birch bark, and retired for the night; but the faithful wife and mother kept fire and watched until midnight, when the cheery "whoa," fell upon her ear, and all was well. Mr. Austin becoming benumbed with cold had found himself sleeping upon his load — and this while in a standing position. Feeling his danger he aroused himself bv vigorous motion, and as before stated, was soon with his delighted family. On the first day of January, 1809, a company of Indians made a formal visit at the house of Mr. Austin, having previously notified him of their intentions. They numbered about one dozen, and were arrayed in their best attire, painted and hung with feathers and ornaments of every hue. As they neared the house, a salute of several guns somewhat startled the host and family, but after this friendly demonstration they relapsed into their usual quiet, and patiently awaited the dinner they saw preparing.

The bill of fare, as reported by Mrs. Waid, should have satisfied a company of gourmands. It consisted of roasted ribs, fried cakes, bread and wine; after which they smoked their pipes of marble and buckhorn, and returned to their homes in better condition than many who have since made New Years calls. The Indians possessed many trinkets of unwrought silver which they claimed to have found a three days' journey up the river; but none of the settlers could be induced to accompany them to the spot, such was their guarded care, lest themselves or families should be betrayed by their red-skinned neighbors. That silver was found at no great distance from Gouverneur, is undoubtedly true, and it remains for some future explorer to find the coveted deposit.

The maple trees which still abound in this region, were quite a source of wealth both to the whites and Indians. Troughs were made either by hewing or burning a cavity in a log, until it was capable of holding sap, which was afterward boiled in a caldron kettle brought all the way from Washington county. The female members of the settlement often attended to this duty, the men being engaged in felling trees and clearing up the land for tilling.

The cows and other live stock imported seemed to have an intelligent perception of their duties, seldom wandering from home and fattening themselves by becoming consideration, so that soon pork, fowls, beef and butter, were no longer luxuries. Seven pigs, from a family of sixteen, weighed when dressed two hundred and fifty pounds apiece. For the benefit of porkraisers, we would remark that they were fed upon boiled corn, with an occasional dessert of same pounded. Neighborly exchanges were made in eggs and poultry, two large or three small hen's eggs being deemed an equivalent for one goose egg.

The first birth in the settlement was Allen Smith, son of Willard Smith, before mentioned. He was born May 8th, 1806, and died March 9th, 1871.

For two years the only means of communication between the banks of the river was by boat or a perilous footpath, formed by felling trees from opposite directions, their upper branches being trimmed off and leveled. These rested upon the island in the river just above this village, and which have ever stood the firm abutments of subsequent bridges.

The bark-covered houses and barns answered well for a time, but the sun and rain so warped this primitive roofing that it was deemed expedient to seek a substitute. This was only accomplished by a toilsome journey to Coopers Falls, the nearest saw mill then in the county; boards were rafted or drawn from this distance — venders of patent roofing then being unknown — and in this tedious manner, were comfortable shelters secured.

A valuable donation of books, consisting of religious and secular histories, with issues from the American Tract Society, was received from Connecticut during the infancy of the settlement. These works, it is believed, were instrumental in moulding the intelligent mind for which the early inhabitants were remarkable.

Although the settlers enjoyed an unusual degree of health, the services of a physician were sometimes necessary; and the nearest one to be procured was Dr. Seeley of Dekalb; it is also related that so tardy were his movements that patients frequently recovered before his arrival.

In the spring of 1807, Dr. John Spencer, wife and two children came from Windsor, Connecticut, and for years he was the only physician within the circuit of many miles. He traveled far and near in the performance of his duties, often going a great distance on foot, remaining out over night with the sick whom he nursed with assiduous care. At one time several families in Antwerp were prostrated with a malignant fever; these he visited from time to time, always on foot and by an obscure and unfrequented path. Early one morning in December, 1807, he set out for his usual visit. When about three miles from the settlement, he was startled by the sight of a deer pursued by a black wolf. Secreting himself behind a log, he watched with interest the chase, when a pack of eleven others came upon the scene of action, but discovering the new game paused for reflection, leaving their comrade to look after the deer. Their counsel, however, was of short duration, for with loud howls and open jaws they assailed the doctor, whose first impulse was to retreat. Near the present residence of M. G. Norton, was an unfinished log house; this he hoped might be reached, but deeming such a movement impracticable, he next bethought himself of being treed; the latter suggestion was however abandoned, as he was reminded that wolves had no occasion to hurry, and might detain him longer than was agreeable, as the cold was intense. So divesting himself of coat, hat and unnecessary burdens, he cut a heavy beech cudgel and rushed at his assailants, beating the icy bushes right and left and making all the noise he was capable of doing, by shouting, pounding and stamping, until the pack thought best to retire. Caution now pointed homeward, but duty was beyond, and our hero somewhat sensitive as to his reputation for bravery ,determined to proceed, which he did although haunted for some time by the disappointed howls of his late distant assailants.

Dr. Spencer was a dignified but genial gentleman of the olden time, and we well remember his fair face surmounted by hair of silvery whiteness. His good wife survived him several years, and both are now sleeping near the scenes of their former labors.

CHAPTER III

The high reputation of the country for farming purposes, together with the low price of land and the available water power of the Oswegatchie, soon tempted new adventurers to Gouverneur, so that in the spring of 1807, there were twelve families in the settlement, namely: Isaac Austin, Willard Smith, Pardon Babcock, Eleazer Nichols, Isaac Morgan, Richard Townsend, Daniel Austin, Stephen Patterson, Benjamin Smith, Israel Porter, Stephen Smith and Dr. John Spencer. It will be seen that the Smiths were then as now, largely represented. Land which was originally twenty shillings per acre, now readily sold for three or more dollars and was taken up in plots ranging from two to five hundred acres. A large tract was soon purchased from the proprietor, Mr. Gouverneur Morris, and the work of clearing rapidly progressed. It was no unusual thing for one farmer with the assistance of a hired man to cut over six or eight acres during the summer, and fallow it for a crop of winter wheat. The reports of these wheat harvests approach so nearly to the fabulous that we forbear mentioning the number of bushels to the acre: suffice it to say that many farmers soon found themselves out of debt and the owners of fine productive farms. The nearest market at this time was Ogdensburg, where all produce must be carried by sleigh or wagon, over rough and unimproved roads, or floated by raft or canoe down the Oswegatchie river. The wholesale destruction of forests has always marked the track of the pioneer, and perhaps as matter of defence against wild beasts the evil cannot be remedied. Some years since while watching the planting of shade trees in our own streets, a plain hearted old gentleman remarked, "We have been all our lives endeavoring to get out of the woods, and the next generation will spend their days in getting back again." One who wielded one of the first axes in Gouverneur, has often told the writer his method of providing the winter fuel. This, with his mode of building and kindling a fire, may not prove uninteresting to our readers. "All the down wood was at once refused; nothing but the body of standing timber was considered fit for burning; this was never piled nor corded, but stacked so as to season and shed the rain, and subsequently snaked over to the house where it was once more cut in twain and was then ready for use. The most of us had an andiron or firedog, some had only stone supports."

"The mode of procedure was first to carefully fit a back-log to the rear of the fire-place, then one as nicely adjusted to the front — this only for foundation — and the work of filling up commenced. Smaller logs were piled in, and the interstices stopped with fatpine, chips, dried bark, etc. After the application of a few coals to the base of this structure and one or two puffs from the mouth or bellows, the fire was considered made for the day, unless the "women folks" saw fit to make occasional additions of light stuff — for be it known this was always the work of masculine hands, the strength of two men being considered necessary to accomplish the daily task. This duty over, we again repaired to the woods, felling trees and chopping until time for feeding the cattle and replenishing the fire at home. Most of the winter was spent in this manner," adds our informant, "but them fires was cheerful, though."

Aside from the light of the fire-place, but few means for illumination were at hand; some candles were moulded or dipped, but so few animals were slaughtered that tallow was not plenty. Beggar-lamps were sometimes improvised by melting lard in a shallow dish and tying a small weight in a rag leaving the end above the grease for lighting. Pine knots were often used and many who are not reckoned of the old settlers well remember the cheery light from these natural illuminations.

So much land was occupied upon the south side of the river that the want of a bridge began to engross the public mind, the more so as several persons had narrowly escaped drowning while attempting to cross by boat or the foot-path formerly described. The settlers receiving no encouragement from the town of Oswegatchie, of which they formed a part, with characteristic independence raised among themselves the sum of five hundred dollars with which to build the bridge. Mr. Isaac Kendall was the contractor, and in the face of every discouragement it was in a few months completed. A log hut was erected to protect the workmen from the weather, floats were constructed upon which to operate, timber was cut, hewn and hauled to the river, which was soon spanned by a rough but convenient structure which lasted for twelve years and was then replaced by one built by James Parker, of which more anon.

The bridge had no railing but heavy beams pinned to the sides for protection. Great was the rejoicing at this achievement of industry and art; calls and visits of congratulation were exchanged and no draw-back appeared to hinder the advancement of civilization. Mothers took their babes and spinning wheels out to spend the day with the nearest neighbor, quilting parties were instituted and days of feasting followed in the wake of the new bridge.

The settlers for a time had a preference for locating at Natural Dam, a beautiful sheet of water a mile or two below the present village of Gouverneur. Here in 1808, a large clearing was made by order of Mr. Morris, and a sawmill and flouring mill erected at the expense of the proprietor. Mr. Isaac Austin built these mills with the understanding that certain rentals should accrue to himself, but there being some defect in the contract he lost largely, became discouraged, abandoned the enterprise and returned to his own premises. An incident which occurred during the raising of the mill deserves being perpetuated. Elder Sawyer came on horse back to look over the ground preparatory to holding mission ser-

vices, but finding the male members of the community absent — they being engaged in raising the mills, a work of three or more days — he concluded to postpone the meeting to a more favorable opportunity. "What," exclaimed the indomitable Mrs. Austin, "cannot you preach to the women as did Paul and Silas?" The hint was taken, word went far and near, and quite an audience of females gathered to listen to the precious word. The text upon this occasion, which was singularly appropriate was from Acts XVI, 13: "And we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither." Whether any Lydias appeared among the hearers as the result of this discourse, tradition saith not.

The religious harmony which prevailed among the town fathers is well worthy the imitation of their sons. The first families were Baptists, but a large Congregational element was early developed, and until the organization of the Baptist church in 1810, no outward feeling was manifested regarding sect or belief, and all parties worshiped together, each giving of his ability for the support of the gospel by whomsoever preached or declared. Early in August, 1808, a shadow came over the settlement in sudden death of Emily Porter, a sprightly little girl of two years, and daughter of Israel Porter before named. She had been out during the day with some other children gathering peas; and it is believed ate a quantity of the half ripened kernels which swelled in the stomach producing violent spasms from which she was only released by death. This occasion led to the selection of the first burying ground which was near the present Presbyterian church in a hemlock grove. The crossing of the river being necessary to reach Mr. Porter's house, and the bridge not yet completed the body was brought over to the house of Mr. Isaac Austin where impressive funeral services were held by Stephen Patterson. The coffin was made of unstained pine, and at its removal fifty years later was found in a good state of preservation. The grave was immediately surrounded by stout pickets and otherwise so protected as to secure it from invasion by wild beasts.

The Indians, whose history is intimately connected with our own, lost so much of their native shyness as to prove a source of annoyance. Their visits were made at all times and upon all occasions and no ordinary hint moved them to departure, particularly if the family meal was at hand. As it was not deemed expedient to offend them these visitations were quietly overlooked. One copper-faced lad of sixteen or seventeen years conceived a passionate affection for one of the comely daughters of the settlers. His regard was manifested by sundry gifts of baskets, maple sugar, birds and other game, always accompanying the latter with the assurance that they were the fruit of his own gun or bow. The young man's dress upon such occasions was in the most approved style of Indian decoration. A hawk's tail formed a crest above his painted brow ,while various trinkets dangled from any part of his person where they could find a lodgment. But our damsel was proof against such charms, the discarded lover coolly withdrew his attentions, leaving her to become the cherished wife of one of her own choice and color.

CHAPTER IV

In the autumn of 1809, it was deemed expedient to open a district school, there being about a dozen children in the neighborhood between the ages of five and fifteen, and, indeed, several younger aspirants for knowledge were soon added to the number.

Accordingly a board of trustees was organized and a school house built of logs, near the spot now occupied by the Presbyterian church. This structure measured twelve feet by sixteen, measuring from the outer walls. A large fire-place ornamented one side, the teacher's throne a second, and three or four benches hewn from logs, the remaining two. The furniture was, of course, scanty in the extreme, consisting of small deal table, one chair and, we may suppose, a few twigs of beech or birch completed the outfit. A young man named Silas Brooks, of Antwerp, was engaged as teacher, and for a whole week imparted lessons of wisdom to the assembled group, but becoming homesick and dissatisfied at limiting his efforts to so small anumber, he resigned and sought a wider field of action, where we may hope he found full play for the exercise of his intellectual forces.

Miss Betsy S. Sackett was solicited to fill the vacancy, which we believe she did with credit to herself and the satisfaction of her employers. The names of her scholars have been preserved and the list may awaken some memories of olden time in the hearts of those who may recognize an old friend or playmate. They were Rebecca Austin, Patty Austin, Elwell E. Austin, Amanda Babcock, Isaac Morgan, Jr., Sally Nichols, James Nichols, Nancy Nichols, Iantha Porter, George Washington Porter, Eliza Austin — an occasional scholar — and Betsy Spencer, less than three years old, who was drawn to school on a hand sled by a slave boy named George. Of the latter scholar it is reported that at this early age she was a ready reader, and the subsequent advantages bestowed upon her by indulgent parents have long placed her among our most intelligent citizens.

Later, Miss Sackett was married to John Parker and settled in the town of Fowler, where she died March 22nd, 1861, in the 71st year of her age.

The first slave brought to town was one Jenny, belonging to Dr. Richard Townsend. In early life she lost a leg which was amputated below the knee, and henceforth propelled herself by a contrivance attached thereto in the shape of a small stool, padded for a rest, and which she navigated with considerable ease. Jenny was at one time conveyed to Ephraim Gates, for the consideration of a span of horses and sleigh, but her health failing so as to render her nearly useless, she was repurchased by her former owner, by whom she was treated with uniform kindness until her death, which occurred the following season. Her funeral was largely attended and every token of respect manifested. Dr. John Spencer read the funeral sermon, and the poor maimed body was decently interred in the public burying ground.

The postal arrangements were for a long time in an imperfect state. The settlers mostly received their mail from the Black River country, whence a man was occasionally dispatched on foot to bring the letters,

MYRON CUSHMAN

CUSHMAN HOUSE — The home of Myron Cushman, an Abolitionist, his daughter, Christialania, and grandson, Arthur E. Cushman. Reputed to have been a station on the "underground railroad," it is located at 120 Rock Island Street.

there deposited with Haile Coffeen, postmaster for that section. The cost of one letter was seldom below twenty or thirty cents, and newspapers were rarely to be had. Dr. Richard Townsend was eventually appointed postmaster for Gouverneur. This gentleman made an office of his table drawer, where all missives for the district were securely kept until called for. The mail was carried from Black River, or Watertown, to Ogdensburg on horseback by Levi Holt, whose cheery face was always welcomed in the settlement, and whose retentive memory furnished most of the floating events of the day to the ready listeners on his beat. Great was the rejoicing when a few years later the mail was transferred to a four-wheeled vehicle, and the driver's horn awoke the surrounding hills to a realization of their importance as a town among towns, with a post-office and all the elements of a glorious future.

Mr. Isaac Austin was early elected justice of the peace, which office then carried more weight and respectability than it has done in latter times. The justice was considered the regulator of public and private affairs, and the guardian of town morals; he settled family difficulties, gave advice freely, and brought offenders to trial; he married parties cheaper than the minister, and tied the hymenial knot as closely — in short he was the faithful arbiter of all disputes and the willing servant of all parties. Upon one occasion, the squire was called to walk a distance of six miles to join a couple in the bonds of wedlock. Attiring himself in his best velvet suit, he quietly proceeded upon his way, doubtless musing over the anticipated fee, when he carelessly collided with a projecting knot of wood, splitting open the knee of his cherished pants and bruising the unlucky member so as to render a bandage imdispensable. A pocket handkerchief supplied the latter want but gave an undignified appearance to the offending leg. He, however, arrived at his destination without further mishap, performed the ceremony from a secluded corner of the room ,made his apology for not remaining at the marriage feast and returned home, much to the surprise of his family who did not look for his coming before the following day. At another time the good man went a distance of several miles upon a similar errand, accompanied by his invalid wife in her cradle and drawn over rough and unimproved roads. They were amply repaid by the pleasant company and bountiful repast which awaited them, and all hands voted the entertainment well worth the trouble and labor of the undertaking.

The ever present Indians evidently exercised their ingenuity in contriving ways and means for refreshing their inner man at other people's expense. The squire and family had one day regaled themselves upon a "boiled dinner," and at the usual hour retired to rest. A little after midnight a slight noise attracted the attention of the sleepers, when it was discovered that a party of the redskins had taken possession of the kitchen and were generously helping themselves to the best the house afforded. Pork and beef were gulped down in chunks, and potatoes packed them into place. The bread disappeared like snow in summer, and the empty platter bore a famished look as the bewildered owner made his appearance upon the scene of action. Remonstrance was in vain; the thing was done, and it was not the part of prudence to arouse the ire of the intruders. They however saw the necessity of an apology, and pleaded an unsuccessful chase, extreme hunger and the known generosity of their host. A gentle reproof was administered, with instructions to call in future by daylight and make their wants known to the proper authorities.

Although the country was considerably cleared and settled, the wolves and bears still held possession, and made frequent inroads upon the domestic animals and growing crops. Several incidents concerning the denizens of the forest have been furnished the writer, and it has been thought expedient to embody the most of them in the present chapter without reference to date or location.

Mr. Willard Smith, having captured a large fat bear, resolved in giving a dinner party in honor thereof. A fine roast was taken off, and a small oven of stones was improvised out of doors for cooking the much prized delicacy. The dish was prepared after the most approved style, the fat carefully drained off, and a gravy of drawn butter enriched the whole. All the vegetables of the season adorned the board, and, adds our informant, "I have seldom seen a more inviting meal." The remainder of the bear was salted and packed for future use, and made an excellent substitute for pork.

Bear catching was reduced to a science and the settlers lost all fears of the animals, so that bruin was frequently vanquished by a single hand, and forth with found quarters in a tub of brine, while his shaggy hide adorned the sunny side of some barn, where it was left to be cured by wind and weather, and was a trophy of no mean character. No wild animal ventured nearer the haunts of civilization than the bear. He trampled down and carried off the corn, stole the maple sugar, tipped over the sap troughs and once or twice essayed a paw into the boiling syrup, much to the amusement of the attendants, whose shouts of laughter were only drowned by the growls of the discomfited beast.

Mr. Ephraim Case adopted a novel mode of capturing a bear which was destroying his corn. A piece of meat was attached to a rope, and the hunter retired to a neighboring hill, where with his gun he awaited an attack; but becoming drowsy, he fastened the rope to his leg and fell into a quiet nap, from which he was awakened by an unceremonious journey down the hill; he at once fired in the direction of the new conveyance when the steed took fright and retired from the scene of action.

Henry B. Holbrook — lately deceased — was accustomed to relate an adventure which here deserves mention. He was about driving up his cows for milking, but missing a valuable mare he started in pursuit. After tracking her some distance, five large wolves disputed with him the right of way. As there happened to be plenty of stones in the neighborhood, he pelted the pack for a while and then gracefully backed off, leaving his assailants masters of the field. By this time night had set in, and Mr. H., coming directly upon the house of Wm. Rhodes, near Little Bow, he lodged there, unable to proceed further. But a different scene was transpiring at home; the family and neighbors being thoroughly alarmed instituted a search for the missing party, blowing horns and otherwise making signals by which the wanderer might learn his whereabouts, should he be within hearing. The innocent cause of all this tumult was afterward found in a neighboring pasture, evidencing by a crop of porcupine quills protruding from her nose, that she had met with a more serious encounter than her master. Upon another occasion Mr. Holbrook in returning from a visit, became benighted and camped out in the woods; hitching his horse to a tree, he made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, but the restive beast told of other parties present, and our hero sought a tree, where, with chattering teeth he awaited the morning, which hurried never for his accommodation. Half perished, at daylight, he again mounted his horse and at last reached the house of Israel Porter, where he lived at the time.

Our readers must be satisfied with one or two more incidents which serve to show the hardships of pioneer life and the trials of those who prepared the way for the pleasant homes we enjoy.

On a Sabbath morning, Lyman Dodge found a large black wolf in a trap, and in the absence of fire-arms, the beast was killed by blows from a long pole, snarling and growling to the last. At another time a party of coon-hunters treed an imaginary coon up a hemlock stub; failing to fetch him down by ordinary means, a fire was kindled at the base, when a bear dropped into the flames and made off for the thicket, leaving behind an unquestionable odor of burnt hair.

Mr. James Parker, a charming old man of ninety years, has furnished us many items of interest which will in due time appear. Among them he mentions the killing of a deer, after a playful remark from his father that "breakfast would have time to cook if they waited for him."

CHAPTER V

For some time our friends had been subjected to petty annoyances and inconveniences, which though small, aroused in the colony the same spirit which actuated our revolutionary fathers to declare their independence. The freeman's treasured privilege of voting could not be exercised short of a toilsome journey to Ogdensburg, and there each man must prove his own identity after a dictatorial formula provided for the occasion. Such indignities could in no wise be suffered, and the spring of 1810 found a respectable number of men prepared to take official proceedings toward becoming an independent body.

There were between two and three hundred inhabitants in the settlement, and about thirty legal voters. To some of the latter, Daniel D. Tompkins and DeWitt Clinton, no doubt, owed in part their election, for it is reported that party spirit ran high and ambitious mothers, inspired by the popular tumult, named many of their boy-babies Daniel or DeWitt, and it is presumed that some of the girls rejoiced in the names of their respective spouses.

After the usual legislative proceedings, the town was formed from Oswegatchie, April 5th, 1810, and named Gouverneur, after Gouverneur Morris, the first proprietor of the district. A caucus was held on "Cold Friday," at the office of Dr. Richard Townsend, and the first town meeting at the house of Dr. John Spencer, at which time the following officers were elected:

Supervisor, Richard Townsend; Town Clerk, Amos Comly; Assessors, Pardon Babcock, Rufus Washburn and Isaac Morgan; Commissioners of highways, Amos Comly, Ephraim Case and Benjamin Smith; Overseers of the poor, Jonathan Colton and Israel Porter; Constable, Collector and keeper of the public peace, Barnabas Wood; Pound Master, Israel Porter. These gentlemen are said to have discharged their

duties with so much zeal and fidelity, that crime and disorder were strangers — introduced only since they have gone to their rest — and entertained by few of their descendants.

Progress was now the watch-word, and this spirit exhibited itself in public improvements whenever and wherever they could be advanced. The west side of the river first boasted an inn, kept by Israel Porter, and a commodious log school house was built near Fosgate's four corners. John Cheney Rich, late of Richville, N.Y., taught the first school, and his own intelligent family attest to his competency as instructor of the young. This school house was also used as a place for religious services, which were for a long time held there by the Baptist and Congregational denominations. This portion of the town for a time out-stripped the other in the number and quality of its buildings. The country was more level and better cleared, and several influential families having located here, the tide of civilization swept westward; but the water privileges of the opposite side together with early associations caused business to gravitate in that direction, and the establishment of a store by John Brown forever settled the location of Gouverneur village.

The first store — which was a model of its kind — deserves more than a passing notice. Goods were brought from Black River, Sacketts Harbor and Ogdensburg, and were sometimes even shipped from parts of Canada. Calico sold from two shillings to fifty cents per yard; cotton cloths varied according to the texture from two shillings to one dollar per yard, and broadcloths were sometimes valued as high as ten dollars per yard; and as the war of 1812 approached, goods reached most fabulous prices. "Yet," says one, "we were always well dressed and kept within range of New York fashions." Domestic manufactures were often the only currency in circulation. "But I reckon," adds our informant, "that we were happier in those days than now." Neighbors were then neighbors in the scriptural sense of the word, one was no better than the other, and the petty frauds, emulations and bickering of later years, were to them unknown.— Mothers nursed their own babes, spun, wove and knit, while husbands held the plow with as honest a pride as their sons now support a ratan or light a cigar.

Mrs. Pardon Babcock, who died March 27, 1856, as the age of 78, was wont, after performing her daily tasks, to visit her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Daniel Austin, by boat, which she rowed with much dexterity, often carrying one or more children upon the journey. The new cemetery is located upon the farm once owned by Pardon Babcock, and we could wish a suitable monument placed over the remains of the aged pair, recognizing their virtues and services in a becoming manner.

By the aid of judicious runners, the praises of Gouverneur were sounded in all directions, so that scarce a month passed without some addition of numbers and wealth to the place. Emigration was diverted from adjacent towns which were soon outstripped by the infant aspirant for honors. The settlers, too, were solid men, possessing little of the spirit of adventure, and who were willing to invest their money in lands to be cleared and cultivated for themselves and children. It has also been remarked that few new places contained a like number of educated persons. A circulating library was early set in motion, and this love of reading has so been transmitted from parent to child, that scarce a family can be found which has not a well-stored book case in its possession. Old letters, deeds and public documents further impress this fact upon us. All are marked by correct orthography and a bold fair hand.

A goodly share of prudence marked all operations, so that plenty and prosperity were early guests. Many articles were exported, so that the out lays were not over-balanced by needless expenditure. Black salts, or potash, maple sugar, wheat flower and cattle were sold in Ogdensburg, Watertown and Sacketts Harbor; from the latter point salt was obtained as also some other articles of exchange. A fine pair of horses were reared and trained for De Witt Clinton, and driven to Albany, where he was then Lieut. Governor of the state.

Flouring mills were erected at several points below the town, where grain was either exchanged or converted into such matter as was most needed at home. Mr. James Parker relates that upon one occasion he drove to Church's Mills over an obscure road, or blazed path, as it in reality was. Having set out to return home with his load, he was obliged to ford two streams and back his grain over to secure it from becoming wet. Night and weariness overtaking him near the residence of the late Harvey VanBuren, he again unloaded, turned his oxen loose, and as it was raining, placed his cart over the precious grain and crept under it for a night's repose. A company of wolves relieved the tedium of the night by their howls, so that the good man was early prepared to resume his journey.

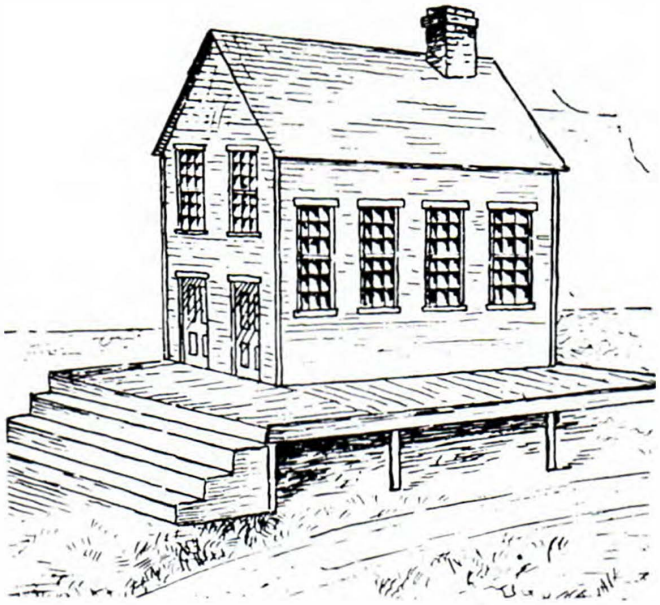
Mr. Parker with his younger brother John, came to Gouverneur April 19, 1808. Both married daughters of Elijah Sackett, and both made farming their pursuit. John Parker settled in Fowler, where he died May 26, 1866, aged eighty-three years. James Parker was born in Canterbury, Conn., April 1st, 1792, and consequently completed his ninetieth year the present month; he still resides upon the farm he chose and cleared, and in the house he assisted to erect. His form is scarcely bent with age, his hair is silvery white and his fine blue eyes as clear as ever. They are to-day surmounted by heavy dark eyebrows which give him the appearance of firmness and concentration, characteristics which have followed him through life. With the exception of deafness, his faculties are unimpaired; he has ever been a model of temperance and industry ,and as a gentleman and christian his record is untarnished. A slight impediment of speech made him diffident in conversation, for which reason his virtues were better known in his family than in the outer world; but no philanthropic object passed his purse unaided, and his hand was ever first in public improvements. May he long live to cheer us with his presence, and may his bright example be a model for many.

The years of 1810 and '12 were full of interest to the town of Gouverneur. The first church organization was completed, a clergyman ordained, and officers

elected, and one or two schools established; mutterings of a coming storm were heard from all directions, and our northern frontier was illy protected against an invading army. The Indians of adjacent towns had made unfriendly demonstrations and some faint hearts turned homeward for safety. The latter circumstance for a time discouraged emigration and palsied commerce; but the tide of progress could not be readily stayed, and men moved firmly and cautiously upon their way. Crops were planted and harvested, public improvements were undertaken, streets straightened and widened, fences built, new houses erected and old ones repaired. Laws were made for the destruction of noxious weeds, cattle forbidden the highway and ducks and geese were fined for leaving their own premises.

We shall next proceed to some particulars regarding the Baptist church, its pastors and officers and its present condition and prospects.

CHAPTER VI



FIRST CHURCH of the Baptist Society erected in 1822, from a pen and ink drawing found in an old record book. The drawing is well preserved and is done on tracing paper, the clipping said, and a note was made that the cut "is in a rack at the head of the stairs to the second floor."

No settlement can be considered well established without a religious organization; and men only interested in the sale of lands have ever found the school and church valuable adjuncts in the advancement of their projects. Our settlers, we believe, were influenced by higher and better motives; they had left behind them refinements and privileges which they were not disposed to bury, and in the bright future, they saw the wilderness blossom like the rose; churches and seminaries arise under the magic hand of civilization, and public improvement which should outrival the scenes of early years. Fathers and mothers, are not your golden projects realized? and hear you not from earth and heaven, the whispered and welcome plaudit of "Well done, good and faithful servants?"

For the following history and establishment of the Baptist church in this village, we are indebted to the records which have been kindly placed in our hands, as well as to several aged citizens who have furnished facts of interest: On the 18th day of February, 1811, a committee of three persons — namely, Elder Amasa Brown, Timothy Atwood and Eli Carington, of the first Baptist church, of Hartford, Washington county, met at the house of Isaac Austin; and after prayer to the great Head of the church, proceeded to hear the request and resolutions laid before them. The articles were, first, Doctrinal, second, Practical and third the Covenant; to which, after mature deliberation, the committee resolved to accede, giving the petitioners the right hand of fellowship as a church and as brethren of the church.

There were eighteen members all told; their names were Jonathan Payne, Stephen Patterson, Eleazer Nichols, John Brown, Hezekiah Nichols, Isaac Austin, Benjamin Drake, Aaron Atwood, Joel Atwood, Tabitha Austin, Zilpha Gates, Patty Payne, Alice Payne, Betsy Thompson, Nancy Nichols, Lovicie Smith, Polly Brown and Hannah Atwood. At this time Jonathan Payne was chosen moderator, Stephen Patterson, clerk, and soon after Jonathan Payne was called to serve as deacon. Isaac Austin and John Brown took charge of finances and collections. In December of this year it was resolved to join the county association, and a committee was appointed to attend the next meeting at Stockholm.

The desire of all was now to have permanent religious services, and it was unanimously voted that Jonathan Payne should be ordained to the work of the gospel ministry. After due examination the business of consecration proceeded, assisted by delegates from Hartford, Denmark, Watertown, Rutland and Henderson. Mr. Payne related his religious experience, call to the ministry, etc., which being satisfactory, the work of ordination was completed on Tuesday, February 20th, 1812. Elder Osgood gave an introductory review of the church and its organization, Elder Parsons preached the sermon, Elder Card made the consecration prayer, and with Elders Brown and Gill, laid their hands upon the candidate, Elder Brown gave the pastoral charge, Elder Gill the right hand of fellowship and Elder Johnson made the concluding prayer.

The services were conducted at the school house described in a foregoing chapter, and were of a solemn and impressive character. People flocked in from adjoining towns and all doors were hospitably opened for the numerous guests. In March, Aaron Atwood was chosen deacon, and the Saturday preceeding the first Sabbath of every month was set apart for church and covenant meetings, and we believe has been religiously observed up to the present time.

The first baptism was that of Sally Haskins, and took place Sunday, June 7th, 1812, near the place now used, and nearly opposite the residence of A. P. Killmer Esq. Elder Jonathan Payne performed the service, and a large number of persons witnessed the ordinance. The labor of raising the yearly salary, was

then, as now, a burden borne by the few. Elder Payne owned a small place known as the Rhodes lot, adjoining the premises of Harvey Thompson; only one-fourth of his time was due at home, as he preached at various other points, and money being out of the question, it was stipulated that he should receive a certain amount of grain upon the first day of January; and this for some time formed the bulk of the good man's income. Elder Payne has been succeeded by Rev's Morgan, Barrel, Sawyer, Haven, Boughton, Pomeroy, Webb, Sawyer, C. Sawyer, Morgan, Babcock, Ames, Daniels, Child and Putnam. In 1822 a plain frame church was built, and in 1850 sold to James Spencer, Esq., and removed to his premises. The same year the present house was erected and is a neat and well-kept edifice. A parsonage is in course of building near the church, which we believe is to be a convenient and handsome dwelling.

The membership of the Baptist church has steadily increased until it numbers 213 members and is in a **flourishing and working state.**

SECOND HOME of the Baptists, this wooden church was used until 1894 when it burned.

The separate religious organizations will receive due attention as we proceed with the narrative of Gouverneur. We must now return to the early history and eventful years of the war. Little fear was entertained of a raid from the British army; but the Indians were more than suspected of treachery and evil designs, so that every precaution was taken for defence; and this led to the erection of the Block House, soon after the declaration of war. Watchers, or sentinels, were posted at all points, suspicious movements magnified, and every eye was on the alert for something — no one could tell what.

On a quiet summer evening Mrs. Willard Smith noticed an unusual movement among the tall potato vines which grew upon the river bank. Hurriedly notifying her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Nichols, that an Indian was lurking by, the brave ladies armed with a pitchfork, repaired to the spot ready to extinguish the whole race of scalping savages; a few violent thrusts brought up a bristling hedgehog — whose arrows in civilized hands might have proved mischievous enough, but upon the present occasion only furnished a few specimens of field artillery and topics for many a hearty laugh in years to come. Upon another occasion an Indian with his squaw took lodgings with Mrs. Smith, who was alone in her house. When Mr. Red-skin was ready for retiring he dextrously threw his tomahawk into the door for safe keeping, very much as a modern traveler tosses his satchel into the rack of a railroad car. The good hostess however was vividly reminded that a similar motion might pin her to the door post. The unwelcome visitors left at a reasonable hour, much to the relief of their landlady.

That the Indians had an idea of honesty is aptly illustrated by a circumstance which took place about this period. Mrs. Smith relates that they had raised a mammoth cabbage which they kept to astonish visitors, and as an evidence of the fertility of the new country. One morning a bright object in the direction of the cabbage plot called for an investigation, when it was discovered that the big vegetable had disappeared and a silver shilling occupied its place upon the newly cut stump. Cabbages yielding this amount to the head might prove a remunerative crop.

Previous to the draft which took place in 1812, rumors of an attack upon Ogdensburg reached the settlement and called out all the patriotism of the citizens. Men left their families and flew to the rescue of our frontier harbors. From Gouverneur Stephen Patterson, William Fanning, Isaac Austin and Stephen Mitchell volunteered , taking only their guns and a few eatables for the way. They found the place all quiet for the time and in a few days returned to their homes. Fanning, however, who was lightly clad, took on a cold, which with additional exposure, eventuated in his death. But the war was not thus easily disposed of. There were foes at home as well as abroad, men who sympathized with the old government and who were suspected of being too friendly with the enemies of the country. A few such, cooperating with the Indians, worked mischief in neighboring towns, and the utmost vigilance was exercised to detect such at home.

Many were loud in their professions of loyalty, but when men were really needed they were scarce enough. One whose duty it was to notify a few of the draft, relates that their consternation and fear were laughable in the extreme. Some wept, others concealed themselves in all sorts of possible and impossible places, while not a few boldly and cheerfully shouldered their guns and went for the defence of their country.

Silas Spencer, then a citizen of this place and brother of Dr. John Spencer, went as substitute for John Parker, and performed a feat of heroism which deserves a place in history, and should be engraved on

his monument — when such a memento is required, for the brave man still lives. A squad of British soldiers were effecting a landing at Ogdensburg — there being but a small garrison there — when Mr. Spencer turned a solitary cannon upon the invaders, touched it off with a fire brand, re-loaded again and again, until the men dispersed and returned by the way they came. This primitive mode of warfare may not have been according to the teachings of West Point, but it availed for the occasion.

CHAPTER VII

For reasons best known to themselves the British government failed to make the expected efforts to occupy frontier towns. Ogdensburg and Sacketts Harbor were points of interest, and neither place was properly protected. Both were considerably harassed, and several skirmishes took place within their limits, but no permanent foothold was obtained and to the determination of the inland towns, much of our subsequent success may be attributed. At home, every nerve was strained, every precaution taken, and aid in abundance sent to the front. Men planted and harvested their crops, women spun, wove and knit, while many a load of provisions and clothing was rafted down the river for the relief and comfort of our soldiers at the front. One lady reports having baked thirty loaves of bread at one time, and others were equally busy in their care for the army. Of the many who left this section for the war, but one man, Charles Newell, is known to have perished, and he died from a disease contracted in camp. He was a single man, and while in Gouverneur had worked in the ashery above the falls.

The war was unpopular from the first, but a principle was at stake, and men were not wanting to fight for it. Considerable strategy was practiced upon both sides, occasional shots were exchanged to test the strength of the armies, night raids were undertaken for foraging or the release of prisoners, jails were mysteriously opened and their occupants set at liberty before knowing into whose hands they had fallen. Many of the new settlements were entirely depopulated, and the very sight of an Indian was sufficient to throw a community into the greatest excitement, and the belief that an army of savages was in near ambush. Nor were these fears entirely groundless. Horses and cattle were stolen or driven beyond the reach of their owners. A fine yoke of steers belonging to one of the settlers, was driven into Jefferson county and sold for rum and a few Indian trinkets — so much below their real value as to excite suspicion. The animals were eventually recovered, but the thieves, we believe, were never brought to justice. Strange as it may seem, no injury beyond the above mentioned was ever sustained by our citizens. In the adjacent towns, the Indians were provoking beyond measure; making threats and executing them, purloining everything within their reach, and otherwise annoying the inhabitants, until they were glad to surrender their premises and return to their early homes. Whether the uniform kindness ever extended them, or the appearance of a formidable Block House and pickets counselled them to peace, is still a question to be settled. Business was of course paralyzed, and crops more or less neglected; but after a time better judgment prevailed, confidence was restored, and acting upon the advice of one to whom the settlers had ever listened, men returned to their homes and were never more molested. "If we stay in the Block House," said Mr. Austin, "we with our cattle shall perish for food and shelter, and if we return to our farms we can but die." After pledging themselves to mutual protection and assistance, the unfinished fort was abandoned, and a year later was sold at public vendue, the avails to be appropriated toward building a house of worship or any benevolent object afterward suggested.

Of this Block House we must have a further word to say. It was situated in the road between the residence of F. M. Holbrook, Esq., and H. H. Hoover's livery stables. The pickets compassed about one acre of ground, and the main building was formed of timbers calculated to withstand the wind and weather of a century. Spruce logs were brought from Richville, oak from the surrounding forests, and men from far and near labored upon this modern Babel, until it assumed satisfactory proportions. Some of the timbers still exist in the dam by the mills in this village; some were incorporated into buildings; a remnant of one still remains on the premises of Isaac Starbuck, Esq.; several houses were framed from the larger portions; bridges were interlaced with beams from the structure, and any one in need of wood for fences, fuel, shop or shed, was referred to the old "Block House." Later, parties who had labored upon the affair, were remunerated for their trouble, and a list of these may at some time be given to our readers.

Dr. John Spencer at one time kept a small Inn on the farm now owned by Wallace McKean. One morning he breakfasted a party of soldiers, who carried some small ordnance on their way to Ogdensburg. Having a desire to inspect one of these death-dealing machines, the Dr. put his eye to the mouth of a cannon, when, lo! instead of powder and ball, several of his own hens were reposing in the big gun, their necks rung and their last cackle hushed. "Well," soliloquized the Dr., "the men need them more than I, let them go." A few years later, a stranger accosted him at his new place of business, with the question: "Didn't you keep tavern down the river once?" Being answered in the affirmative, he added, "did you breakfast some soldiers one morning? and did you miss any hens about that time?" The Dr. assured him that the facts were perfectly fresh in his memory, that he knew of the theft at the time, but felt it a privilege to do something for his country, and was willing they should select their own provisions.

So rigid was the economy practiced by the settlers, and so inventive was their genius, that had they been forever cut off from foreign supplies, we believe they would have worked themselves up to their present standard of perfection. Farming utensils, with a few exceptions, were manufactured at home. One man constructed an entire loom, another reels and wheels, and still another rakes, axe-helves, hoes and pitchforks. Some ingenious harrows were made of pointed sticks, while the more primitive dragged the limbs of trees over their plowed ground.

LUCY GARRETT SMITH, daughter of John Garrett and wife of Willard Smith. There is a question as to the accuracy of our source; it may be the picture of Betsy D. Thompson, another pioneer woman.

Mrs. Willard Smith relates that upon one occasion herself and family made one hundred pounds of maple sugar by boiling the sap in a tea-kettle and porridge-pot. At another time Mrs. Nichols and Mrs. Smith united the milk of their cows, and made a company cheese, the hoop holding about five quarts. Said hoop was made of some small measure, and remained in existence until a few years since when it was accidentally destroyed. Mr. Willard Smith owned some flouring mills hollowed from long logs, with a pestle, worked by a spring pole for pounding corn. These he kindly permitted his neighbors to use, never requiring the usual toll.

As milk was greatly in demand, the raising of calves was no light matter. Slops of all kinds were invented, basswood leaves steeped, and with the addition of a little sour milk, a young dairy was soon in process of training.

Mrs. Smith still lives at the advanced age of eighty-eight years. She is a cheerful, intelligent old lady, retains her faculties perfectly, and resides but a few miles distant with her daughter, Mrs. William Rutherford. Her father, John Garrett, a soldier of the Revolution, died at her house, February 16th, 1853, at the age of ninety-seven. He had lived with her two or three years, and his remains lie in the new cemetery. Willard Smith died March 3rd, 1844, at the age of sixty years. Mr. and Mrs. Smith were about the same age and were married at Hartford, Washington county, March, 1805. The wedding dress of the bride deserves a description in this place. It was of fine white cambric, costing one dollar per yard; was afterwards sold and did the same service for Mrs. Nancy Barnes, was again purchased for the adornment of Mrs. Miranda Bullock, upon a similar occasion, and still again was the wedding dress of Mrs. W. Foster, who eventually dyed the garment and cut it up for her children, who , it is presumed, made an end of the noted material. Did our ladies of the present day exercise a similar care, we believe bankrupt husbands would be less common.

About the close of the war, a distillery was built by John Brown, which for some years, continued in full operation; it was situated near the ashery above the mills, and was a source of annoyance to the settlers, although ardent spirits were then deemed necessary to the health of laboring people. One whose business was blacksmithing, was subsequently arraigned before the church, for making too free use of intoxicating drink. His honest plea was that the duties of a blacksmith were of the most exhausting nature, and that "as he had never been seen the worse for liquor, would in future attend to his own business."

Another whose steps had become too unsteady to keep the road from the village to his farm, noticed on the following morning that his uneven pace was distinctly marked upon the newly fallen snow. His mortification was such that he immediately drove all his cattle from their stalls, made them pass over the tracks, the better to obliterate them, and made a point of watering the poor beasts at the river. though there was not the slightest probability of their being particularly thirsty. Should a drove of cattle now be driven over every drunkard's path, we fear the roads would become badly worn, and the river unusually dry.

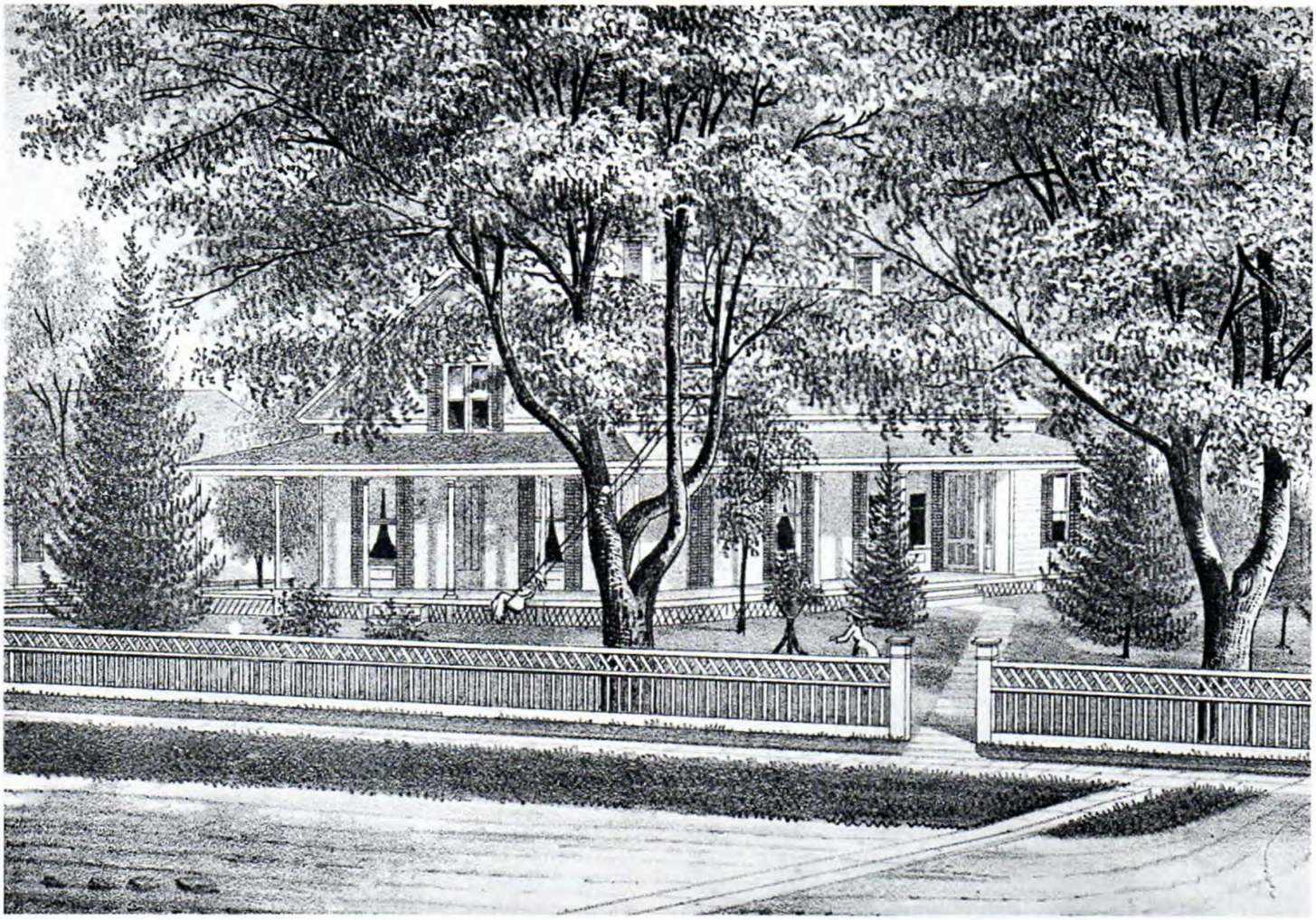
CHAPTER VIII

As we proceed in these familiar sketches of Gouverneur, it will sometimes be necessary to make a retrograde movement, and go over the old ground, as new characters are introduced in their connection with public or local movements. We are sometimes asked, "Do you not intend giving a history of this person or that institution?" To which we reply, "Each shall be remembered in order of citizenship and position." Our first settlers were men and women of mark, else they would never have left their homes of civilization and comfort for the uncertainties and perils of emigrant life. We have from the town records, the names of thirty or forty of the first families with the date of their arrival here, also a list of the deaths which cover a period of more than fifty years; and we shall be glad to relate incidents of interest connected with the lives of any from whom we have not heard.

There was considerable competition among the settlers regarding the construction and improvement of their property. Dr. Richard Townsend took the first step in this direction, by building a house hewn from blocks of timber, neatly shingled with broad cuttings of pine. The house has been added to and remodeled from time to time and is now a handsome residence owned and occupied by F. M. Holbrook, Esq.

The first frame house is still standing, and was built for Dr. John Spencer. by Rockwell Barnes and Isaac Austin. It is now owned by Mrs. H. D. Smith, and though in a good state of preservation, bears the marks of time and wear. It is one of the old landmarks long owned by one of fragrant memory and treasured for its hospitable roof which has sheltered some of Gouverneur's choicest spirits.

Building material was for many years brought from Natural Dam, over unworked roads; yet in spite of these difficulties, nearly every man built and owned his house; and it has often been a subject of remark



House built for Dr. Townsend on Clinton St. between Main St. and Trinity Ave. In Mrs. Parker's time this house was owned by Francis Holbrook. See note in appendix.

that few places of its size could boast of more comfortable homes than Gouverneur, and these occupied by the owners thereof; indeed so true is this statement that houses to rent are the exception, rather than the rule, and it is but lately that buildings for this purpose have been erected.

Several persons had long had an eye upon the waste water power which now propels the mills and machinery at this place. William Downs, a practical worker in wool, was the first purchaser, and an extract from the contract between himself and Gouverneur Morris, may not prove uninteresting to our readers. After the usual "First part," "second part," "whereas," "aforesaid," and "witnesseth," we learn that on the first day of February, 1814, "The said William Downs purchased of the said Gouverneur Morris, a building lot of thirty-eight feet in length east and westerly, and twenty -four feet in depth, on the Easterly island and on the north side of the bridge over the Oswegatchie river in the town of Gouverneur, with the privilege of the water for the use of a carding machine and fulling mill. On condition that the said party of the second part shall erect and bring into operation said carding machine and fulling mill, timely in the ensuing season to card the fleeces which may be taken from the sheep at that time and the mill to dress the cloth. The party of the second part is also to build a dam across the river, and to keep a correct account of all expenses. Then follow certain conditions relative to the sale of other water privileges, all of which may have been very lucid to the parties concerned, but to our innocent eyes appears to be a jumble of reservations, conditions and seeds for future litigation and misunderstanding. The document is neatly drawn and signed by William Downs, Richard Townsend acting as agent for Mr. Morris and the whole "signed, sealed and delivered, in the presence of John Brown."

Mr. Downs is reported a good working man, who made excellent cloth and the nicest kind of rolls for spinning.

The new country was for many years known as fine hunting ground, and from its early settlement we have accounts of hair-breadth escapes and feats of valor. At one time, while Messrs. Townsend and Austin were prospecting and surveying, they became acquainted with an old man named Rockwell, living alone in a shanty near Ox-bow, Jefferson county. He had lost wife and children, and accompanied by his dog Trooper, sought seclusion in our northern woods.

Late one evening the dog entered the enclosure of the above named gentlemen, and by his intelligent movements, intimated to them that something was wrong with his master. At the mention of his name, he set up a pitious howl and in various ways endeavored to gain their attention. "Trooper," said the doctor, "Where is your master?" Again the poor beast whined the answer that mischief had befallen his best friend, and it was agreed that the party should immediately instigate a search for the missing hunter. Accordingly, furnished with a good supply of torches, they set out following their intelligent guide to his post of trust; after a journey of some miles, he halted by a log, sniffed the air and wagged his tail in a demonstrative manner. Here the poor hunter, benighted, chilled and weary, had lain down, and but for his faithful companion, would never have awakened from his perilous slumber. With difficulty he was aroused and persuaded to follow the gentlemen to their shanty, where he was warmed and cared for until morning, where he departed for his own quarters, with a recommendation to have a little care in the future.

Upon another occasion, Stephen Patterson and Isaac Austin were returning from Somerville, whither they had been to assist some emigrants who had broken down in the woods. Becoming very hungry they came upon an Indian hut near the premises of Milton Norton, and occupied by one Jo. The host had a savory soup over the fire just at the delicious point of completion, and kindly offered a ladle to his visitors, who without any question for "conscience sake," put in a large supply, refreshing the inner man most satisfactorily; dipping a little beyond the proper depth, one of the party fished up the entire paw of a hedgehog, claws and all, which so cloyed the appetite of both that they professed themselves satisfied with the repast and went on their journey feeling uncertain how long their stomachs would be able to carry the contents, and wondering if hunger would again attack them near an Indian shanty. Indian cooking was held at a discount after it was ascertained that they strained maple syrup through their blankets, and slept on the jerked venison to protect it from the dogs. Nor were the above articles as saleable as before these facts became known. Thos. Babcock, son of Elder Sherman Babcock, of Whitehall, N. Y. lived for a time with his uncle Pardon; he was a lad of much promise and some spunk, as two or three incidents will show. Upon one occasion himself and the younger Patterson were rowing Mrs. Willard Smith and babe with Mrs. Isaac Morgan and daughter, Arabella, over the river, when by accident the boat was overturned and the whole party of six spilled into the water. With the presence of mind worthy an older head, young Babcock proceeded to pick up the cargo. The catastrophe occurred near The Ripples and as the water was shallow at that place, the two ladies with the little girl were first conveyed to shore, when the intrepid boy clutched a yellow blanket supposed to contain the baby — Allen Smith; what was his dismay to find the blanket empty, and the babe floating down the tide. The little fellow was however soon restored to its mother, and all but Patterson were safe on the shore; the terrified lad cried for help

ALLEN SMITH, son of Willard and Lucy Garrett Smith, was the first white child born in Gouverneur.

alleging that as he was unable to swim he should certainly drown; after teasing him sufficiently and using some unbibical expletives, our hero again plunged into the river and piloted the boy to shore. The party were thankful enough for their escape from a watery grave, and ever held the young man in grateful remembrance.

Upon another occasion a traveler came on horseback to the river which he was unable to ford; as bridges were then few and far between — the boy Babcock volunteered to ride over upon the horse while some of the "women folks" rowed the stranger across in a boat. Fearing some calamity his good aunt remonstrated, but with a knowing wink he bade her go in the house, when he dashed into the water and was soon upon the opposite side. For this feat he received the fee of one dollar, but was assured "he did this job too cheaply by half." After performing every antic of which he was capable in the line of climbing trees, house tops and other impossible points, swimming the rapids, trapping wolves, bears and racoons, this young adventurer returned to his home in Whitehall, where he took charge of a small schooner upon Lake Champlain, and was subsequently drowned in those waters.

The elder Stephen Patterson was crushed to death while walling up a well on the premises now owned and occupied by A. P. Killmer, Esq. His son, one of the pillars of the Baptist church in this place, died of a lingering consumption. His last attendance upon public service was marked by an incident still fresh in the memory of many. He rose and read from Watt's Hymns, a few verses relating to the shortness of life, the power of God in creating and sustaining the human frame, and joined heartily in the singing, the last time his voice was heard in public worship.

The family of Benjamin Smith was the sixth in order of emigration to this place, with their three sons; Jason, Amon, and Calvin, and their entrance into Gouverneur was celebrated by a break-down at Somerville, where they camped out under the broken wagon in a storm of wind and rain until help arrived.

Many of their descendants remain, of whom we shall speak upon a future occasion.

CHAPTER IX

As individual acts make up the history of a country, or some event of note, so we must blend the biographies of our settlers with the rise and progress of Gouverneur. It would require a volume of some magnitude to record the events of a single life; how little then can be expected from these occasional papers, chincked up as they are, with items from many sources and jottings by the way. A dear old lady said to the writer, "Make a mark of that, it interests one whether it does others or not." So should our readers miss something for which they have looked, or be surprised at something which is written, let them remember we have selected what we believe would please the general reader, and be especially acceptable to the elders who are fast passing beyond the reach of present history.

ROCKWELL BARNES, master builder of early Gouverneur.

Foremost among the artisans who availed themselves of the privileges of moulding the future of the new country, was Captain Rockwell Barnes, of Farmington, Conn. He was born January 22nd, 1788, of parents who shared largely in the struggles of the Revolution. At the early age of six years he, with a jack knife, modeled a perfect house in his father's dooryard. So skillfully was the work performed that it attracted the attention of passers by every mortise, joint and stick was in its proper place. A few years later he constructed an entire saw mill on a small creek near by. The building was complete, the machinery perfect, and soft materials could be sawed by it. The irons were shaped in his father's blacksmith shop. Working only in rainy weather, and so quickly was the thing accomplished that it was well nigh completed before his parents were aware that so important a structure had arisen in his neighborhood. The rag-wheel is about eighteen inches in diameter and is still preserved in the family; the saw was made from a case knife, and the whole as a specimen of ingenuity and perseverance, but foreshadowed the coming man. At the age of fourteen, Mr. Barnes was apprenticed to Deacon Aaron Carrington, to learn the trade of carpenter and joiner; three years later he was released from his engagement by the death of Mr. C., whose confidence in the young apprentice was such that he left him his tools valued at two hundred dollars. As is often the case when the opportunity offers, the heirs of Deacon Carrington charged Mr. Barnes one shilling per day for the use of the tools, and demanded their worth in full, which was paid by our industrious young mechanic.

In 1806, Mr. Barnes married Miss Nancy Barnes, of Monroe, Washington county, and two years later left his wife and child to seek for work in this vicinity. At Natural Dam he assisted in building the flouring and saw mills, and after fulfilling various other contracts, he concluded to bring his family to this place which he did in 1810, his father, mother and brothers accompanying him. In 1808 Mr. Barnes constructed a light stand for Mrs. Willard Smith, which she lately exhibited to his son as a specimen of his father's handiwork. The first frame barn in town, was built upon the Kearney farm; and the first one in the village for Isaac Austin. This building was made entirely of hewn timber, and was so neatly finished that religious services were frequently held therein. The stone foundation was made by Benjamin Leavitt, at a cost of ten dollars, and we venture to add that it was as well done as work costing ten times the amount at the present time. Said barn was taken down a few years since by Orin Williams and made into a double building for himself and Henry Bullard. Proprietors of balloon frames would do well to look over these ancient timbers before proceeding with their new style of architecture.

In 1812 Mr. Barnes received the commission of Ensign, and in 1816, that of Lieutenant, from Daniel D. Tompkins. In 1819, he was commissioned as Captain by De Witt Clinton, by which title he was ever afterward known. He was a veteran of 1812, but died before any appropriations were made for those soldiers; a man of indomitable spirit and will, he for sixty years attended every town meeting and election; received various offices of position and trust from his fellow townsmen and ever studied the prosperity and advancement of town and village. He died July 4th, 1869, in full possession of his faculties, and attended to the last by an affectionate daughter.

It is pleasant even at this late day to recall the faces of those aged ones, who carved the destiny of our town and left their impress upon it. Mrs. Rockwell Barnes died two years before her husband and was a woman of decision and intelligence. She reared a large and respectable family with but little assistance, as her husband was usually absent at his business. Her will was law, and amid the privations of a new country she clothed and educated her children, fitting them for posts of trust and usefulness.

The severe winters of '14, '15 and '16, told upon the resources of our settlers. Provisions were few and expensive, imported goods were unthought of ,yet many a mother did her house-work and performed the out door duties of making paths, feeding stock, drawing water and wood, while her husband was engaged at a distance, felling trees and preparing for the summer's work.

The close of the war found about thirty families living in town, with several single men and women

who were assistants, or had come to seek their fortunes in the new country. Later a large influx of emigrants from Johnstown, N. Y., swelled the numbers and wealth of the place. They settled mostly on the street leading from Gouverneur to Ox-Bow, and the neighborhood still bears the name of "Johnstown Street" or settlement. Two of three school houses were erected during the year 1815; one framed and built near the present site of S. B. Van Duzee's store, stood until 1827, when it was replaced by a substantial brick edifice.

CHAPTER X

The farming interests of Gouverneur were, from the first, largely protected. A committee of five persons, namely, Ephraim Case, Pardon Babcock, Rufus Washburn, Benjamin Smith and Jonathan Colton were early appointed to superintend the destruction of noxious weeds. The duties of said committee were wide and arduous. Every aspiring daisy, thistle, burdock and mullein was instantly doomed. And although these arbiters of the law were empowered to levy heavy fines for flagrant violations thereof, we do not learn that any decided action was taken in the matter. Indeed, if any member of said committee hinted to his neighbor that "Noxious weeds were flourishing upon his premises," the faithful keeper of the public interest was likely to find a thriving hedge of thistles or pigweed blooming in his own garden by the following morning; and it soon became apparent that men were as jealous for the public welfare as for their own. Strangers visiting Gouverneur at this period were wont to compare the country to a well kept garden. Cedar posts and rails were hauled from Richville, and neat fences enclosed every man's premises. The colony was at this time self-supporting, and to its resources many of the surrounding towns looked for subsistence. There are now in many

TIMOTHY SHELDON

NANCY BOWEN SHELDON, wife of Timothy Sheldon. Non-existence of dental care was one factor in the premature aging of pioneer women.

households specimens of linen in napery, toweling, sheets and ticking, which would do credit to a modern loom. Blankets and counterpanes, too, are exhibited of better manufacture than can be found for sale or in our smartest factories.

As late as 1819 and 1820, wild animals were so troublesome as to call for bounties for their destruction. One of the favorite amusements of our fathers was a bear, wolf and coon hunt. An occasion of this kind is thus playfully described by an old settler, with whom we have had many a social chat. The scene of action extended over the farms of Colburn Barrell and Ephraim Case, including large tracts between. "There was a large party of us and we circled the woods; armed with every conceivable weapon, and closing in inch by inch aiming at a common centre where we expected to find at least a dozen of the varmints. What then was our surprise to find only a poor fox, leaping and bounding in every direction to find a break in the ranks, but," added the old gentlemen, "he was the scartest fox I ever did see."

TIMOTHY SHELDON FARM HOME — This house on the Richville road was restored and rebuilt for the late Justice Paul D. Graves.

In 1815, The Gouverneur Union Library was incorporated. The object was to furnish interesting and useful reading for all disposed to accept at little or no cost. The books were mostly raised by contributions in money or selections from private libraries. Many were received from abroad, so that a valuable collection was soon secured. And every family was in the receipt of one or more volumes of history, travel, romance, sermons and tracts. The books were all of a moral tone, and their influence for good seems incalculable. The trustees of the library were Rockwell Barnes, Israel Porter, Aaron Atwood, Richard Kimball, Benjamin Brown, Timothy Sheldon, Pardon Babcock and Joseph Smith, all of them serving at one time or another in this capacity. This library was eventually transfered to the Gouverneur High School, and from thence to Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary. The destruction of the seminary on the night of January 1st, 1839, involved the loss of many of these volumes, though we believe some of them still remain, venerable tokens of their venerable and liberal donors.

The burying ground mentioned in a former number was early ceded to the citizens of Gouverneur, by the proprietor, Gouverneur Morris. We are indebted to Erwin Barnes, Esq., for a copy of the document, found among his father's papers. "Whereas the inhabitants of Cambray have requested the grant of a piece of two acres of land for a burial ground, and have solicited a part of lot No. 85, beginning at a post standing due east from the Island Falls, forty links above the pitch of water and 7 chains, 32 links from the high water mark and running thence south five chains and fifty links, thence east three chains and sixty-four links, and thence north five chains and fifty links, and thence west three chains and sixty-four links. I do hereby devote the above place to the burial of the dead and will execute a grant therefor to the town, when incorporated. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, the tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1808." "Gouverneur Morris." Sealed and delivered in the presence of, &c. This ground, as most of our readers are aware, was more than crowded when it became a subject of serious inquiry where a new site should be purchased, and whether or not it were best to remove the bodies from the old lot. Much debate and some serious opposition was incurred, an awe amounting almost to superstition, prevaded the minds of many, relative to disturbing the remains of the dead; but a committee, after looking over the various lots offered for sale, at last settled upon the beautiful farm of Pardon Babcock, lying south west of the village, on the banks of the Oswegatchie. Thirty-six acres of this farm were purchased at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars, by the Gouverneur Cemetery Association, which was organized in June, 1857. Benjamin F. Hathaway, of Flushing, Long Island, was employed to lay out and grade the new ground, which was accomplished in a beautiful and satisfactory manner. More than six hundred lots were prepared for use, with miles of walks and avenues, trees were planted, and everything to make this home of the dead attractive, was faithfully performed. The cemetery was dedicated or consecrated to the burial for the dead, June 22, 1858. The first president was Rev. B. B. Beckwith, Charles Anthony, vice-president; Stephen B. Van Duzee, treasurer, and Cornelius A. Parker, secretary. The first trustees were B. B. Beckwith, Edwin Dodge, Erwin S. Barnes, S. B. Van Duzee, Charles Anthony, Cornelius A. Parker. Thos. M. Thayer, John Bolton, Milton Barney, W. H. Bowne, Harvey D. Smith, and Richard Parsons, with William Miller for superintendent and sexton. The first burial was that of J. Bradford Smith, August 24th, 1857. Others followed in rapid succession, and soon the public mind became not only reconciled but anxious to further the act for removing the dead in the village burying ground. This was done "in a decent and becoming manner" under the supervision of Thomas M. Thayer, Esq. The most picturesque portion of the new cemetery was selected for this purpose, boxes were provided, and the whole accomplished at the expense of the corporation.

RICHARD PARSONS

MARIA HOSMER PARSONS, wife of Richard Parsons.

The old site was sold for building lots and gardens, and the avails appropriated toward the payment and adornment of the new ground. The number of removals was a little short of one thousand. And up to the present writing the new interments almost reach that number. Thus one of the most delicate and difficult tasks, which often fall to the lot of a corporation, was performed in a pleasant and satisfactory manner. In looking over the rural cemeteries in different parts of the state we have yet to see a more tasteful and well kept ground than our own Riverside. We have taken up this matter in detail, put in connection with the gift of the town and as a part of its history and record to call the attention of owners and proprietors, to the continuation of their labors in keeping up the improvements and appearance of this hallowed spot.

We have before alluded to the religious element of Gouverneur, and in a former chapter have given a history of the foundation and progress of the Baptist church. The course of events will soon bring us to the origin of the first Presbyterian church, of this village; but previous to this we must diverge to other topics of interest, which incidentally or accidentally occur in our history. No note-worthy events filled up the years of '15, '16 and '17, though there was a marked advancement in the town. Some one has remarked that when the settlers found themselves standing idle they either established a prayer-meeting or opened a new

school. Mr. Roger Maddock, father of Mrs. Isaac King and Edward Maddock, of this village, came to Gouverneur about the year 1816, as agent for Mr. Morris. He settled for a time at Natural Dam, and was an active member of the Baptist church , in this place. To Mrs. Maddock we believe belongs the praise of establishing the first female prayer-meeting, and to her husband the honor of superintending the first regular Sabbath school. Both were fine vocalists, and we are told that with his family quietly riding to church, Mr. Maddock was wont to make the woods resound with his Sabbath songs, reminding all who heard them that the way was his delight, and that by example, at least he guided his house with discretion and trained them to walk in the better way.

CHAPTER XI

Reference has already been made to the religious principles of our fathers, and so naturally did their children and hired help fall into the good way, that it was playfully remarked that the doctrine of total depravity was in danger of falling into disuse, or of becoming obsolete. The Sabbath, if not a day of rest, was a day of worship. Every available vehicle of transportation was called into requisition. Ox-carts loaded with wife, children and hired help piously wended their way to the house of prayer. Horses bearing the good old pillion, carried father, mother and one or two babies to the same place, and many convenient wagons drawn by horses, hied in the same direction. "Later," says another, "the church-going people formed a procession only excelled by a real procession of the present day. A snug little jag of hay always accompanied each vehicle so that the faithful animals might not suffer during the long services of the day, for be it known the fashionable morning and evening services had not yet reached this little eden, which in passing we would remark may account for any decay in church attendance. The stomachs of the good worshipers were not forgotten in the general programme. Cold meats were cooked on the preceding Saturday, big doughnuts fried, and bread and butter prepared for the Sunday's lunch. "Indeed," a good lady assures me, "there was very little work done during the Sabbath in those days." Neighborhood prayer-meetings finished the day, with the usual doses of catechism and ten commandments for the younger members of the family.

The clergymen of those days were expected to be working men, and what time they were not engaged in study they were expected to be at work among their parishioners. At a church meeting, met to consider the expediency of requiring but two services per Sabbath, Mr. Strong Colton settled the debate by remarking in his peculiarly authoritative tone, "When I hire a farm laborer I want the whole of his time, and when I hire a preacher I want him to preach his time out." This blunt exposition of the question held good for many years, and we do not think a like view of the subject would injure the morals of the present inhabitants of Gouverneur.

Several extra services were held from time to time by clergymen from abroad, and the fruits of these efforts are reported as eminently successful. There were but few heads of families unconnected with some church organization. One, whose jokes have descended to us as worthy of repetition, after various solicitations to avow himself a christian and unite with the church, said with a knowing twinkle of the eye and a sly glance at his wife, whose maiden name was Church, "I joined that church some years since, and have never felt it my duty to unite with another." This poser so unsettled his interlocutors that they left him to the enjoyment of his jokes and religious faith in his wife. This, with four exceptions, was the only head of a family who was not a professor of religion. A framed school house standing near the store of S. B. Van Duzee was often used as a place of public worship, and the various denominations alternately met there until the erection of a building for religious purposes alone. Richard Kimball taught the first school in this house, and besides the common branches added some exercises in composition, declamation and history. This school ever had an upward tendency, and though persons then were opposed to anything beyond district school and district school teacher, the conception of an academy or seminary had long filled some heads with hopes of their realization.

At this time, 1816, we have a township of one hundred and fifty families, and a village of one or two hundred persons. A few framed houses were built, with one main street and three or four shorter ones branching therefrom. There was a store, a post-office, land office, fulling mill and several minor establishments, all adding to the thrift and comfort of the place. Mr. Israel Porter kept an inn in the back portion of the building still known as the "Old Porter House." The upright part was added at a later date, and the whole is still in a good state of preservation. Nor were the acts of Mr. Porter confined entirely to inn keeping. Having buried the wife of his youth in July, 1816, his attention was turned to other pursuits, and in 1818 he erected flouring and saw mills in the village of Gouverneur. These with their water rights have since passed through several hands and still exist, moved by the same unceasing force of fifty years ago. Mr. Porter was largely interested in public improvements and held several posts of honor and responsibility. In person he was of medium height, small twinkling eyes, and had ever a fund of humor at hand. He died in Wisconsin, Sept. 16, 1836, at the age of 63. His second wife, Lucy Church, died at the house of H. D. Smith, Esq., April 22, 1857, aged 81 years. But one or two members of this family survive, and none we believe in the neighborhood of their father's early home and labors.

Many items of interest remain on hand of the early times of our town. A few may yet appear in connection with their authors, but we must proceed with matters of general interest. We omitted in the proper place to give outlines of several sermons which have been handed down as specimens of the preaching of olden times. One by Elder Jonathan Payne strikes us as a model of its kind. The subject was drawn from the passage found in St. James, relative to the

mischievous propensities of the tongue. After a detailed account of the evils arising from the misuse of this valuable organ, the good man added: "Not fifty thousand evil spirits let loose upon earth could make the heart aches, and create the griefs done by one tattler." We know not the occasion of the exordium delivered at this time, but we do know that plain preaching has gone into disuse, and the result is apparent in every department of society.

Upon the much mooted subject of christian amusements, another of the ancients spoke in this wise: "Nothing is proper for the man of the world which is improper for the professing christian. No place is fit for the one which is unfitted for the other; parties, pleasant assemblies, rational amusements of all kinds are not alone wisely provided, but necessarily essential for the advancement of civilization and the growth of a healthful public tone." The test, he made the word of God and the rational desire of an educated mind. Would this test was oftener preached and practised at the present day.

No events of special interest are reported at this time beyond the general health and prosperity of the town. Emigrants rushed in from all quarters and the increase at home was such as would frighten a modern household. Families of children numbering eight, twelve and fourteen are often reported and a regiment of eight or ten boys was the heritage of several happy parents; nor are we in fear of contradiction when we report such families as happier and more respectable than the pampered indolents represented by one, two or three in most households, whose only occupation seems to be the filching of their parent's earnings and the gratification of their own selfish desires.

One has drawn at random from a few families born in this town, and the report is as follows: Of one, three farmers, one clergyman and one physician; of another, a missionary, a merchant and several mechanics; of another, a clergyman, a merchant and a physician; of another, architects, lawyers, engineers and farmers, and from others every craft, profession and position of honor the fondest parent could desire.

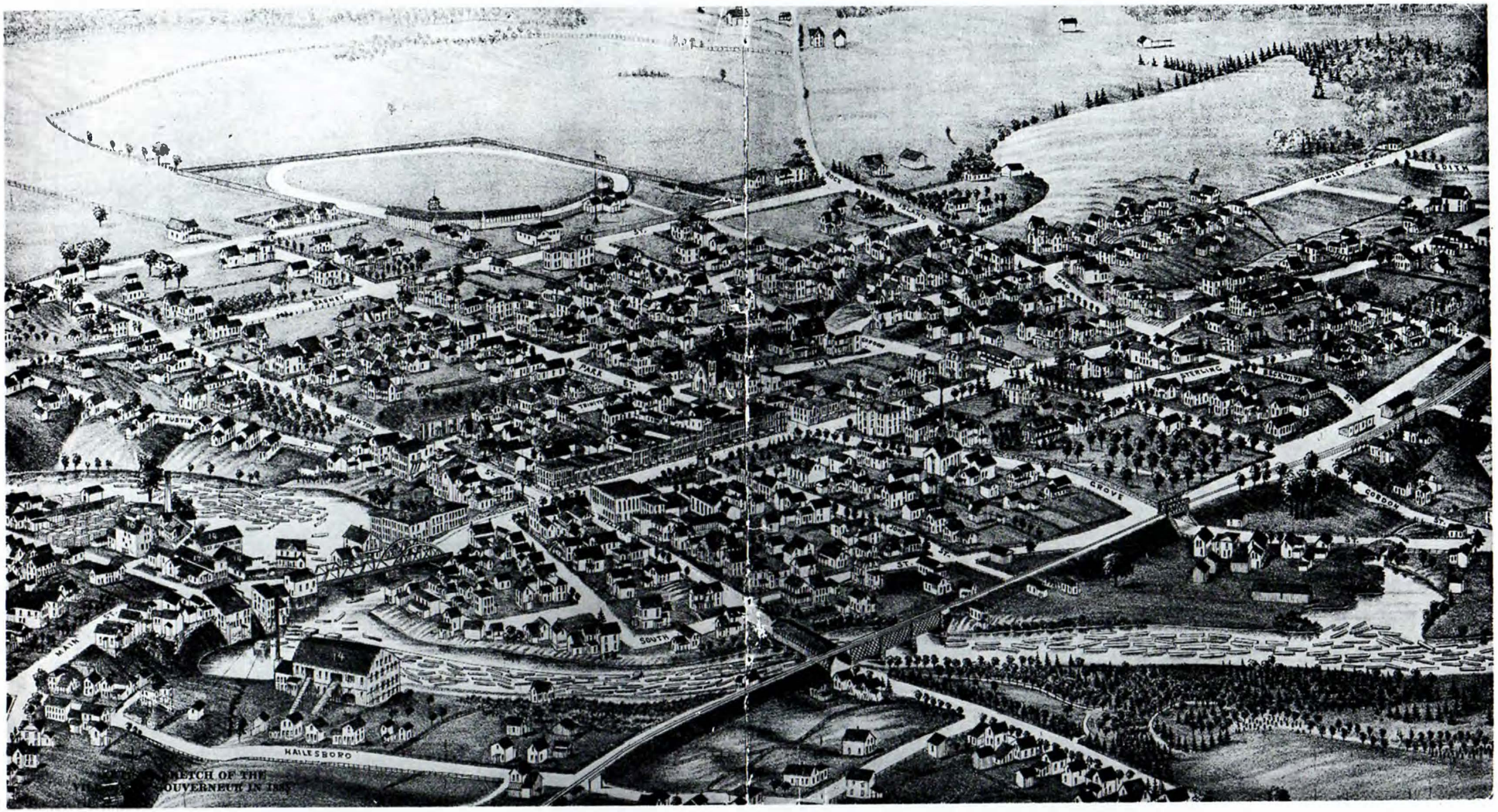
The almost yearly visits of Gouverneur Morris or of some member of his family added greatly to the improvement of the town; and his kind smile or encouraging word is still held in grateful remembrance.

Many efforts were made for dividing the town, but none succeeded before the year 1841, when some persons so far distant from the centre as to lose their right in town meeting and town government petitioned for a division. This movement only added to the enterprise of those left behind, and a more compact township of equal dimension does not exist in St. Lawrence county.

CHAPTER XII

One of the noticable features in the rise and progress of Gouverneur was the indomitable spirit of perseverance which actuated all hearts. If a public improvement was proposed the thing was done; was a school to be organized, a building was provided, teachers hired and scholars furnished. A large Presbyterian or Congregational element had long existed and a church organization was the desideratum of all parties. Clergymen of that denomination from neighboring towns had occasionally officiated, among them, Rev's Winchester, Dutton and others. Services were alternately held in this place and the Colton neighborhood, and many were desirous of building a church at the latter place; but business naturally gravitating to this point, it required no knowledge of the future to fix upon this spot as the centre of trade and the place where the future village should stand. As yet no building for public worship had been erected. The two denominations usually assembled at the school house, sometimes at Mr. Austin's large barn, mentioned in a former chapter, often at a dwelling house, and occasionally at Israel Porter's unfinished dancing hall — one of the largest rooms in the settlement; and we may here add that some of our most zealous and useful christians have assured us that the gospel there preached was received into willing hearts; verifying the truth that God is no respector of persons, nor of places, if His word be preached in its purity.

The forces operating upon the settlement at this period may be readily conceived when we consider that they were mostly of Puritan stock, and in many ways connected with the moving spirits of the age. We are indebted to Miss Elizabeth Spencer for a circular written in June, 1816, and published the following year. It was prepared by Messrs. Dwight, Smith, Beecher, Dutton and Humphrey, to the emigrants from New England and others in the new settlements. After the christian salutation they are encouraged and stirred up to renewed exertions in behalf of the religious progress of the west. We would there were room for the whole address which is prophetic of our present prosperity, and is well worth a reprint. The school, the Bible, the church, and the Sabbath are placed in the foreground. Temperance, liberality and the formation of religious societies are strongly urged; and from such teachings arose our home and foreign missionary societies; and from this we date the formation of the first female missionary society in Gouverneur, and the young ladies working and reading association organized and put in operation between the years of 1822 and 1826, and which were productive of much good both as a working and paying institution. Many garments were made and sent to destitute portions of the country, and large sums of money were raised for home and foreign work. Receipts are before us from various sources acknowledging these donations, one from Rockwell Barnes for money "for the help of building the Meeting House." Received through Miss Betsy Goodrich, treasurer, "October, 1820, received of Tabitha Austin, treasurer of the Female Branch Society, seven dollars and seven cents to be transmitted to the Female Society of the Western District, Oliver Ayers, Missionary." "Received of Mrs. Clark, five dollars for the Parent Society, from the Branch society in Gouverneur, January, 1822, Sarah Richland."



Artist's Sketch of the Village of Gouverneur in 1885.