

## Schools for Children in Gouverneur

Schooling for the children of Gouverneur, first called Cambray township, began in the fall of 1808, according to the L. H. Everts & Co. history written in 1878. In the spring of 1808, workmen engaged in building a bridge across the Oswegatchie river on the site of the present West Main street bridge, used a cabin for living quarters, apparently at the eastern end of the bridge. This cabin served as a school for one year, and in 1809 a log school house, 12 x 16 feet in size, was built on about the site of the Presbyterian church. Miss Elizabeth Sackett was the first teacher in the cabin school and she also taught in the log school house. One report says that a Silas Brooks taught in a vacant shop owned by Pardon Babcock, but the location of this property is not known.

The Everts' history tells of a log school house being built in 1811 apparently on the site of the Ellis Thomas gas station, 142 West Main street, or in the flatiron area caused by the intersection of West Main and Johnstown streets. This probably was used but a short time.

### Frame School House

The first frame school house was erected in 1815 about on the site of the present Lido restaurant, 10 Church street.

### Brick School

In an attempt to do something more permanent in school building, Gouverneur village, started the erection of a one-story brick building in 1826 at what is now 6 John street, and at the rear of the Gouverneur Savings & Loan association. Gilbert Hodgkin was the teacher. This building was increased to two stories.

### Union Academy

This combination of graded school and higher education department was run by the three trustees and was called the Gouverneur Union Academy. "At a meeting of the principal citizens on March 31, 1826 the plan assumed definite shape. Subscriptions were asked and the amount raised divided into shares of \$10 each, the shareholders to constitute an association in which was to be vested the ownership of the upper story of the building and the control of the school."

The sum of \$540 was raised and

the second story added. The building was not ready until 1827. In 1828 an act was passed by the New York State Legislature incorporating the academy as the Gouverneur High School and some benefits were available in 1829 under the terms of the literature fund, somewhat the equivalent of the present state aid to schools. This took this school out of the realm of the elementary school.

### Grade Schools

District No. 12 had been established by the town of Gouverneur on the site of the present West Side school. In 1872 a four room school of the elementary type was established at the corner of North Gordon and East Barney streets. In 1890 a two room school was built at 71 Depot street. The North Gordon and East Barney street school was known as the East Side school and the Depot street school as the South Side school. The East Side building was abandoned in 1917 and torn down in 1921. The South Side building was damaged by fire in January, 1934, and not rebuilt.

District No. 12 building, at West Main and McKean streets, was torn down and a new building erected there in 1889. This building is still in use but will be abandoned for school purposes at the end of the school year, 1956.

### Higher Education

The higher-education ideals of

the people of Gouverneur village manifested themselves even at the early date of 1826. The growth of the settlement was such that the John street two-story brick building was inadequate and discussions were held for the purpose of having a much larger building erected. Subscriptions to the amount of \$2,755 were raised and on September 30, 1830, it was decided to build the new school in the eastern end of the present village park, on land to be purchased from James Averell of Ogdensburg, father of William J. and James G. Averell.

Considerable time elapsed before a building plan was agreed upon, but in 1834 the park site school was completed. It consisted of a main building with wings on two opposite sides, the former being 30 x 40 feet upon the ground and two stories in height with the wings each 28 feet square and of two stories. The building opened westerly on the park.

### Methodist Patronage

The agreement with the Methodist denomination was "that a good and classical school shall be operated."

At midnight on January 1, 1839, the high school burned. Some of the insurance was never paid. The situation was a dark one, a lot was purchased across from the east end of the park from Dr. Wolcott Griffin, and the site used is ap-



THE GOUVERNEUR WESLEYAN SEMINARY



proximately where the present elementary or grade and grammar school is situated at 100 East Main street. This move on the part of the Gouverneur supervisor and town officials kept the town in the school picture for about 100 years.

#### Wesleyan Seminary

The new school was completed in the early part of 1840 and the named changed to Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary by a legislative act. The new school was a stone, three-story building considerably larger than the old one in the park. After several years a tower was constructed on the front toward Grove street. The school had an attendance of around 140 and was one of the best known institutions of learning in the North Country.

The school heads were Rev. Jesse T. Peck, Rev. Loren L. Knox, Rev. Anson W. Cummings, Rev. J. W. Armstrong, Prof. William W. Clark, Rev. C. E. Bruce, Mrs. M. M. Smith, Rev. Arthur Roe, and Rev. George C. Dains, who was the last of the Methodist control heads of the school.

In April, 1869, the Methodist conference voted to withdraw its special patronage from the seminary it had operated for 32 years. The town board voted to issue bonds to the amount of \$20,000 for the benefit of the seminary, and the legislature approved this on April 23, 1869, and authorized an increase in capital stock to \$50,000. Four thousand dollars was used for the improvement of the building and purchasing some adjoining property.

The school then operated for the next 13 years as a semi-private institution benefitted by state aid.

The principals of the Seminary under that organization were M. H. Fitts, Hiram W. Hunt, and Myron R. Sackett, Mr. Sackett being the last to hold that position in the school under its title as a Seminary.

#### Union Free School District

The school system at that time was not a united affair, and people began in the early 1880's to urge a union free school system with all the schools under a public school system control. The matter of changing to a Union Free School district was carried at a meeting on March 20, 1887. District No. 12 retained its num-

ber even though the village had been incorporated in 1850. The Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary ceased to exist at this time, but the advertisement for pupils referred to the school as the Gouverneur Seminary.

The 1880-1890 period saw the greatest growth the village of Gouverneur has ever known, the increase being about 1,300. The 1889 West Side school was part of the building program. The inadequacy of the old Seminary building was soon manifest, and two years of argument followed, much of it over the question of the site. Some had vision enough to express a desire for a site off the Main street section, and others thought that the old site would have to be used, as otherwise it would revert to its former owners who, of course, were the people, through the town board and the supervisor. Some thought the Methodist church still had control. The old site was chosen.

#### Vote To Build

The first vote on February 23, 1893, to build at \$47,500 was defeated 449 to 432, a factor in this being that the village had in 1890 voted \$60,000 to install a water system. A second vote taken on

April 13, 1893, showed the vote favorable, 447 to 437. The taxpayers had to vote later an additional amount of \$5,000.

The new high school building was occupied in 1895 and the pressure on existing buildings was relieved by the removal of some of the higher grades from the East Side school at Barney and North Gordon streets and the formation of a grammar school in the new building.

The Gouverneur board of education, as the official school authority became known when the union free school was adopted, was very soon under pressure from the State Department of Education concerning in particular the 1872-built East Side school at North Gordon and East Barney streets, which had again become overcrowded. The first dash of enthusiasm for the high school wore away and that too was soon regarded as far short of what its rosy start had proclaimed. A plan was worked upon to build a new high school on some other location of sufficient size to care for students for an indefinite period, and to build a new modern elementary school on the East Side site. These East Side references



**THE SOUTH SIDE SCHOOL**, located at 71 Depot street, was erected in 1890 so that the small children of that section could attend school without crossing the railroad tracks. The two room building was damaged by fire in January, 1934, and was not rebuilt. Area is now the property of the Town of Gouverneur.



here are solely for the former school at North Gordon and East Barney streets, which school was the only East Side school until the recent tendency to call the present grade school on East Main street the East Side school.

#### The Dean High School

After prolonged debate, the village in February, 1914, voted \$58,000 to erect a new high school on a lot at the corner of East Barney and Rock Island streets. The village was electrified when Mrs. Myra Dean and daughters, the Misses Jennie and Cora Dean, announced the gift of a new high school.

The new school, contracted for in May, 1914, was opened on April 12, 1915. The State Education department refused approval of the Gordon street site for school purposes.

The new high school did at first relieve the overcrowding in village schools, and the old East Side school was abandoned and torn down in 1921. The movement toward closing rural schools in favor of schooling in this village through non-resident tuition had already begun.

Within ten years from the building of Dean high school, at a cost of around \$75,000, fully equipped and paid for by the Dean family, there was again the cry of overcrowding and in 1936 the village, with the New Deal Public Works Administration funds aiding, built an annex to the original Dean high school building at a cost of \$325,000, called Dolan annex.

#### Centralization

In the late 1940's the movement to centralize outlying school districts in Gouverneur and surrounding towns with the union free district of the village including three buildings was defeated by 76 votes at an election of the qualified voters in the high school on June 17, 1949. In a second election on June 22, 1950 the vote for centralization was carried 1,475 to 723. The new school district was made up of 50 districts, including all or parts of the towns of Gouverneur, Macomb, Fowler, Rossie, Hermon, DeKalb, Edwards, Pitcairn and Antwerp. In 1954 Spragueville voted to join the Gouverneur central district.

#### Building Program

On June 27, 1953, the people of

the central district voted a bond issue to build five new elementary schools and an addition to the high school building. Two of the elementary schools are in the village, one on outer Gleason street on the east side and the other west of Wilson street on the west side. The other elementary schools are located in Richville, Fowler and Macomb.

It is expected that all five new elementary schools will be open for pupils on September 6 when the 1955-56 school year begins. By that time the remodeling job at the high school will be well under way.

Half-day sessions are not new to Gouverneur. In 1919 when the East Main street school was being renovated, pupils went to school afternoons in the West Side building; and on May 5, 1924, a \$100,000 fire gutted the East Main street school bringing about half-day sessions again. Pupils in the upper grades went to the high school building mornings for the rest of that school year, and afternoons the following year until the old school was rebuilt.

For more than a quarter of a century in Gouverneur getting to and from school for many pupils has meant free transportation on a school bus. Before that time everyone who attended village schools either walked to school,

drove a horse and rig which was "put out" at a local livery such as Fuller's sheds (where the Sol Kaplan parking lot is now), or boarded in town. But in 1927 as more and more outlying districts began to want to send their pupils to high school, the idea of hiring someone to take them and bring them back again became a reality when a district in Macomb hired Mr. and Mrs. Oakley Fullington to transport their children to high school.

The Fullingtons began in that year with a seven-passenger sedan and kept adding to their fleet of cars as more and more districts hired them. In 1935 they put on the first school bus, a many-passenger vehicle similar to the modern school bus. This bus drew pupils from the Rice's Corners district in Fowler.

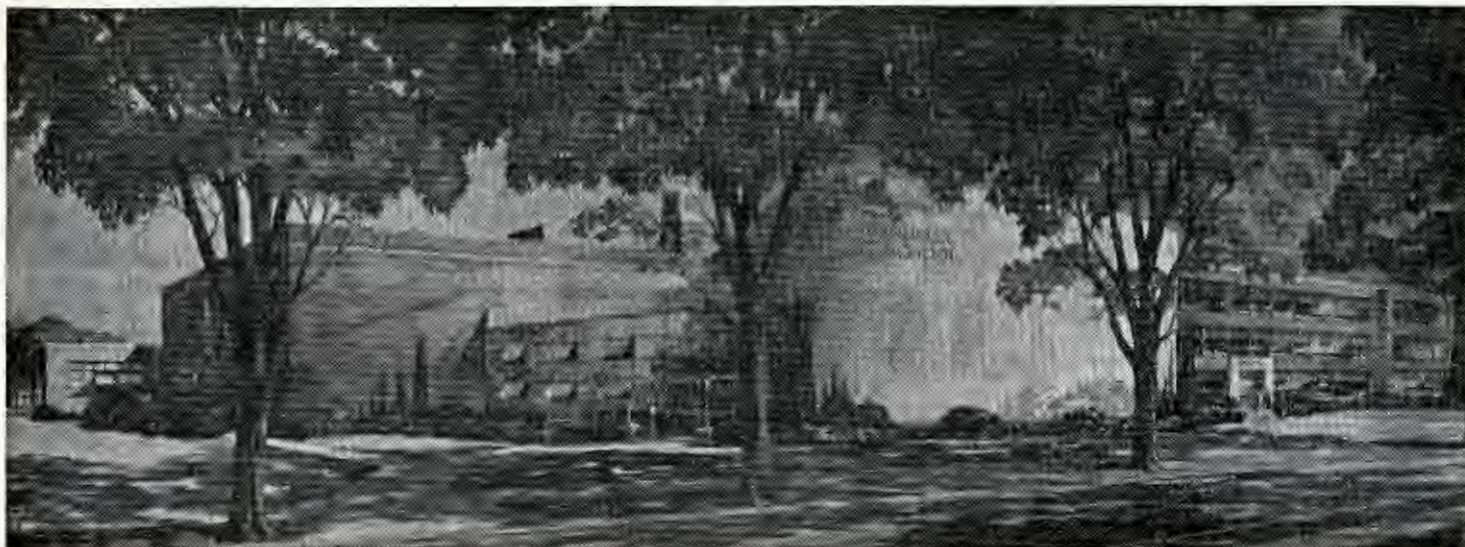
Now the central school district operates or contracts for 39 different buses.

Unexpected population increases the growing popularity of universal free education, and centralization have kept the problem of sufficient classroom space an ever present one in Gouverneur. With the new elementary school and additions to the high school and Balmat buildings, children of this area will have space for a varied classroom program and indoor recreation.

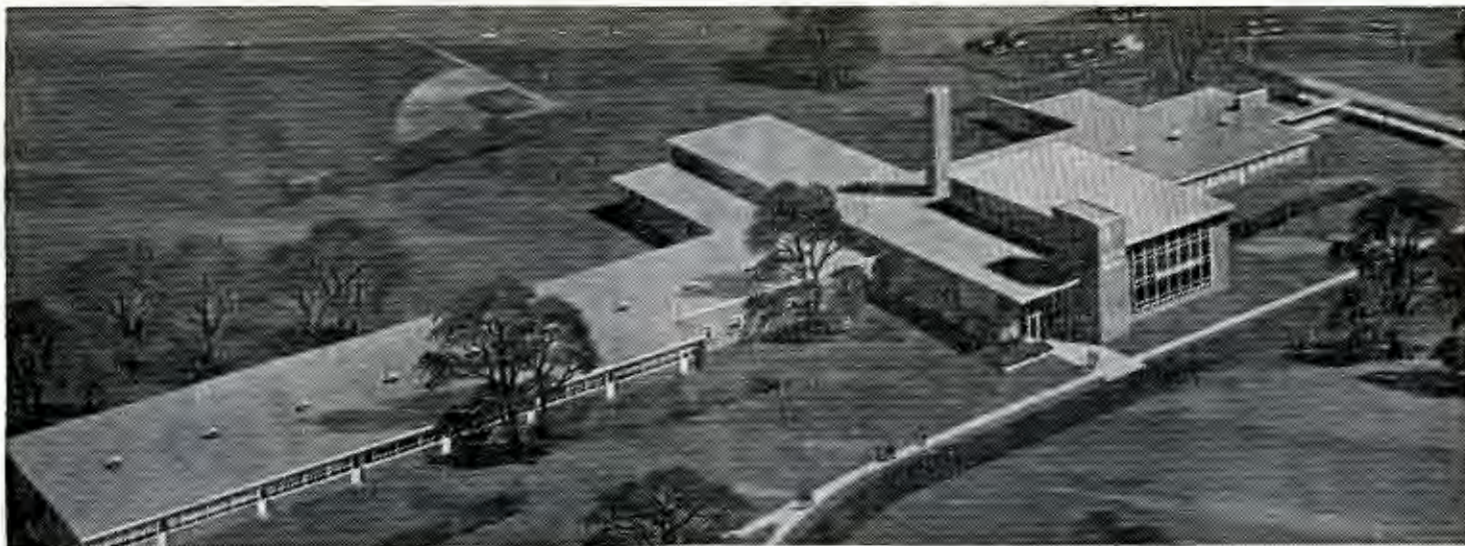


EAST SIDE GRAMMAR SCHOOL





ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF THE GOUVERNEUR HIGH SCHOOL TO BE REMODELED IN 1955-56



ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF THE EAST SIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER, 1955



## The Gouverneur Reading Room Association

By RUTH M. MASON

William Makepeace Thackeray once wrote "We live in deeds not years; in thoughts not breaths." These words might well be applied to the few Gouverneur women, members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who in 1885, hoping to benefit the youth of the town, in the face of many discouragements, decided to open a room, furnished with whatever suitable magazines and books were available, for use as a public reading room.

The first money contributed, \$30.00, was donated by the Women's Christian Temperance Union and was used for purchasing furniture.

The organization adopted the name, The Gouverneur Free Reading Room Association and elected Mrs. C. E. Hotchkiss president. A New England dinner and an Old Folks Concert augmented the slender fund, so that by January, 1886 with \$291.00 in the treasury, the library was opened with a "book reception" at which 40 volumes were donated and subscriptions received for several magazines and local and county papers.

### First Home

The first home of the library was a room in the Reynolds block, now the location of the J. J. Newberry store. Miss Mary Fowler was the first librarian.

Before the close of 1886 larger rooms were secured in the St. Lawrence block. In the meantime two former residents of Gouverneur, Judge James Smith of Buffalo and Mr. Robert Wilson, had each sent \$50.00. The library had now acquired 300 books. It became a circulating library, tickets costing \$1.50 per year or books loaned at one cent a day.

In 1888, through Newton Aldrich, what was known as the Seminary house was leased and occupied until 1894 when the lot was needed for school purposes, it being the site of the present East Side school. Rooms were again taken in the St. Lawrence block.

### Present Building

In 1895, Judge Smith purchased the Sheldon property, the site of the present library, for \$3,500.00 and presented it to the association. In 1900 Newton D. Aldrich

placed \$5,000.00 in the hands of a building committee and the present building of Gouverneur marble was completed by a local contractor, Henry Post, on this site.

In 1953, the need for more room which again had reached an acute stage, was solved by the addition of a spacious children's room. This was made possible through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. James Papayanakos and has greatly improved the facilities of the library.

### Fund Raising

Funds were raised by various means including suppers, food sales, doughnut sales, teas, and card parties. For years a house to house canvass for members who contributed \$1.00 for yearly membership in the Reading Room Association took place. In the year 1895 B. G. Parker, editor of the Free Press, allowed an edition of his paper to be published by the association and the "Women's Edition of the Free Press" was issued.

Today the library is maintained by \$1,000.00 from the village of Gouverneur, \$800 from the town and \$100.00 state aid, all of which is received annually. The library has a trust fund and a modest endowment fund which have been established by bequests of varying amounts from friends. Without these funds, it would be impossible to serve the public especially with the increased expenses of recent years.

A microfilm reader and films of the local Tribune-Press since 1864

was presented in 1951 by Mason R. Smith.

In the same year Mrs. Papayanakos had a natural wood sign bearing the name of the library erected on the front lawn.

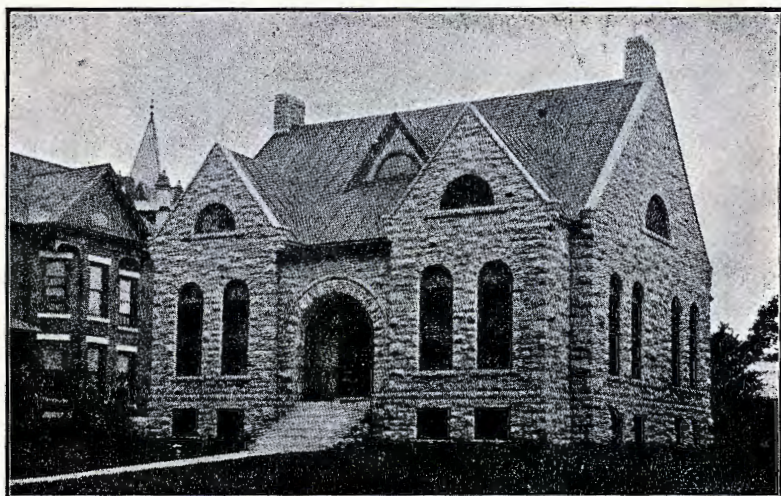
### Library Board

The affairs of the institution are conducted by a board of 15 trustees, elected for five year terms, three members being chosen each year.

### Librarians

The library has been most fortunate in having librarians whose deep interest lay in cultivating the love of books in the hearts of the children who patronized the library and in serving the general public. Among the librarians was Miss Alice Wilcox who died Nov. 27, 1949, after serving for 25 years and who played a large part in the advancement of public interest in the local reading room. She was succeeded by the present librarian Miss Lois Mitchell, who keeps the building open extra hours for school children and is helpful to all who call upon her.

Today the library contains over 11,000 books in addition to those loaned by the Regional Library Center in Watertown. The latter are loaned by the New York State Library to libraries in this section of the state and upon request practically any desired book may be obtained. Films for public use are also available, free of charge, on a variety of subjects. The total circulation of books, periodicals and films in 1954 amounted to 28,820.



THE GOUVERNEUR READING ROOM



## The Gouverneur Federal Post Office

By **JULIUS R. BARTLETT**

Opened to the public on April 1, 1917, the Gouverneur Federal post office at Grove street.

The late George R. Malby, Ogdensburg, representative from this congressional district in 1912, obtained from the treasury department an allocation of funds to purchase a site for a post office in Gouverneur. Local disagreements over the selection of a site delayed action for a time, but finally a site in the northwestern part of the Edwin Dodge grove, at a price of \$9,500, was chosen and the data forwarded to the Treasury department, where it was acted upon favorably. The lot is about 150 feet square.

James Devault of Canton, O., was the successful bidder at \$52,000 on the contract for the building.

After some excavating, the re-locating the Dodge home and the laying of the cornerstone in the fall of 1915, work was suspended.

The new building is a one story structure, the exterior of which is terra cotta brick, with Indiana limestone base and trim. Its length on Grove street is 85 feet and the width on Dodge place is about 60 feet. Lawns border the east and north sides, and a parking space is provided at the rear of the post office to take care of cars being used in postal business.

The spacious lobby is marble trimmed with a built-up cement and marble floor. The postmaster's office is at the extreme left and the money order and registry window at the extreme right. The delivery and stamp window are in the center area. At the left are the post office boxes.

An officially designated post office in Gouverneur did not appear on Washington records until August 23, 1824, but Dr. Richard Townsend, Gouverneur Morris' land agent, was known to have maintained a postal service of some sort as early as 1816. By the time the first post office was es-

tablished in 1824, there were in the area at least 60 patrons.

### Rural Delivery

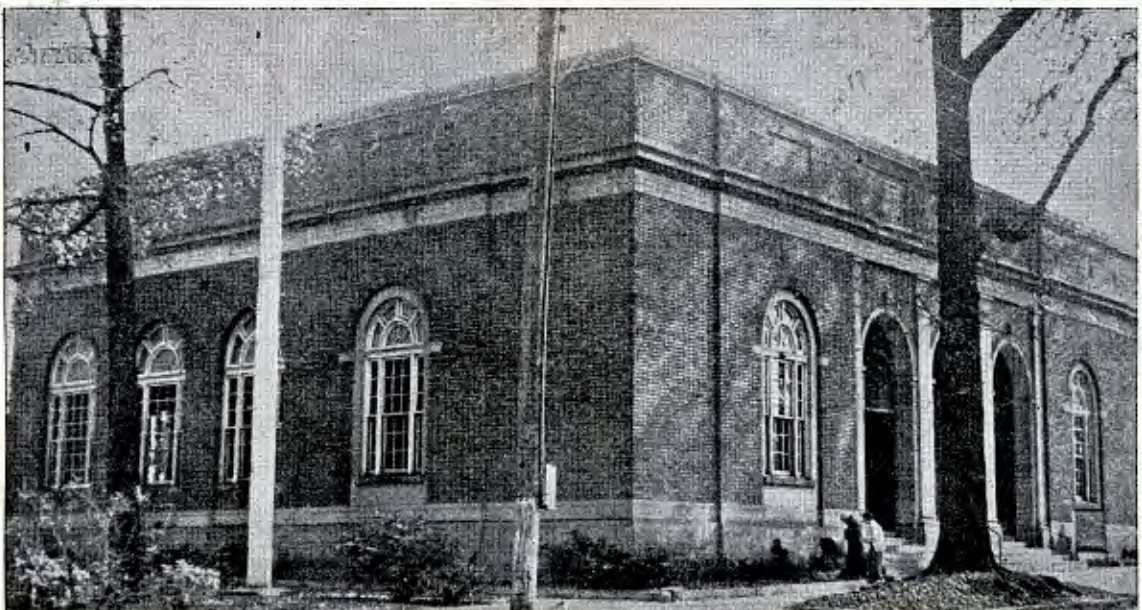
Rural free delivery was started on January 1, 1904, with four routes, Route 5 was added a month later, and Routes 6 and 7, set up in 1911. The arrival of the auto and paved roads made it possible to reduce the rural routes recently to five. Rural free delivery was changed nearly 20 years ago to rural delivery, because the government considered the middle name of the service misleading since the service is not free. Village delivery service was started on May 1, 1906.

### Postmasters

The postmasters of Gouverneur beginning with Dr. Townsend have been Dr. Townsend 1816-1824; Edwin G. Dodge 1825-1849; Chauncey Dodge, 1850-1853; Charles Anthony, 1854-1855, (resigned) William H. Bowne, 1856-1861; Stephen B. Van Duzee, 1862-1865; George B. Winslow, 1866-1882; Horace G. Reynolds, 1883-1885; William R. Dodge, 1886-1889; Abraham C. Gates, 1890-1893; C. Pliny Earle, 1894-1898; Justus B. Abbott, 1899-1908; Charles McCarty, 1909-1915; Fred B. Fuller, 1916-1922; Wilbur A. Van Duzee, 1923-1935; Grant W. Fuller, 1936-1948; Maurice Paige, acting postmaster, July 1, 1948-1949; Fred Price, postmaster from July 1, 1949.



**THE CACHET** used by the local post office, May 24, 1955, in commemoration of Gouverneur's Sesqui-centennial.



**THE GOUVERNEUR POST OFFICE ON GROVE STREET, COMPLETED IN 1917.**



# History of the First Presbyterian Church

By MISS HAZEL DICKSON

On May 24, 1817, a Presbyterian Congregational church was organized. William Colton, James Parker, William Cleghorn, Richard Kimball, Rockwell Barnes and John Spencer were trustees of the first organization.

Six names were placed upon the church roll. William Cleghorn, Elijah Hough, William Colton and his wife Hannah Colton, Jonathan Colton and his wife Betsy Colton, first appeared on the roll.

Mrs. Elizabeth Spencer was the first person admitted on profession of faith and her children were the first persons baptized in the

church. Two months after the birth of the church, the sacrament of the Lords supper was administered to 22 members.

During the first three years, the church had no settled pastor and services were irregular, but in 1820, the church was legally constituted a society, with corporate power.

A rough, rude building scarcely meriting the name of church, was constructed in 1820.

## The First Pastor

The Rev. James Murdock was engaged as stated supply in 1821. He served the church faithfully for four years,

The present Presbyterian church site was procured in 1820 and deeded to the society by Mrs. Gouverneur Morris. The edifice, built at a cost of \$1,400 was 34 by 39 feet in size, with no architectural beauty.

It had a balcony around three sides and no steeple. However, a square cornice, ornamented with four small spires, decorated the front of the church. Before the building burned down in 1877, the church had been moved to a lot,

occupied by the Starbuck barn on William street, and later moved across the street to the lot, occupied by the "Gouverneur Marble Works."

The building was used as a church, town hall, opera house, hose house, village lock up and marble shop.

Successor to Mr. Murdock, the Rev. Richard C. Hand was installed in September, 1826, and remained a faithful pastor until 1833, a period of seven years. No services were held during a greater part of five years following Rev. Hand's resignation. However, the church was supplied by the Rev. Jonathan Hovey, the Rev. Bucknell and Robert F. Lawrence. These men served for short periods.

Rev. Simeon Bicknell, a Dartmouth graduate, was ordained in October, 1838, as pastor of the church and remained here until January, 1842, when he was succeeded by the Rev. John Orr. Mr. Orr began his service in February, 1842, staying until August, 1843, when the church observed its 25th anniversary. For a long time, perhaps 20 years, there had been a division in the church. The result of these years of struggle was that a Congregational church was organized in 1843, taking from this church 27 members.

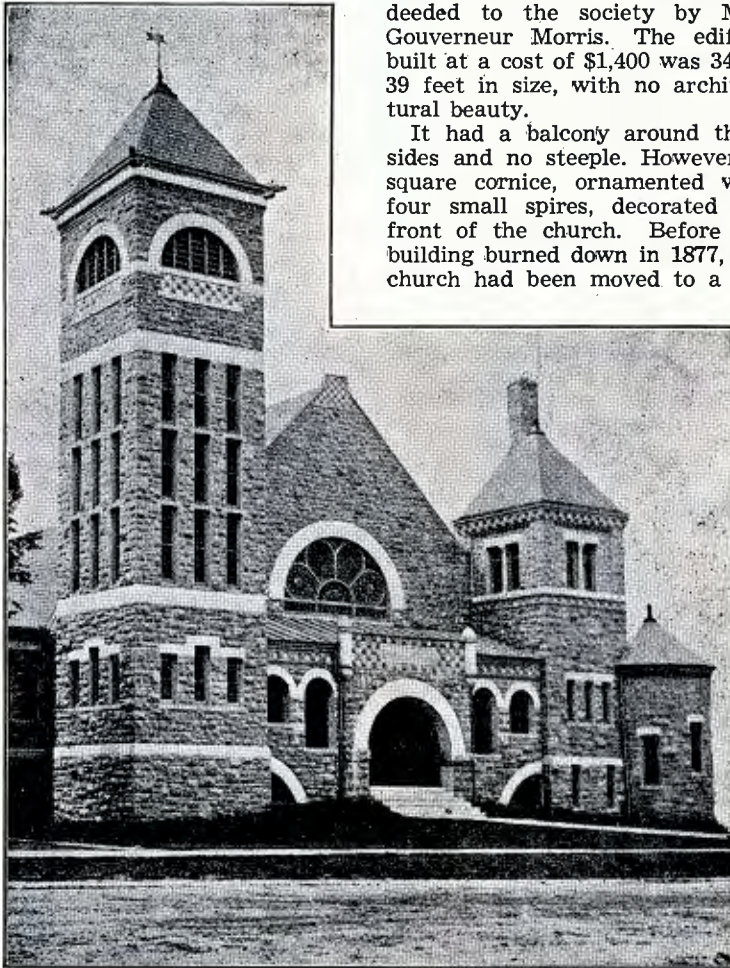
The Congregational society bought the lot, where the Methodist church now stands, and erected a plain edifice which they occupied until 1862, when the organization was dissolved and the members returned to the parent fold.

## Rev. B. B. Beckwith

The church next extended a call to the Rev. B. B. Beckwith who commenced his labors in the fall of 1843 and was installed February 14, 1844. Here seemed to have ended the troubles of the church, and it now entered upon a career of steady growth.

Mr. Beckwith's pastorate covered a period of 23 years of prosperity in the church.

In 1843, a new "meeting house", was raised and finished in 1844, the one some of us remember as the "Old Church." This was a building 60 by 40 feet, with a seven foot projection for lobby and belfry; its cost was about thirty-five hundred dollars.



**THE CORNERSTONE** for the present First Presbyterian church building was laid on July 27, 1892 and dedication services for the edifice were held on October 3, 1893. In 1950 an extensive repair and remodelling program was inaugurated with a new boy scout room and recreation room added and complete redecoration of the church carried out.



Previous to the dedication, the following resolution was recorded, "Resolved that Thursday the 29th day of August, 1844, be fixed upon and set apart as the day on which the new "meeting house" shall be solemnly dedicated to the worship of Triune God, the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

#### Fully Presbyterian

For a long time a change in the church government had been under consideration. In February, 1863, a motion was passed that, "the church become fully Presbyterian, by electing a board of ruling elders." Accordingly seven elders were elected by ballot and were ordained on a Sabbath afternoon, May 17, 1863.

Their names were George Rodger, Melville Thrall, Samuel Wright, James Brodie, Simeon Parmelee, Joseph Howes and George Lockie.

In 1865, the resignation of Mr. Beckwith, leader of the church for nearly a quarter of a century, was accepted though he continued to serve another year.

A call was extended and accepted by the Rev. N. J. Conklin, Utica, and he began his work in March, 1866. During the year 1866, a new parsonage was constructed to the east of the church.

During the ministry of Mr. Conklin, the church was enlarged and 20 pews were added; the old stoves were exchanged for a furnace and improvements were made in the lighting system. Doors were removed from the pews and the slams that announced the arrival of families in their pews, were heard no more.

#### Rev. Tryon Edwards

In 1879 Rev. Conklin resigned his charge. He was succeeded by the Rev. Tryon Edwards, a grandson of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards. For six years Dr. Edwards led the prospering and united church, after which the church had no regular pastor for a year.

The pulpit was supplied by visiting candidates.

#### William Skinner

Dr. Edwards was succeeded by the Rev. William Skinner, who came to Gouverneur immediately after his graduation from Princeton Theological seminary.

Ordination services were held July 9, 1887. He preached his first sermon in the "Old Presbyterian church" on June 19, 1887.

The manse which stood beside the church was a wooden building,

later replaced by a brick and marble residence.

In 1887, when Mr. Skinner assumed his duties as pastor, there were about 220 members in the church. When he resigned in 1929, there were more than 550 members.

Members had long realized the need for a new church and the old church was formally closed with an historic sermon by the pastor. Work of demolition began at once; and on May 14, 1892, ground was broken for the new edifice and the "Old Church," passed its 75th milestone.

The cornerstone of the beautiful marble structure now used by the church congregation, was laid on the afternoon of July 27, 1892 when Mr. Skinner swung the huge stone into place. The group then gathered at "Union Hall" to hear an address by Rev. L. M. Miller of Ogdensburg. Dedication ceremonies of the new edifice were held on October 3, 1893, with the Rev. Henry H. Stebbins, D.D. of Rochester, preaching the dedicatory sermon.

The church needs little description; it is a magnificent structure of Gouverneur marble, with interior finish of chestnut, and seats 500. It is a substantial, convenient, luxurious, and graceful building, the old squares having given place to arches, curves and circles. Its cost was approximately \$50,000.

By coincidence the farm property, formerly owned by one of the first elders, Samuel Wright, finally produced the marble which the St. Lawrence Marble Co. used in the building of the church.

On October 16, 1895 Mr. Skinner married Miss Katherine Markwick of Gouverneur, a daughter of the late Robert Markwick, then elder in the church. The ceremony, performed by the Rev. James F. Brodie, was the first wedding in the new church, which had been completed in 1894.

#### Parsonage

The church property was enriched in 1904 by a gift of a brick parsonage with marble trim from Mrs. Myra Dean and her daughters, Miss Jennie Dean and Miss Cora Dean. The old parsonage was removed to John street and is now known as the Fox house.

In 1907 a Union Evangelistic campaign was conducted by the Rev. M. S. Reese and party, of Rochester. Fifty-eight members were added to the church, at this

time. In 1912, the local church entertained the "Synod of New York." Dr. Mark Mathews, then "Moderator of the General Assembly," of the Presbyterian church, U.S.A. was the speaker for the occasion.

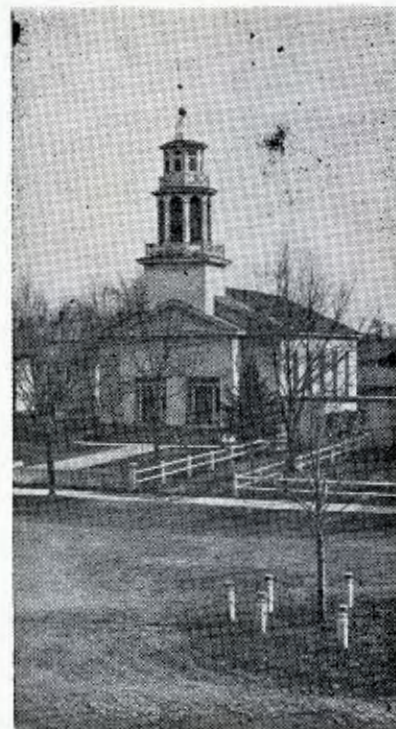
#### Evangelist Campaign

In 1916, a Union Evangelistic campaign was conducted by Dr. John H. McComb and party. At this time, there were 111 additions to the church.

A total membership of 550 persons belonged to the church in 1917, several of the members being direct descendants of original members. In three cases the office of elder had passed from father to son.

During the year 1917 the 100th anniversary of the church was celebrated. In 1920, a new organ, three manual with echo, was given anonymously. The name of the donor, Miss Jennie Dean, was not revealed until after her death. It was installed and played for the first time, September 5, 1920, by Mrs. Lillian Tait Sheldon.

In 1929, Mr. Skinner resigned after 42 years as beloved and hon-



**THE THIRD CHURCH** constructed by the Presbyterian congregation, first organized in 1817, stood on the site of the present church from 1844 until about 1892 when it was razed.



ored pastor. In 1930 Mr. Skinner was made "Pastor Emeritus".

In 1940 a Baptismal Font was given by the congregation and dedicated to the church as a memorial to Mr. Skinner.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph A. Schofield who came here in May, 1930, from Hobart, N.Y., where he had been pastor for five years. During Mr. Schofield's pastorate, he was very active in the affairs of the Presbyterian of St. Lawrence, having been moderator of the Presbytery for two terms 1939-1941.

On Sunday, May 17, 1942, a marble tablet was unveiled in honor of the first ruling elders of the church, after it had become fully Presbyterian. The dedication of the tablet marked the 79th anniversary of the first elders election on May 17, 1863.

The tablet, a gift of three descendants of the first elders, was unveiled, after appropriate ceremonies by Mrs. George Sisson, jr., of Potsdam, daughter of Joseph Howes, one of the original elders.

Another celebration was held on Wednesday evening, May 20, 1942, to commemorate the observance of the 125th anniversary of the local church, first organized jointly with the Congregationalists, on May 24, 1817.

### Tower Chimes

In 1943, the tower chimes and sound system was installed, as tribute to World War II participants, and in memory of those who gave their lives.

In 1949, Mr. Schofield started the "New Life Movement," in the church and 60 new members were added to the roll. In 1950 an extensive repair and remodelling program was inaugurated, with a new boy scout room and recreational room added and a complete redecorating program.

At the annual meeting of the church, in 1951, special tribute was paid to Mrs. Ella Woodworth, chairman of the flower committee for over 20 years.

Charles M. Tait (deceased) had a record of 41 years of service with the choir of the Presbyterian church. He started at the age of ten, pumping the pipe organ in the "Old Church" and became a member of the choir seven years later. He afterwards became director of the choir and held this position for 25 years, resigning in 1919.

Mrs. Lillian Tait Sheldon, a composer of note, was organist of the church for nearly 40 years. Then Catherine McCloy Sweet played for a few years, with Charles Tait as director of the

choir. Miss Helen Markwick played the organ from 1916-1919, about a year.

Altogether Mrs. Sheldon composed 22 anthems and 20 sacred songs. Some of her compositions are used by the church choir at the present time.

Mrs. Sheldon passed away in 1925. She was succeeded by Charles Tait, who played the organ for about a year.

In 1926 Mrs. Ora Spencer Fuller became organist and choir director and served until 1951, when she resigned.

Mrs. Fuller was succeeded by Mrs. William H. Foster, who is organist at the present time with Mrs. Thomas Farley as choir director.

Special tribute should be paid to Morris B. Davies, member of the choir since 1909, a period of 46 years and who is still singing in the choir at the present time.

Mr. Davies also has a record of continuous service as treasurer of the Sunday school since 1911.

In 1953 Rev. Joseph A. Schofield resigned to accept a call to the "Good Will Presbyterian church" at Montgomery, N.Y. Mr. Schofield was succeeded by the Rev. Merritt Updyke, who began his pastorate, in January, 1954.

## The First Church of Christ, Scientist

In the year 1898 Christian Science was first brought to the attention of Gouverneur people.

The first Christian Science Society was formed in the year 1913. The first service was held on Sunday morning, September 21st, in a room on the second floor at No. 40 Church street. On Wednesday evening at 7:30, the first testimonial service was held and a week later By-laws were adopted. Soon after the Society became a recognized branch of The Mother Church.

In April of 1916 the Society rented the Unitarian Church of Trinity Avenue where regular services have since been held on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. A reading room has also been maintained in the church parlor, where the Bible and all the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, can be read, borrowed or purchased.

### First Lecture

The first public lecture on

Christian Science was delivered in the church edifice on March 16th, 1917 by a member of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, and a lecture has been given every year since that time.

In July of 1936 the Society was incorporated as a church and the name changed to First Church of Christ, Scientist.

The idea of owning the church had ever been in the thoughts of the members, and a fund was established for that purpose. The architect, Mrs. Minerva Nichols of Brooklyn, who drew the plans for the building of the church by the Unitarians, was a Christian Scientist, and it seemed only fitting that this edifice should eventually become a Christian Science church. The church was purchased from the Unitarians on July 6, 1940.

By a gift from the Selina C. Cornish bequest and aid from the trustees under the will of Mary

Baker Eddy, and many willing sacrifices on the part of each member, the indebtedness of the church was discharged on December 28, 1940.

Complete freedom from debt earns a Christian Science church the right of dedication. On Sunday, January 4, 1942, the very inspiring dedicatory services were held and First Church of Christ, Scientist of Gouverneur, New York was formally dedicated.

The late Mrs. Wesley (Zelma Burt) Henderson was a Christian Science practitioner for many years, followed by Mrs. Isabelle C. Graham, who now lives in Ohio. The present practitioner is Mrs. George (Marque) Holtrey, formerly of New York city.

The pastor, ordained by Mrs. Eddy to conduct services in The Mother Church in Boston, Mass., and all its branches, is the Christian Science textbook, Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures written by herself, and the Holy Bible (King James version).





THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN GOUVERNEUR



THE CHURCH OF GOD