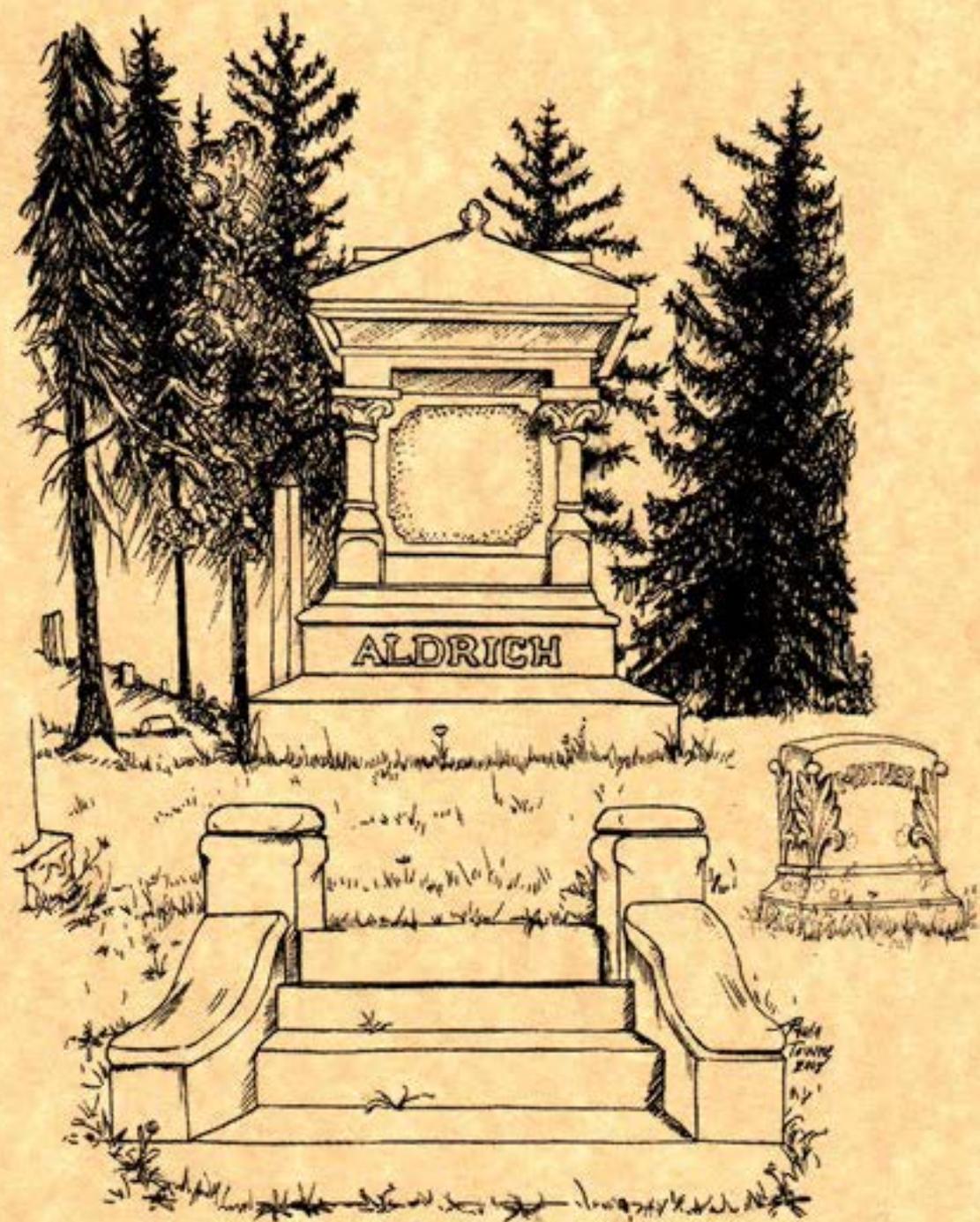


# ANNUAL TOUR

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY  
GOUVERNEUR, N.Y. SEPTEMBER 27, 2008



## Gouverneur Cemetery Association

Early in August 1808 a shadow came over the settlement of Cambray in the sudden death of Emily Porter, a sprightly little girl of 2 years, and daughter of Isreal Porter. 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 causing her death. This occasion led to the selection of the first burying ground, which was in the area of the present Presbyterian Church in a hemlock grove. Here Emily Porter was laid to rest in a pine coffin.

This first cemetery was ceded to the inhabitants of Cambray by Gouverneur Morris and consisted of 2 acres bounded by the Oswegatchie River and roughly by what are now John, William, and Church streets. In 1857 it became apparent a new and larger cemetery was necessary.

After looking over the various lots offered for sale, a committee settled upon the former Pardon Babcock farm, which had become the property of Harvey D. Smith. It lay southwest of the village on the banks of the Oswegatchie.

Thirty acres of this farm were purchased at a cost of \$1500.00 and "one burying plot" from Mr. and Mrs. Smith by the Gouverneur Cemetery Association, which had been organized on June 23, 1857. B.F. Hathaway of Brookline, N.Y. was employed to layout and grade the new ground. More than 600 lots were prepared for use with miles of walks and avenues - trees were planted and everything to make the cemetery attractive was done. The first burial Joseph B. Smith August 25, 1857. (19 B31) By 1860 records indicate 11 acres had been added, and in 1866 there is an entry in the minutes of the annual meeting noting \$800 spent that year for land.

By 1860 the public mind became reconciled to transferring the dead from the old burying ground. The most picturesque portion of the new cemetery was selected for this purpose, boxes were provided, and the whole accomplished in two weeks at the expense of the corporation. In all, 637 removals were made under the direction of Thomas Thayer. Emily Porter was relocated to her family plot. (9 H75) Many of the removals were from unmarked graves.

The new cemetery adopted the name Riverside at a meeting of the association held April 14, 1858, and the dedication ceremonies took place Sunday, June 23 that year.

In the year 1954 it became apparent to the officers and trustees that more ground was a necessity. All 1676 saleable lots in Riverside had been purchased, and using a figure of 3 burials per lot (actually probably more) it can be said that the population of Riverside is greater than that of the village.

A site on the east bank of the Oswegatchie was finally selected which consisted of 10 acres purchased for \$3500 and a perpetual option was granted for up to 30 more acres. This addition is designated as East Riverside and should serve the area for many years.

**WILLIAM McKINLEY VAN SLYKE 1896 - 1954**  
**GERTRUDE SLICER VAN SLYKE 1896 - 1985**  
**THE VAN SLYCK FAMILY**  
**BETTER KNOWN AS THE VAN SLYKES**

There is a wonderful book in the library and museum which details the history of the Van Slyck family, better known to us as the Van Slykes. It gives information on the descendants of Broer Cornelis Van Slyck from 1634 - 1999. The genealogy of seven generations from the Netherlands to Gouverneur was researched by Barbara Anderson and W. Barton Van Slyke, who became eligible to join the prestigious Holland Society of New York because of this effort.

Buried here in Riverside Cemetery are Barb and Bart's parents, William McKinley Van Slyke and Gertrude Slicer Van Slyke, better known as "Jimmy", (also buried here is Bill Magee, a friend and neighbor.)

Bill was born June 16, 1896, in McHenry, Illinois, and was raised by his mother since his father died when "Willie" was 10. In 1902 the family moved to Gouverneur where he attended the West Side Grade School and Gouverneur High School. At 16, he worked after school and Saturdays for the Meade Brothers Drug Store and, after graduation, for the Walter R. Perrin Drug Store - the same store that he and Henry J. Curtis subsequently purchased. It is thought that Walter Perrin helped finance Bill through Albany College of Pharmacy as well as helping Bill and Henry purchase the store. Bill's schooling was interrupted by his enlistment in the Navy in 1918.

Gertrude Slicer was born in Nepton, Kentucky, where her father was a flour mill operator. The family moved to Paris, Kentucky where Gertrude obtained all her secondary education. Her family life was troubled (her parents later divorced) and she couldn't wait to attend college. (Battle Creek Normal School for Physical Education - founded by Charles Kellogg of cereal fame) After graduation gym teachers were in demand in NYS because of the compulsory physical education mandate and the WWI draft. She accepted jobs in Watertown and then Gouverneur.

It was here she met and married William M. Van Slyke. "Jimmy" as she was called because she taught "gym" and Bill often met each other crossing the bridge, he going to work at the drug store and she walking to her job at the West Side School.

Despite Bill's long working hours (the store was open from 7 am - 11 pm) and persistent health problems (including TB) the couple "burned their candles at both ends", and did an inordinate amount of

socializing and late-night partying until the mid 1930's. From the time his TB was arrested in 1942 until about 1951, he was active in village affairs as a trustee and, later, mayor. He was an elder in the Presbyterian Church for many years.

In 1954 he had a massive heart attack and stroke. (An ironic note is that he had visited his Uncle Dr. David Mills who had had a massive stroke followed by prolonged paralysis and aphasia upon which he stated, "I hope I never have to die like that." Unfortunately that is just the way he did die.)

Jimmy cared for Bill until his death at age 58 in 1954, after which she continued to live in their home on Barnes Street until her health caused her to move to Watertown and eventually into a full-nursing care facility where she died in 1985 at age 89.

Bill and Jimmy were productive and well-loved citizens of Gouverneur. They had two children, Dr. William Barton "Bart" Van Slyke, Watertown, and Barbara Ann Van Slyke Anderson, Glendale, Arizona.



**William McKinley  
Van Slyke**



**Store Front  
87 East Main Street  
Gouverneur, NY  
circa 1938**

### **CHARLES LEVI GLEASON 1866 - 1956**

Charles L. Gleason was the grandfather of Bruce Gleason, a lifetime resident of Gouverneur, and Mary Gleason Colton of Canton. Charles Gleason had a small farm that included what today is Valley Drive, Dale Road and Meadow Lane. Bruce remembers as a boy helping his grandfather put loose hay in a small barn for two cows and one horse.

Charles made his living by selling vegetables from his garden there at the house. He kept a root cellar in the bank on the gully back of Rock Island Street. There was also a wooden vat that stored water from a spring that was used by many in the area. Nothing is better to drink than cold spring water. Bruce lived on Barnes Street with his parents Harvey and Dorothy, and sister Mary. It was Bruce's daily job to walk to his grandfather's for fresh milk. Bruce and his dad also kept a vegetable garden on his grandfather's property. Bruce and his wife Liz decided to make their funeral arrangements a couple of years ago since both their sons live away. There were supposed to be two burial lots left in the family plot. Guess what. When it came time to check out Riverside Cemetery during this process, there was "no room in the inn". Another relative had been buried where Bruce thought two available lots were. Needless to say Bruce and Liz had to purchase a new plot for their final resting place.

### **HARVEY L. GLEASON 1899 - 1982**

Harvey Gleason died in 1982. He was born in Pitcairn and moved to Gouverneur as a teenager, graduating from Gouverneur High. He played guard on a championship football team. Many knew Harvey through his affiliation with the Bank of Gouverneur where he was employed for many years. For 61 years he was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church of Gouverneur. He was also the first Scout Master of Boy Scout Troop 22 sponsored by the church. Harvey served as treasurer of the St. Lawrence County Fair for several years. Harvey was a 60 year member of the Masonic Lodge and a Past Master. He loved gardening and had one of the most fruitful gardens on Barnes Street for many years. He was married to Dorothy Fredenburg and they had two children, Bruce and Mary. After Dorothy's death in 1956, Harvey married Margaret Herring.

### **DOROTHY L. GLEASON 1902 - 1956**

Dorothy was the wife of Harvey Gleason. She died in March of 1956. Dorothy was a graduate of Gouverneur High School and graduated from the A. Barton Hepburn Hospital School of Nursing. Dorothy lived in the village her entire life and was a member of First Presbyterian Church. She was a member of the Eastern Star, and also secretary of the Past Matrons Club of the Eastern Star.

### **FRANK WELLINGTON SPRAGUE 1853 - 1924**

Frank Sprague was born in Antwerp on June 26, 1853. He was educated at the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary which was located where the present Community Bank stands.

Frank married Emogene Cross in 1872. He commenced his business life on the Temple Farm in Gouverneur. In 1880 he moved his family to Iowa and then returned to Hailesboro in 1882, where he built Crystal Springs Cheese Factory. In 1886 he bought General Merchandise Stock in Hailesboro from A. A. Potter and Company. He continued this business until 1900 when he sold out to G. M. Holmes. Frank moved to Barnes Street and bought out Isaac Burr, who was a furniture dealer and undertaker. He held several offices in the Town of Fowler when he lived there. Frank and Emogene had three children: Lynn, Claribel and Stella. Lynn Sprague, his son, continued the undertaking business. For a while Lynn also owned another funeral home in Canton. In 1939 he sold the Canton business to William Gardner, one of his son-in-laws. Paul Sprague, Frank Wellington's grandson went into business with his father Lynn, as did his grandson, Frank Worth Sprague. Sprague Funeral Home had been a three generation business for many years. Upon the death of Paul, Frank continued the business, until it was purchased in the 1980's by Richard French. Frank Wellington Sprague died in 1924 of Typhoid Fever. However his son Lynn and wife Emogene who also contracted Typhoid Fever survived. Typhoid Fever was not only a menace to the Sprague Family, as other family members also were stricken by this horrible disease, some who survived and others who did not, but took many lives before being almost eradicated.

### **AMASA CORBIN, SR. 1802 - 1881**

Amasa Corbin, Sr., born in Champlain, N.Y. in 1802 came to Gouverneur from Berkshire County, Massachusetts in 1830. He had been a farmer there and continued to be one his entire life. He had his farm on the Gouverneur Richville Road. He lived in a cabin until his home, copied after a prevalent New England style, was built. Upon completion of the house, the cabin was taken down. He is credited with "30 neat cattle."

Corbin was the first cheese maker in the area. Much of the cheese from this area, including Corbin's, was marketed in Montreal. In the winter it was drawn by sleigh via Chateaugay, then across the frozen St. Lawrence River, and sold for three cents per pound. Later his cheese was sent to Boston in "casks" holding six to nine cheeses.

Corbin arrived at an opinion quickly and never wavered from it.

When he decided to sell cattle, after determining what it was worth he would not let it go for less, and waited for someone to meet his price.

He was progressive in his thinking and along with Milton Norton, another farmer, brought the first two reapers and mowers to town.

#### **AMASA CORBIN, JR. 1843 - 1913**

Amasa Corbin, Jr., educated in the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary, enjoyed varied careers. He became a teacher at age 18, the president of a Business College in Bridgeport, Ct. at age 21, and the president of a Business College in Poughkeepsie, NY at age 23. Next, he was General Agent and Superintendent of an Insurance Company for several years. Following this tenure he was President of The St. Lawrence Manufacturing Company and The Adirondack Pulp Company of Gouverneur, both of which businesses he organized. He was also the President and Director in several Zinc Industries in Missouri, which he promoted and organized. These Zinc Companies involved the investment of nearly two million dollars. Later, Mr. Corbin was the President of the Adirondack Pyrites Company which operated near Gouverneur. He was also President of the Gouverneur Agricultural & Mechanical Society.

#### **MARGARET HERRING GLEASON 1907 - 1994**

Margaret Gleason was born June 6, 1907 in Gouverneur. She died July 16, 1994. She will long be remembered for her career as a history teacher and her interest in history.

She was one of the founding members of the Gouverneur Museum. Margaret graduated from Gouverneur High School and Cornell University where she was Phi Beta Kappa. Both of her great grandfathers, William Herring and Orramal Merriman were pioneer settlers on the Johnstown Road. She taught for 10 years before returning to Gouverneur in 1940 to begin her teaching career here, retiring in 1966. She married Harvey Gleason in August of 1957. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, the Gouverneur Historical Association, the Travelers Club, the Gouverneur Reading Room Association, Delta Kappa Gamma, and many more organizations both in Gouverneur and St. Lawrence County.

## NEWTON ALDRICH 1830 - 1909

Newton Aldrich was born June 6, 1830, in Luzerne, Warren County, New York. His father, Seth Aldrich, was a successful farmer and a prominent citizen of Warren County. Newton was reared to farm life and educated in public and private schools of Luzerne and Glens Falls. In 1852 he began as a merchant in Luzerne and became one of its leading business men. At the age of 21 he was elected Town Supervisor which he was until 1862 when he was



elected Assemblyman from Warren County, a nomination he refused the next term. In 1858 he was married to Kate Griffing of Washington County. They had one son, Herbert G. Aldrich.

In 1861 Newton became involved with the business interests of Gouverneur when the firm of Weston, Dean and Aldrich was formed. In 1867 he became a resident of Gouverneur and the creation of the sawmill at Natural Dam was begun. He was a member of Weston, Dean and Aldrich until it became the Aldrich Paper Co. in 1900 and was converted to a paper manufacturing plant.

Mr. Aldrich was a stockholder in and director of the Aldrich Paper Co., vice-president of the United States Talc Co., a stockholder in the International Lace Manufacturing Co., and president of the Bank of Gouverneur.

Newton attained prominence in public service. He was supervisor of the Town of Gouverneur from 1872 until 1902 (with the exception of four years). He was chairman of the committee which had charge of the erection of the county courthouse. For 25 years he was a trustee of the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary. He was a trustee of the Gouverneur Village, and in 1883 was elected its president. In 1886 he was appointed a member of the State Board of Charities by Governor Morton.

Newton Aldrich was a generous, public-spirited man whose philanthropy led to the beautiful library building given to the Gouverneur Reading Room Association, which is in use today.

Politically, Mr. Aldrich was active for many years as a Republican, where he was held in high regard as an astute, but modest, man of high integrity.

Here lies a man who was most influential in the growth of the Gouverneur area.

## **PROFESSOR WILLIAM F. SUDDS 1842 - 1920**

Sudds was born in London, England in 1843, and came to the U. S. at age seven. The family settled on a farm in the northwest corner of the town of Gouverneur. From early childhood he had a love for music, but the family could not afford the luxury of music lessons until he was 15 years old. He practiced piano at a neighbors each day after his farm chores, walking one and a half miles each way. He mastered the violin, guitar, cornet and violoncello alone, without an instructor.

He joined one of the Civil War cavalry outfits and carried in his baggage an old battered cornet, on which he practiced every spare moment, sometimes neglecting his horse.

Overheard one day by the regiment's bandmaster, he was placed in the regimental band.

While stationed in New Orleans he became quite ill and during his convalescence, he received piano lessons from the finest French pianist in the city. He returned to Gouverneur following his stint in the War. However he felt the need to learn more and was accepted at the Boston Conservatory of Music. Upon completing his studies at the Conservatory, he returned to Gouverneur where he gave music lessons and became a dealer in organs and pianos at 22 Church Street.

He married Elma Bond and they lived in several homes before building the red brick house on West Barney Street, occupied for many years by the Edward Case Family.

His reputation as an excellent musician had him giving concerts throughout the country.

He was nationally renowned by musicians. He was also the composer of more than 400 musical compositions, and was widely sought after by music publishers. Some descriptors of Sudds were: self made, native talent, driving energy and musical genius.

Sudds gave his services to any musical enterprise in Gouverneur. He directed local choruses, directed the orchestra in the Union Hall, and for ten years led the Choral Union of Gouverneur. He was also the head of the music department of the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary. He died September 29, 1920.

## **NELSON B. WINTERS 1911 - 2004**

Nelson Winters was born in Gouverneur, February 17, 1911. Except for a few years after college Nelson lived most of his life in Gouverneur. He was Gouverneur Village Historian for several years and no one knew more about Gouverneur and probably no one will ever know as much about Gouverneur and its history than Nelson.

He graduated from St. Lawrence University in 1932. He traveled daily to his college classes by train from Gouverneur to Canton and back. Upon graduation he secured employment in the New York City area, where he met his wife Katherine. After working briefly in the New York City area, he returned to Gouverneur. He and Katherine raised their three children: Bruce, Duane and Margette. Nelson belonged to many civic organizations throughout his life, including: Luncheon Club, Masons, Gouverneur Historical Association, Gouverneur Chamber of Commerce, and many more. He was also a member of the Trinity Episcopal Church. Nelson retired from the sales department of International Talc in 1974. He previously worked for the Ruderman Corporation, and Loomis Talc.

One of Nelson's prize possessions was the sketch drawn by Norman Rockwell when Nelson was a teen. Upon his death, the family decided to "long-term loan" the drawing to the Gouverneur Museum where it graces one of the living room walls. The drawing was sent for preservation and has been hermetically sealed to prevent damage. Be sure to check it out today after the tour, if you have not already had the opportunity to view this artistic treasure.

### **THE DEAN SISTERS**

**JENNIE DEAN - JUNE 4, 1863-NOVEMBER 17, 1943**

**CORA DEAN - APRIL 19, 1865-JANUARY 23, 1946**

The "Dean Sisters" came to Gouverneur in 1866 as toddlers with their family from their Warren County home where the family had been early settlers. Favorable prospects in the lumbering industry in this area influenced Mr. Dean to move his family here. He had been interested in this business locally for some time before the family came here to reside.

Orison Dean became a member of the lumbering firm of Weston, Dean and Aldrich in 1866. The business later became the main industry in the Gouverneur area. His wife, prior to her marriage, was Miss Mira Aldrich, a sister of Newton Aldrich, an associate of Mr. Dean in the lumbering trade. As the firm's business expanded, their holdings increased, and the Dean family assumed a major role in the development of Gouverneur before the turn of the century.

Following their father's death in 1903, Jennie and Cora Dean became important benefactors in Gouverneur and Northern New York. The Memorial Arch in the Gouverneur Village Park was dedicated on August 30, 1905 as part of the Town's Centennial Celebration. Atop the arch is a bronze eagle that was not a part of the original design. It was commissioned by Jennie Dean and mounted in 1906.

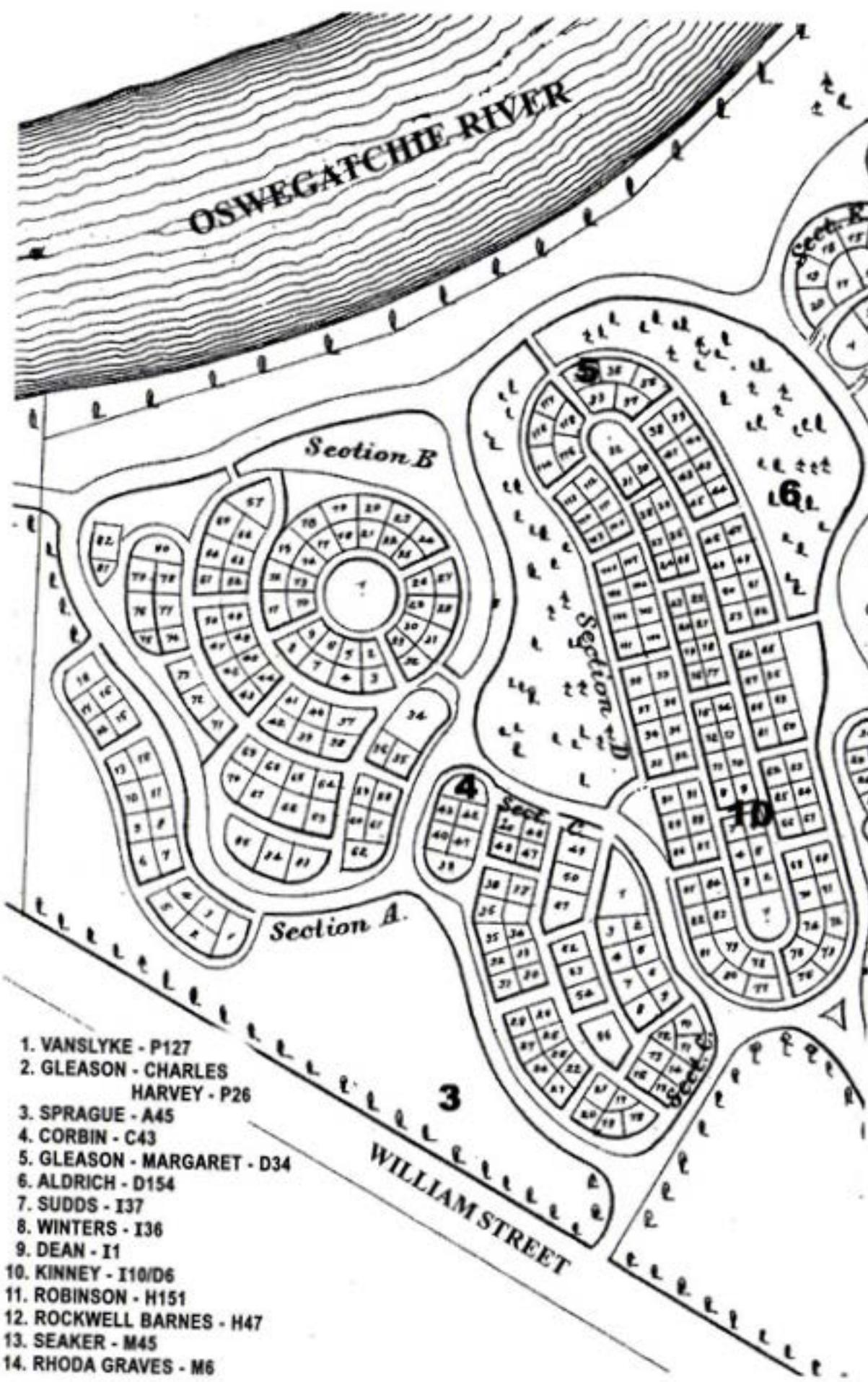
Mrs. Dean, Cora and Jennie were important benefactors in the building of the new High School in Gouverneur with their \$58,000 donation. Opening in April of 1915, it is often referred to as Dean Academy. The Dean sisters also funded the Dean Oratorical Contest, which still exists as an annual speaking contest at the high school.

Both Cora and Jennie were St. Lawrence University graduates and exceedingly generous to their Alma Mater. In 1926, Jennie Dean gave \$50,000 and Cora gave \$25,000 toward erection of a St. Lawrence University dormitory in memory of their father. Cora Dean also established a book fund at the Herring Library of the university two years prior to this, known as the Cora Dean Book Fund, the income of which is used to purchase books.

The sisters were also benefactors of the First Presbyterian Church in Gouverneur, the Stephen B. VanDuzee Hospital, and A. Barton Hepburn Hospital in Ogdensburg. Upon Jennie's death she left bequests to the five Gouverneur churches and to Hepburn Hospital. An initial impetus to the construction of a new hospital here was the \$142,000 bequest in Cora's will. Cora also bequeathed another \$25,000 to Dean High School, which had been the beneficiary of many substantial gifts over the years from the Dean sisters.

### **CEMETERY FACTS . . .**

- As of September 2008 the cost for gasoline to mow and trim both cemeteries is over \$2200.00
- There are 1679 saleable lots in Riverside, before the recently added two sections. If each lot has eight possible burials this would result in a population of 13,432.
- East Riverside has at the present time 432 possible lots with about 50% being used. Having eight possible burials in each of these lots the population could be at least 1,728.
- Keeping these figures in mind this could mean at least 15,560 monuments to be trimmed after each mowing.



1. VANSLYKE - P127
2. GLEASON - CHARLES  
HARVEY - P26
3. SPRAGUE - A45
4. CORBIN - C43
5. GLEASON - MARGARET - D34
6. ALDRICH - D154
7. SUDDS - I37
8. WINTERS - I36
9. DEAN - I1
10. KINNEY - I10/D6
11. ROBINSON - H151
12. ROCKWELL BARNES - H47
13. SEAKER - M45
14. RHODA GRAVES - M6



**Map of  
RIVERSIDE CEMETERY  
at Gouverneur  
St. Lawrence N.Y.  
1883**



13  
14

1  
2

## **BURT ORRIN KINNEY 1873 - 1966**

Burt Kinney graduated from the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary. He worked for a short time at a local furniture factory, pulling lathes at the Van Duzee saw mill.

As a very young man he started working for the Dewey and Perrin Drug company then located in the "old Whitney drug store". In those days work began early in the morning often before 7 am with the mopping of the establishment, the icing of the refrigerators and the making of the ice cream, and continued until 10 or 12 o'clock at night. Wages paid in those days would bring an incredulous grin to the faces of sales persons today. The most a starting clerk could hope for was \$8 a week. An experienced man got \$10. Overtime was unknown. It was merely an accepted part of the business that clerks would be called out at night to open the store for drugs to fight emergency illnesses that had a habit of developing after midnight.

After he had been working at the drug store for several years, B. O. came home with the news that his employer had offered to raise his salary from \$10 a week to \$12 and to send him to Albany College of Pharmacy. Mentor and boss A.W. Dewey, a druggist encouraged him to attend. Dewey paid for his education. He graduated in 1901.

In 1902 Burt Kinney took possession of the drug business owned by A.W. Dewey who retired from the business due to poor health. It was slow going in the new store. His first day's sales totaled \$157.90 and the second day \$36.04.

Operating on a limited amount of borrowed capital, he worked hard to keep from going under. It was Burt Kinney's industry and acumen which built the business. Patrons of the store were sure of a welcome when they entered and a courteous and willing attention to their needs. It was never too much trouble for B. O. to search for exactly the article the customer wanted, taking time to show a personal interest in the customer.

Small children in town knew that if they "went to Mr. Kinney" they would receive the same consideration that adults did. And they might also find a horehound drop or a piece of hard candy slipped into their hands. Many children obtained spending money by collecting bottles and taking them to Kinney's to exchange for a few pennies.

Burt Kinney was a talented baseball player, playing shortstop on the Gouverneur team. His interest in golf helped bring about the founding of the Gouverneur Country Club. He loved to fish. He had a camp at Trout Lake where the family spent time in the summer.

He recognized the need for a hospital in the community and when the Van Duzee hospital building was given to the village, he worked many hours to set it up. He served on the hospital board of directors for many years. He served as a village trustee, director of the Gouverneur Savings and Loan and was a life member of the Gouverneur Lodge F & AM.

He waited on customers up to six weeks before he died in 1966 at the age of 92.

### **KATHLEEN DRAPER, (KITTY) 1877 - 1962**

Kitty Draper was born in 1877, one of six children. She was educated in Gouverneur schools. Her father was considered a master in the trade of plumbing and his industry has become legendary among the older people in the village.

Kitty married Burt Kinney when she was nineteen. First they lived in an apartment over the old Gouverneur Reading Room. They were among the first residents of Sterling Street and lived there for more than 50 years.

They had 2 children, Harold and a daughter, Bessie Frances, who died in childhood.

### **HAROLD KINNEY 1897 -1979**

Harold became the "boy" in the firm in 1912, at the age of fifteen. He worked part-time until he graduated from Gouverneur High School in 1914. He then attended Cornell University and received a degree in chemistry. In 1918 he joined the Army.

Harold became associated with Kinney Drugs in 1919. Unsure of what he wanted to do, he worked in the store while trying to decide and finally stayed because he loved merchandising. He served as executive vice president and treasurer for 32 years. He was named president in 1960 and became chairman of the board in 1966, retiring in 1977.

He married Mary Kaley in 1924. They lived at 6 Sterling Street from 1928 to 1962 when they moved to a new home on Rock island St. They had a daughter, Susan.

Aware of tentative plans for an addition to the EJ Noble hospital of an extended care facility they made a sizable donation. They participated in the plans for the nursing home which opened in 1971 and is named the Harold and Mary Kinney Nursing Home. They also contributed to the hospital.

In 1972 St. Lawrence University recognized Mr. Kinney as a distinguished person.

Harold Kinney was a charter member of the Gouverneur Luncheon Club, a member of the board of directors of the Gouverneur EJ Noble Hospital and the Kinney Nursing Home, a member of the board of directors of the Bank of Gouverneur, and a member of Gouverneur Lodge F & AM. In 1969 he received the Julius Bartlett Memorial Award.

He died in 1979.

### **ORRIN KINNEY 1824 - 1904**

Orrin Kinney, father of Burt Kinney was a pioneer in St. Lawrence County and a resident of the area for 50 years.

He was born in Fowler in 1824. He moved to Gouverneur when he was a young man.

Orrin worked as a carpenter and earned the reputation as a man of the strictest integrity and honor. He built the Anthony and Aldrich homes.

### **ELECTA BIGNALL 1837 - 1928**

Electa Bignall, mother of Burt Kinney died at the age of 91. She was one of 12 children. She was known as a strong force in the community. She was the second oldest member of the First Baptist Church.

Orrin and Electa Bignall Kinney had three children, Burt, Austin and a daughter Mrs. George McKean, and Orrin had a son Andrew by a former marriage.

### **ROBINSON LOT**

#### **RIVERSIDE CEMETERY, GOUVERNEUR, NY**

The Robinson lot was purchased by Martha Rebecca Newton Robinson in 1911 at the death of her husband Jasper Robinson for \$60.

The Robinson family has lived in the Gouverneur-Fowler area since the 1850's. The Robinson farm was on the California Road behind Sylvia Lake.

The family farm purchased by Jasper and Martha on the California Road included a large portion of the Southern shore of the lake. The family cottage was built on Sylvia Lake in 1892.

The Robinson family consisted of Jasper and Martha Rebecca. They had three children.

### **Elmer John Robinson 1874 - 1960**

Elmer Robinson was born on family farm in Fowler in 1874. He lived his entire life in Gouverneur. He graduated from Potsdam Normal in 1899. He taught school briefly. He then went into the hardware store business, Robinson's Hardware Store, which is now part of the Kinney building on Main Street. He owned that business until 1946. He married Katherine Elizabeth Hamilton of Gouverneur in 1914.

Elmer's children are  
Sylvia Robinson Santacroce,  
Martha Robinson Goulding,  
and Zelma Robinson Wemyss

### **Jessie May Robinson Taylor 1889 - 1960**

Jessie was also born on the family farm on the California Rd. in 1889. Jessie graduated from GHS in 1910 and St. Lawrence University in the class of 1915.

She married Warren Taylor from Niagara Falls in 1919 at the family home on Rock Island Street. Jessie and her family lived in Gouverneur most of her life. Living a short time in Niagara Falls in her early marriage.

Jessie's children are  
Robert Taylor,  
Norton Taylor,  
and Peggy Taylor Hopper

### **Benton Robinson 1871 - 1901**

Born in 1871 in Fowler, Benton Robinson married Kate Barraford from Edwards. Benton died very young. He was killed in a mining accident at the age of 31, leaving a daughter, Grace Robinson Locker.

The only direct Robinson descendants left in the Gouverneur area at this time are Norton Taylor, Jessie's son; Katie Pistolessi, Martha Robinson Goulding's daughter; and some grandchildren of Grace Robinson Locker.

The lot  
Front left to right  
Martha Robinson Goulding, Katherine & Elmer Robinson, Martha R. & Jasper Robinson, Sylvia Robinson Santacroce  
Back right to left  
Benton & Kate B.  
Grace Robinson Locker and Abe Locker  
Norton and Joan Taylor  
Jessie and Warren Taylor

## ROCKWELL BARNES 1788 - 1869

Rockwell Barnes was born in 1788.

At age 6, with a jack knife, he modeled a perfect house in his fathers door yard. This was so skillfully done that it attracted the attention of those passing 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 nearby. The building was complete, the machinery perfect, and soft materials could be sawed by it. The irons were shaped in his fathers blacksmith shop. Working only in rainy weather, it was nearly completed before his parents were aware that so important a structure had arisen in the neighborhood.

At age 14, Rockwell Barnes was apprenticed to Deacon Aaron Carrington to learn the trade of carpenter and joiner. When Mr. Carrington died three years later he left his tools valued at two hundred dollars to Barnes.

In 1806, Rockwell Barnes married Miss Nancy Barnes, of Monroe, Washington County, and 2 years later left to seek work in this area. He brought his family here in 1810. They had five children; Erwin, Phoebe, Erastus, Ruben and Belinda. Descendents include Lillian Taitt who married James Sheldon whose children included Marion who married William Jennings and Gertrude who married Howard Smith.

At Natural Dam he assisted in building the flouring and saw mills.

In 1812, Barnes received the commission of Ensign, and in 1816, he was commissioned as Captain by DeWitt Clinton, by which title he was ever after known. He was a veteran of 1812, but died before any appropriations were made for those soldiers.

Rockwell Barnes and Isaac Austin built the first frame house in Gouverneur, for Dr. John Spencer, on the corner of Main and Clinton streets, where Kinney's is now.

In 1820, the first Congregational or Presbyterian society was organized. Rockwell Barnes was a trustee.

A church building was started that year, but it was not completed until 1824. Rockwell Barnes is believed to have been the principal contractor and performed much of the labor. This was replaced in 1844. All Presbyterian churches have been on the same site.

In 1833, he built brick stores on Church and William Street. These were taken down in 1875 and Union Hall was built.

A man of indomitable spirit and will, for sixty years he attended every town meeting and election. He held various offices and positions of trust. He ever studied the prosperity and advancement of town and village.

He died July 4, 1869 at the age of 81.

### **FRANK SEAKER 1873 - 1931**

Frank Seaker was a farmer, supervisor of the Town of Macomb, and schoolmaster at Brasie Corners school until moving to Gouverneur to start an automobile dealership in October 1912.

A Republican, he was elected and served in the New York State Assembly from 1911 to 1921. He was succeeded in the Assembly by the late Rhoda Fox-Graves and she by her son, the late Paul D. Graves. This seat is now held by Dede Scozzafava.

Frank Seaker formed a partnership with Elmer Curtis to be known as Seaker & Curtis Marble City Garage. This was located where Cambray Court stands now. They carried Dodge, Hudson, Buick cars and Case tractors. In 1915, Frank Seaker ended his association with Curtis and formed one with P.A. Graves which became the Seaker Graves Motor Co. They built a new building where DJ Walters is today. In 1922 when Chevrolet was added, they kept the Buick line and dropped the others. When Seaker & Curtis was dissolved Curtis took on the Ford agency.

He died in January 1931.

### **NORA GRAVES SEAKER 1871 - 1951**

Nora Graves Seaker was born in 1871. She grew up in Macomb and married Frank Seaker in 1896. She died at her home, 80 Clinton Street in 1951.

### **RAYMOND SEAKER 1897 - 1961**

Raymond Seaker was born May 18, 1897 in Macomb, son of Frank and Nora Graves Seaker.

Raymond Seaker was a partner in Seaker Graves Motor Co. Raymond Seaker entered the automobile business with his father in 1913. He became a partner in the business in 1931. In 1954, after Mr. Graves' death he became associated in partnership in the same firm with Mark Graves. In 1961 at the age of 63, he was stricken with a heart attack. He died at home. His son Hilliard then became the partner of Mark Graves.

Raymond Seaker married Alta Hill, December 12, 1917. They had two children, a son Hilliard and a daughter Norrine Dickson (Republican State committeewoman from St. Lawrence County). He had five grandchildren, Billie Jean and Frank Seaker, Jeff, Gregory and Lea Dickson.

In 1936, he built a home at 68 Clinton St. They also had a summer residence at Black Lake and a winter home in Florida until 1958.

Raymond Seaker belonged to the Gouverneur Masonic Lodge, Gouverneur Grange, Elks Club, Odd Fellows, Luncheon Club, Citizens Club, Black Lake Fish and Game Club and Spruce Mountain Hunting Club and he was an active square dance "caller" specializing in the "circle two step"

#### **PATIENCE SEAKER 1899 - 1986**

Patience Seaker was born in Macomb in 1899. She graduated from St. Lawrence University and taught history in Albany, Canajoharie, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, N.Y.

Patience Seaker was active in Gouverneur Morris Chapter DAR, NYS Retired Teachers Assoc., American Red Cross, Eastern Star, St. Lawrence County Historical Assoc., Gouverneur Garden Club, Gouverneur Shakespeare Club and Gouverneur Arts Club. She was an avid contract bridge player.

She died in 1986.

#### **RHODA FOX GRAVES 1877 - 1950**

Rhoda Fox Graves was born in Fowler in 1877 to Leander and Rhoda Austin. Her mother died shortly after her birth, and her father could not care for her. He let Lafayette & Rhoda Fox adopt her when she was two weeks old.

She attended schools in Gouverneur and graduated from the Wesleyan Seminary in Gouverneur. In her early life she was a teacher in rural area schools.

In 1905 she married Perle Graves, a farmer and part owner of Seaker-Graves Motor Co. They had two sons, Paul and Mark. Paul succeeded his mother in the state senate, and Mark became a partner in the Seaker-Graves Motor Co.

She worked diligently during the suffrage campaign in St. Lawrence County and she was very instrumental in making the Town of Gouverneur the first town in St. Lawrence County that allowed women to vote in the 1917 election. When women got the vote she was ready to enter the world of politics.

When she announced that she would run for the New York State Assembly as a republican, her opponent, Frank Scott of Morristown said "Anyone can beat a woman." She campaigned hard, promising farmers to represent them in Albany. She told women she would make their concerns known in Albany. She trounced Scott, getting twice as many votes.

That election proved politics had changed and that women voters had spoken. She represented her district well and kept her word to the farmers, the women and all her constituents. Graves was also an advocate of children's rights, thus representing constituents of all ages.

She carefully listened to not only her constituents, as her home door was always open, but also to the debates in Albany. When it was time to vote, she represented her people back home. Visitors were told "don't ring the bell, just walk in." Graves took every concern seriously and answered every letter personally in longhand.

She was elected to the State Assembly four times, 1925-1933. She was the first woman elected to the State Senate and served from 1935-1949. During her tenure in Albany she was a force to be reckoned with.

Rhoda Fox Graves died January 25, 1950. Even after her death she was acknowledged as one of the most important women in New York State. In 1998 Gov. Pataki recognized her as one of the "Outstanding Women in New York State". A plaque is at the Gouverneur Museum.

### **MORE CEMETERY FACTS . . .**

- An estimate was given about 3 years ago for the removal of trees in Riverside that were deemed as unsafe. The cost would be \$1000.00 for each tree if that company did the cleanup and \$600.00 if the cemetery's two employees were to take on this task.
- A permanent maintenance fund is for the purpose of maintaining and preserving the cemetery for the future. Ten percent of each lot sale must be added to this fund as well as \$35.00 from each burial. Only the interest may be used for day-to-day operations.
- A Perpetual Care Fund was established years ago for the purpose of an individual grave, plot or space. This sum of money is also an endowment and can be invested with only the interest going towards care of a specific lot.
- Lot owners are the true owners of the cemetery and it is to their best interest to attend all meetings held by the board.

**Watertown Daily Times**  
**Watertown, N.Y.**

**Saturday, October 18, 1958**

**SODA FOUNTAIN IS DISCONTINUED**

**VanSlyke & Curtis Milkshake Known in North  
Sold for 15 Cents in 1923**

Gouverneur, Oct. 18. Monday saw the end of a Gouverneur institution of the last 35 years when the final traces of the soda fountain at the Northland Drug company, successor to the Van Slyke and Curtis Drug firm, were eliminated from the store's floor. No longer will Gouverneur teenagers gather there to talk over the Saturday afternoon football game.

Back in 1923 "Pete" and "Bill" VanSlyke, decided to add a service to their drug store. They put in a soda fountain for the convenience of their customers, little realizing that its reputation would spread throughout the north.

After some deliberation it was decided that this fountain should have one distinction. It would serve a chocolate milkshake, sundae, or soda better than any other in the village or for that matter, the north. The chocolate syrup would be a secret formula. It was, and for years it was brewed on the stove of Mrs. William Van Slyke.

The cost of the milkshake in 1923 was 15 cents. It was a large milkshake, and it was a good one. It did not take long for the young persons of Gouverneur to discover that here was a drink that would quench their thirst and please their taste. They went to the drug store and they talked over their problems there. Quite often Pete or Bill would come up with some good advice.

Through the years the reputation of the Van Slyke and Curtis milkshakes grew. The favorite story concerns a returning veteran from World War II. As he touched his feet to the ground at the Gouverneur railroad depot it is said his first words were, "The first thing I want in this town is a milkshake at Van Slyke and Curtis's."

A woman from Malone, employed in the state department, stopped at the drug store for a milkshake every time she was in Gouverneur. During the roaring twenties and into the thirties cars from Monroe county, Onondaga county, Albany county, and even out-of-state cars could be seen parked near the drug store, their occupants inside quenching their thirst with the Van Slyke and Curtis chocolate milkshake.

The firm always prepared an excellent milkshake for its customers. Through the war years and after, the quality was maintained. As higher costs forced increases, Pete and Bill reluctantly added five cents then another, and then another until 30 cents was reached.

The force of modern competition doomed the fountain at the Northland Drug Store. Space was too valuable for many other items now carried by the modern druggist. And so the fountain had to go. It will take many Gouverneurians a long time to erase the habit of going downtown to have a milkshake at Van Slyke and Curtis's.

**Officers of the Association - 2008**

Mike Villeneuve, *President*

Ron Taylor, *Superintendent/Vice President*

Barbara Roeser, *Secretary*

Jane Scott, *Treasurer*

***Trustees***

Eldon Conklin

George Love

***Tour Committee Members***

Gale Ferguson

Shirley Jones

Ron Taylor

Beverly Dalton

Joe Laurenza

Kris Battersby

Marilyn Scozzafava

Mary Tessmer

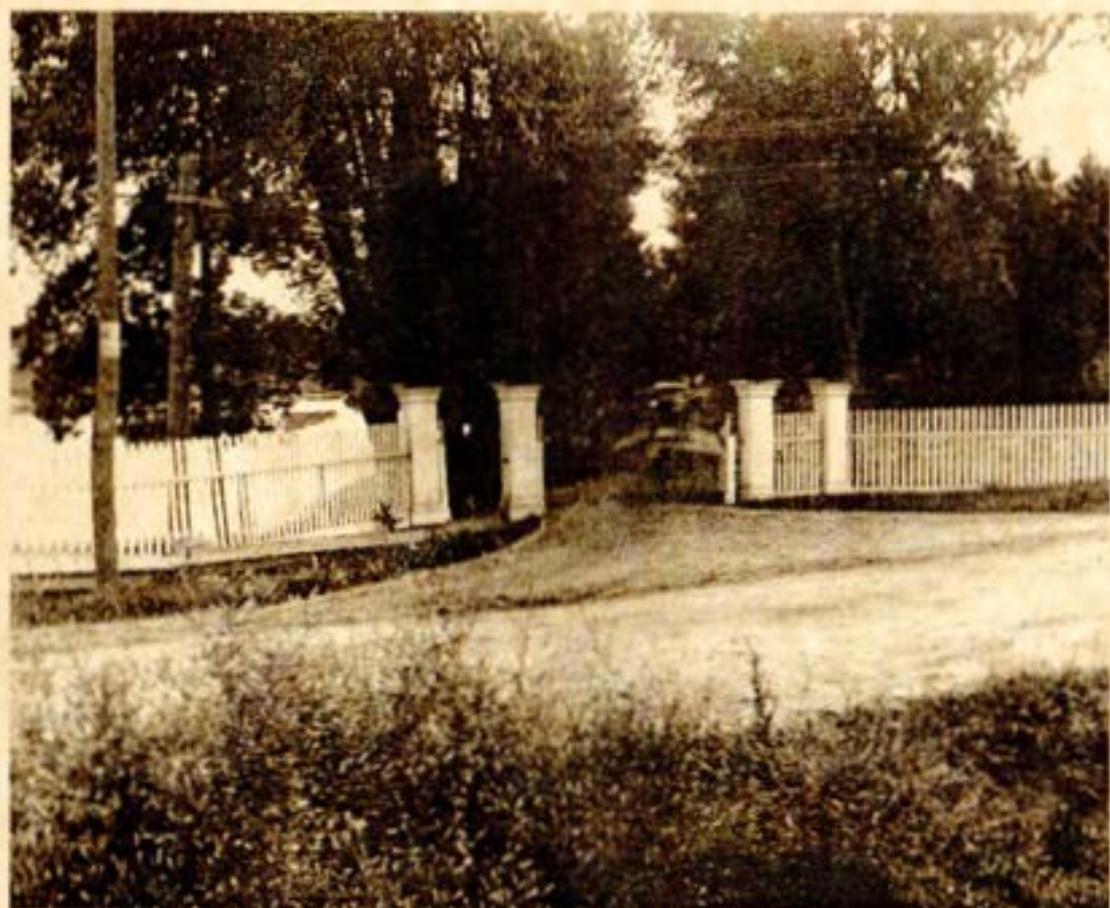
Jane Scott

***Cover Art***

Paula Towne

***Booklets provided by***

Joe Laurenza, Village Historian  
who along with Gale Ferguson  
are tour guides for the day.



**FIRST GATE OF CEMETERY AFTER  
CROSSING BRIDGE  
GOUVERNEUR, NY  
BEFORE FENCE WAS REMOVED**