

citizens urged us to come, saying that Gouverneur needed another newspaper."

(At this time the Herald-Times was still in business). He promised a first-class local paper, striving to record all matters of local interest and to lend assistance to community projects.

Northern Tribune

And then a prominent teacher and political leader by the name of Martin R. Sackett got the journalistic bug, too.

"Please remember that this is no mushroom growth of a night. A puff of criticism will not harm it, nor a cyclone of adversity destroy it. We have come to abide, and we believe we are sure of a welcome."

With these prophetic words, Colonel Sackett, as editor of the Northern Tribune and secretary of the Gouverneur Publishing Company, which had been organized to publish it, concluded his last editorial in the first issue, June 4, 1887.

Although he could not possibly have foreseen it at the time, since his company had entered into competition with two other well-established local papers, the Herald-Times and the Free Press, Col. Sackett's paper has since proved to be the sole survivor of all the papers published since the beginning of Gouverneur.

For the Northern Tribune, in company with the Free Press, was eventually to absorb the Herald-Times; and the Tribune, in its turn, the Free Press, and even later the Independent which appeared briefly in 1935.

The Gouverneur Publishing company was composed of "twenty-five representative citizens of Gouverneur."

They were, Col. Sackett reported, in one of his first editorials, "men from the bench, men from the store, from the office and school, men of all shades of opinion on social and religious topics. * * * Men in the middle and past the middle life."

He added that "the company rests upon a solid financial basis, having the support of ample capital."

Stock Issue of \$6,000

It is estimated that the original stock issue for the Northern Tribune totalled approximately \$6,000 — of which Mr. Sackett held 60 per cent, and with entirely new equipment for the printing and publishing business, the new corporation

set up its headquarters on the second floor of the Egert block, the present I.O.O.F. building.

Announcing that the paper would be Republican in politics, the first editorials outlined in its policy the support and development of Gouverneur.

With the purchase of the subscription list of the Ogdensburg Sentinel in the fall of 1887, the Northern Tribune acquired a substantial group of subscribers, almost as large as that possessed by many other papers of the North Country which had been established for many years.

Competition Was Keen

Old-timers recall that competition between the three weekly newspapers then published in Gouverneur was keen, and that the Tribune had to fight for its share of the available business.

In the spring of 1892, however, shortly before the Northern Tribune was to celebrate its fifth anniversary, Mr. Sackett purchased the stock, business and equipment of the Herald-Times, which ceased publication at that time.

The subscription list was retained by the Gouverneur Publishing Company, and the machinery and equipment was purchased from Mr. Sackett by Mr. Parker of the Gouverneur Free Press.

During the next twenty years, Colonel Sackett rose to political prominence, and finally leased the plant to William F. Bowhall, and turned the editorship over to Francis H. Lamon.

Lamon it was who first proposed that Gouverneur hold a centennial celebration in 1905.

York Press Established

In 1908, Vasco P. Abbott, who held a small interest in the Northern Tribune, acquired control and established the Gouverneur Independent Publishing Company, with his son, Hugh Abbott, as general manager. In 1912, during the Bull Moose campaign, Hugh Abbott organized the York Press Corporation, now known as the Mason Rossiter Smith, Inc., and remodeled the plant to make possible the installation of modern machinery.

The plant, now a part of the present building at 10-14 Park street, was built by Mr. Abbott in conjunction with Gilbert Hutton, who owned the adjacent block to the south.

The Hutton property was acquired in 1946 from the J. Hermon McLearn estate.

During the same year he established the Massena Press at Massena, the Herkimer Independent at Herkimer, the Lowville Herald at Lowville, and took over the Hermon News at Hermon. All of these papers were published at the Gouverneur plant of the York Press Corporation in the interests of the then potentially powerful Progressive movement. These papers were published until 1916, when three of the weeklies were discontinued and the Hermon News consolidated with the Northern Tribune.

Following the death of Hugh Abbott in 1921, Clayton F. Rush, who had been associated with the business office since 1912, acquired an interest in the corporation. Following the death of Mrs. Abbott in 1932, he acquired the controlling interest in the stock of the corporation.

Mr. Rush came to Gouverneur from Camden in 1910, and was employed by the International Pulp Company as stenographer for the late A. J. McDonald, then superintendent of that company. He became associated with Mr. Abbott in 1912, at which time the Abbotts organized the Mac-A-Mac Corporation, a lumbering project at Brandreth, with offices in Gouverneur.

Subscribers to the Northern Tribune and the Gouverneur Free Press were surprised to read in their papers on April 17, 1929, that the Free Press was about to cease publication, and that the subscription list, unfilled contracts legal advertising and business of the latter were to be taken over by the York Press Corporation on the following Friday and merged with the Northern Tribune.

Following the sudden death of the late B. G. Parker, publisher of the Free Press, and one of Gouverneur's most prominent citizens in New York, Friday, February 11, 1927, the business of the Free Press was carried on by his estate until October 10, 1927, when new management assumed control.

McFarlane Buys Free Press

The purchase was made by Charles McFarlane of New York city, in the name of his son, J. W. McFarlane, who established the McFarlane Press, which continued publication of the Free Press until it was merged with the Northern Tribune in 1929.

Through the H. C. Rogers Real Estate Agency, the sale of the Free Press business was consum-

mated to the York Press Corporation, publishers of the Northern Tribune.

The machinery and equipment of the Free Press were dismantled and shipped to the Morrill Brothers Printing Company plant at Fulton, in which Mr. McFarlane had a substantial interest.

The Independent

For nearly eight years, the Tribune-Press was alone in its field until Hossie R. Kinney, son of a prominent local citizen Robert Kinney, began the short lived publication of the second tabloid newspaper in Gouverneur's history, the Independent.

The first issue appeared Friday, July 5, 1935, its mast-head in two colors, the word Independent appearing in large red letters, the word Gouverneur being overprinted on it in black.

Housed in a frame building at the rear of the residential blocks along Main Street west of the Williams Street intersection, the plant caught fire Monday, November 25, 1935.

On Friday, November 27, Mr. Kinney announced that the damage done by the fire made further publication of the Independent impractical, and arrangements were made with the Tribune-Press to take over the subscription list.

New Owner

Ownership of the York Press Corporation, printers and publishers of the Tribune-Press, changed hands for the second time in twenty-five years, on April 1, 1937, when Mason Rossiter Smith, editor, formerly of North Tona-wanda, N. Y., consummated the purchase of the controlling interest in the newspaper and printing plant from Mr. Rush, publisher and business manager.

Mr. R. Smith Takes Over

Mr. Smith, who came to the Tribune-Press on September 20, 1936, and assumed the office of editor on October 6th, following the death of Hilton H. Wallace, former editor, became the fifth editor in the forty-nine years of consecutive publication of the Tribune-Press and its predecessors, the Northern Tribune and the Gouverneur Free Press. He assumed the position of Editor and Publisher, upon acquisition of the business.

The staff at time of the transfer consisted of Warner H. Miller, mechanical superintendent; Maurice B. Mitchell, managing editor

and advertising manager; Mrs. Murray D. Rayburn, bookkeeper; Ray Brown and Merton E. Gamble, linotype operators; Charles D. Gale, compositor; R. Harold LeBlanc, compositor-operator-pressman; Gordon Butler and Douglas Gamble, floor men.

Of this group, death has taken Messrs. Merton Gamble, Brown, Gale and LeBlanc, Mr. Mitchell moved on to higher responsibilities in newspaper, radio and TV work in Ogdensburg, Albany, Washington and New York, while the balance of the staff remain with the business.

Norwood Again

The Norwood News came back into the Gouverneur picture again when the Tribune-Press acquired the newspaper from A. R. Nickerson, editor and publisher, in the summer of 1940.

Gordon J. Butler and Gordon J. McPherson, the latter a recent addition to the staff, moved over to Norwood to operate the mechanical department and news-and-advertising, respectively.

But with the advent of America's entry into the war and subsequent shortages in both manpower and materials, the Norwood venture proved unfortunate, and after yeoman efforts to publish the newspaper in its Norwood plant, and then to print it in Gouverneur, the venture was finally given up early in 1942, and the subscription list sold to the Potsdam Courier & Freeman.

In 1941 and '42, too, the Tribune-Press published the Pine Camp News, a tabloid newspaper, for 4th Armored Division trainees at the U. S. Army camp near Great Bend. But for similar reasons, this paper folded, too.

The Tribune-Press recently became affiliated with the St. Lawrence Plaindealer at Canton, when the Gouverneur publisher acquired the later paper July 1, 1949.

The Hammond Advertiser was purchased of Leo Sansoucy in July, 1949, its subscription list eventually being merged with the Tribune-Press and the Advertiser discontinued.

The War Years

As time went on, the Tribune-Press staff expanded with the addition of several younger men. Seven members of the organization, Gordon Butler, Douglas Gamble, C. Samuel Gamble, Gordon McPherson, Craig Nichols, Kenneth MacLeod and Publisher

Smith, left their work to join the colors during World War II.

Meanwhile, a skeleton staff, headed by Warner H. Miller as general manager, loyally carried on the business. In this small group were Mrs. Rayburn, Ray Brown, Eddie Premo, Charlie Gale and Harold LeBlanc, with Frank W. Lovering of Medford, Mass., as "war editor."

With the end of the war, all but one of the veterans returned to the Tribune-Press, Craig Nichols having decided to go into the printing business with his father near Rochester, N. Y. Other veterans joined the staff, including Paul Pete and Howard Pollard, linotype operators; Richard Benjamin, pressman; Ernest Cronk, general services; Fred Turkington and Kenneth Orvis, news editors; and F. W. Rumke, news editor and advertising manager. Bud Bartholomew joined the staff after naval service, then reenlisted in the air force.

Ken MacLeod accepted another position with a large weekly newspaper on the West Coast, and at about the same time Charles Ferguson joined the staff as machinist and assistant foreman after long experience in North Country papers and printing offices.

More recently, Gordon McPherson became affiliated with the advertising division of the Purina Company at St. Louis.

The present staff includes news editor, Mrs. Lincoln Cathers, assisted by Mrs. Rodney Bradish; Advertising manager, F. W. Rumke, assisted by Miss Betty Davis; office manager, Mrs. Rayburn, assisted by Miss Martha Willenbacher, and Mrs. D. G. Hughes (Circulation Manager); solicitor, Paul Smith; general manager, Mr. Miller; foreman, Mr. Butler; assistant foreman, Mr. Ferguson; operators, Messrs. Pete and Pollard; pressmen, Messrs. C. S. Gamble, Benjamin; floorman, Douglas Gamble; general services, Ernest Cronk. Mr. Smith remains as editor and publisher.

The Tribune-Press also numbers some 60 correspondents covering the Gouverneur area.

Incorporated in 1950, the corporate name is Mason Rossiter Smith, Inc., with Mr. Smith as president and treasurer; Mr. Miller, executive vice-president; Mr. Ferguson vice-president and Mr. Butler as secretary.

The Electric Light and Power Industry

Electricity and horsepower had more than a little in common in the early days of Gouverneur. The first use of electricity to light an area for the public came on a night in 1886 when two enterprising promoters used a battery of arc lights to illuminate a track for a horse race on the Gouverneur fair grounds. This was almost half a century before the practice of lighting athletic events at night became popular on a national scale.

It was a year later, in May of 1887, that a proposal to light the village streets was made by William J. Morrison, a representative of the American Illuminating Company of New York. Upon approval of the Gouverneur village board, he formed the American Electric Company and began the task of erecting the poles for 20 arc lights throughout the heart of the village. This step heralded the end of the familiar lamp lighter of that era and the many oil lamps that illuminated the downtown area. Mr. Morrison generated the power for his electric lights with a steam boiler located at the Gouverneur Machine Shop at 68 West Main street, now the Ruderman Machinery Exchange Machine Shop.

Illuminating and Power Co.

In September of 1887, the venture was taken over by the local citizens and incorporated as the American Illuminating & Power Company. The new company started with 30 arc lights.

High Pressure Boiler

The village of Gouverneur experienced rapid growth in the period between 1880 and 1890 when the marble and talc industries began operations in the area. This expansion brought with it a corresponding need for more electric service and the machine shop boiler was discarded in favor of a high pressure boiler which was housed at what is now the site of the municipal building on Clinton street.

According to the contract signed by the American Illuminating & Power Company, the company had to provide arc lights along the settled portion of the town from dark until twelve o'clock, "except such nights as there shall be good and sufficient moonlight, unobscured by clouds." No residential and street lighting power

was available during daylight periods because of industrial demand. In 1893 the generation was supplemented by a steam boiler of the Gardner Talc mill, then situated on Parker street, which could make power available only when it was not needed for production. The Gardner mill burned on March 5, 1894, bringing an end to this plan.

Oswegatchie Co.

The Oswegatchie Light & Power company came into being in 1895 as an electric subsidiary of the International Talc company. Transmission lines were constructed four miles from the power plant to the village of Gouverneur. Darkness to midnight operation was followed until October 1906, during which time the Oswegatchie company also pumped the water supply as well as lighting the street lamps. In 1911 a second generating plant was constructed at one of the mill sites which developed a "head" of thirty feet.

Hannawa Power

In the interim, local interest had grown in the operations of the Northern Power Company of Potsdam which generated power at Hannawa Falls on the Raquette River, Southeast of Potsdam. It was felt that by inviting the northern power company to serve Gouverneur, the accompanying overland power line could be used to pick up the villages along the route and eventually spread to the farm areas.

A public referendum was held and the Northern Power Company was invited by the town to project its lines to Gouverneur. In October 1907, poles were set on the south side of the village along Pooler street and across the Oswegatchie river to a substation which was erected just outside the village limits on the Hailesboro road. For many years the two franchised power companies operated in and around the village.

Flat Rates

In the early days of electric service, power was sold on a flat rate plan which was actually on a per light per month basis regardless of the amount of power used. This continued until the early 20's when both companies changed to a meter system. During this period the residents frequently enjoyed the light to the

fullest—often leaving inside and outside lights on day and night. It is recorded that when a section of street lights was out of order it was not unusual to have enough outside house lights on to keep the streets from becoming entirely darkened.

Three Systems

In 1923, a proposition was adopted by the village taxpayers at a referendum which authorized the construction of a new concrete dam and power plant by the village to serve village installations. This set the stage for the rather unique situation of having three separate electric operations all serving the same small community. A power commission was named and in the winter of 1925-26 construction was started on the first dam, power house and a distribution system.

The new village plant began operating in October, 1927, almost four years after the vote to bond for a semi-municipal operation.

Ornamental Lights

In the early spring of 1926, Edward J. Noble, his brother, Robert P. Noble of the Life Savers, Inc., and their sister, Mrs. Alger Conger, announced a gift to the village of an ornamental lighting system to extend entirely through the village along East and West Main included the cable for the understreets and Church street, down Depot street to the New York Central railroad tracks. This gift ground installations and was presented to the village to honor their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey H. Noble. A bronze tablet at the base of one of the poles at the west end of the village park commemorates the gift.

Niagara Mohawk

In 1950, negotiations began with the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation which concluded in the purchase of the plant and properties of the Oswegatchie Light & Power Company. This eliminated the costly duplication of transmission and distribution facilities and made available to the residents of Gouverneur the widespread facilities of the larger utility. New facilities were constructed including the new Battle Hill substation, four miles from Gouverneur; and the rebuilding of the Gouverneur substation and other facilities owned by predecessor companies.





1920



1955

Railroad History Reflects Pioneer Spirit

Nowhere is the pioneer spirit of the North Country better shown than in the early history of its railroads. Going back more than a century, the beginnings of the Northern Railroad, the Watertown & Rome, the Potsdam & Watertown, and the R. W. & O. provide some of the most interesting chapters in the annals of American railroading.

The Northern Railroad

As far back as 1829 preliminary discussions were held about the possibility of constructing a railroad across the Northern Tier. Finally on February 17, 1830 a meeting was held at Montpelier, Vermont, to consider the building of a road from Rouse's Point at the bend of Lake Champlain to Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence. Promoters of the plan envisioned trains that would operate over the proposed line at 15 miles an hour and cover the distance from Boston to Ogdensburg in 35 hours.

Further meetings were held the following month at Ogdensburg and a year later at Malone, but so great were the difficulties to be overcome that it took 14 years before the Northern Railroad was finally incorporated on May 14, 1845.

Its first meeting was held the following month in Ogdensburg and George Parish of that village was elected its first president. Complete surveys of the line, as it now exists were made by James Hayward, and Colonel Charles L. Schlatter, the road's chief engineer and later superintendent, prepared to build it.

Actual construction was begun in March, 1848, just east of Ogdensburg and at the same time grading and laying of rail began at the east end of the road at Rouse's Point. In the fall of that year trains were in regular service between Rouse's Point and Centreville, and a year later the road had been extended to Ellenburgh. By October 1, 1850, trains ran into Malone and a month later the line was open for its entire length of 117 miles. Its cost, including equipment and fixtures, was placed then at \$5,022,121.31.

Although the Northern Railroad was a genuine pioneer, it never realized the dreams of its promoters. It soon entered upon serious difficulties, undergoing several re-

organizations and becoming successively the Ogdensburg Railroad, the Ogdensburg & Lake Champlain, a branch of the Central Vermont and last a branch of the Rutland Railroad, which it remains today.

Watertown & Rome Railroad

While one group of men struggled so hard to establish railroad entrance to the North Country from the east, another strove to approach the area from the south. After years of disappointment, frustration, and perseverance, this effort resulted in the first truly successful railroad venture of the North Country—the Watertown & Rome Railroad.

Although the legislative act under which the Watertown & Rome was incorporated was passed April 17, 1832, it had to be extended four times before the road was opened nearly 20 years later, on September 18, 1851. The story of the intervening years is one of commercial audacity, business daring, vision and perseverance as a group of courageous pioneers struggled to make a reality of the railroad that existed for years on paper alone.

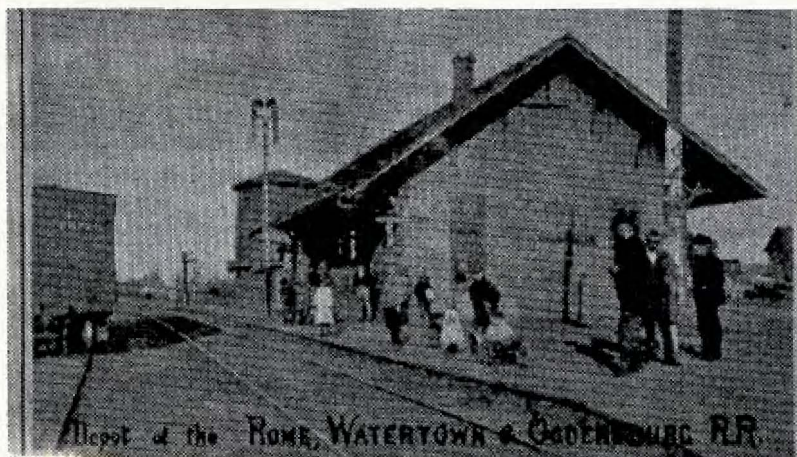
Among this group were William Smith and Clark Rice, of whom it is said that they used to sit in an upper room of a stone house on Factory street in Watertown, exhibiting to callers a toy train on track mounted on a table and trying to induce the folk of the village to invest their money in a scheme which seemed then chimerical.

There was also William Dewey, who issued two thousand copies of a 32 page pamphlet, entitled "Suggestions Urging the Construction of a Railroad from Rome to Watertown." So potent was this pamphlet that the citizens of Cape Vincent, alarmed at not being included in the plans, held a mass meeting which was followed by the incorporation of the Watertown & Cape Vincent Railroad. Surveys followed and the present Cape Vincent branch was included in plans for the construction of the Watertown & Rome.

In an editorial headed "Our Railroad," the Northern State Journal of Watertown on March 29, 1848 described a railroad meeting held in the Jefferson County Court House a few days before and expressed some irritation over continual delays in the building of the railroad: "... Seldom has any meeting been held in this county where more unanimity and enthusiastic devotion to a great public object have been displayed, than was evidenced in the character and conduct of the assemblage that filled the Court House . . . Go ahead, and that immediately, was the ruling motto in the speeches and resolutions, and the whole meeting sympathized in the sentiment.

Organization

The actual organization of the Watertown & Rome was finally accomplished the following April at the American Hotel in Watertown, and an emissary was sent to Albany to have the original Act



Old Gouverneur Depot 45 years ago. Broke ground for new station in 1909, moved in March 1, 1910.

for the building of the line extended for the last time. Construction was soon begun and by the fall of 1850 track had been laid about 24 miles north of Rome.

On September 10 of that year passenger service was installed between Rome and Camden, but it took until the following summer before the road reached Adams. On the evening of September 5, 1851 the first locomotive pulled into Watertown. Although a great crowd had congregated that historic evening, the real celebration took place later in the month, as announced by the Watertown Reformer:

The morning of September 24 was ushered in by a 13-gun salute, one for each member of the board of directors. There was more shooting a little later on when a procession marched down Stone street to greet the train upon its arrival at the passenger depot and a salvo of 72 guns was fired—one for each mile of completed line.

At last the Watertown & Rome had arrived—with a bang—in Watertown. By the following spring regular service to Cape Vincent began and the long-delayed railroad began its flourishing career.

Potsdam-Watertown R.R.

An early survey of the Northern Railroad projected the road from Malone to Ogdensburg through the prosperous villages of Canton and Potsdam, but this survey was rejected and the line built slightly to the north. Potsdam was so aroused at being by-passed by the new road that 58 of its high-spirited citizens organized themselves into the Potsdam Railroad company in 1850 and built a branch line to connect their community with the Northern Railroad. For lack of a better name the point where the branch met the Northern was called Potsdam Junction, which was after re-named Norwood.

The success of Potsdam with her railroad and the prosperity it brought stirred the envy of neighboring villages and the demand for a railroad linking Watertown and Potsdam began to grow.

In the summer of 1851 E. N. Brodhead was employed to make a preliminary survey of the proposed line and on January 9, 1852 he made a full report at a meeting held in Gouverneur. There was no dissent and the Potsdam and

Watertown Railroad was organized then and there.

Edwin Dodge, President

Among the directors of the new road were Edwin Dodge and W. E. Sterling, both of Gouverneur. At the third meeting of the new board, held on February 26 at VanBuren's hotel in Gouverneur, Mr. Dodge was made president of the new road. His fellow officers were Zenas Clark, vice president; Henry L. Knowles, secretary, both of Potsdam; and Daniel Lee of Watertown.

To launch this brave new venture in railroading a fund of some \$750,000 had been raised and offices opened at 6 Washington street in Watertown. Early in the following year, 1853, it became necessary to increase the capital stock to \$2,000,000 but still many vexing financial problems remained to be solved. Committees were appointed to study the location of the new line and to provide suitable station grounds and buildings.

In February, 1854, a committee was authorized to enter into negotiations for the purchase of 2500 tons of iron rail, by sale of bonds of the company, "or otherwise," and by that fall the directors were ready to consider the acquisition of some rolling stock. At their November meeting they decided to purchase the engine Montreal, with tender, from the Watertown & Rome for \$4,500, plus two baggage and "post-office" cars, at \$750 each. Later, using their own hard-earned cash, the directors acquired from one "Vilas, of Plattsburgh," as the identification appears in the board minutes, an additional locomotive and two more cars.

On the morning of September 12th, 1856, the Chicopee brought the first train into Gouverneur, the end of the line. Here the stage coach picked up the passengers for Ogdensburg, going by way of Richville, Cooper's Falls and Heuvelton.

The first depot, a picture of which is shown, was built across the tracks from the present one and toward Beckwith street. There was also a shed for wood since this was a refueling station.

Five years after the historic meeting in Gouverneur, when the P & W was organized, Board Secretary Knowles triumphantly recorded success in his official minutes. "On the morning of the fifth

of February, 1857, a passenger train left Watertown at about nine o'clock a.m., with many of the officers of the company and invited friends, passed leisurely over the entire road to its junction with the Northern Railroad, that road to Ogdensburg, arriving at Ogdensburg at about four o'clock and returned the next day to Watertown." So much more work remained to be done, however, that it wasn't until June that passenger service was established from Watertown, where trains connected with the Watertown & Rome, to Norwood, 75 miles away. A few years later a branch line was built from a point two miles from the village of DeKalb straight through to Ogdensburg 18 miles away.

R. W. and O. R. R.

The complex financial burdens involved in bringing the Potsdam & Watertown into being, at a cost of \$1,800,000 soon proved too much for the struggling pioneer and in the summer of 1860, the little road was purchased by the Watertown & Rome for about half that amount. The actual merger of the two properties was accomplished in the following year when the corporate title was changed to the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg Railroad effective August 23, 1861.

A second company of the same name was incorporated in 1874 with the acquisition of the RW&O of the Lake Ontario Railroad and still a third company of the same name was formed the following year by an agreement of consolidation with the Syracuse & Northern Railroad.

The final Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg Railroad company was formed by another agreement of consolidation, dated March 14, 1885, with the Oswego Railroad Bridge company.

After a somewhat hectic but honored career, as an independent railroad, the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg was leased to the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad on March 14, 1891. Finally, in 1913, through consolidation, it became a corporate part of the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, which in turn became part of the New York Central Railroad on December 23, 1914 through consolidation with the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad and many of their subsidiaries.

The Telephone Industry in the Gouverneur Area

The newspaper business and the telephone industry in Gouverneur were born practically side by side, and both have continued to flourish in this community down through the years.

In 1884 the telephone was only a "baby" having been introduced to the world eight years before by its inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Some people envisioned a successful future for the telephone, but a large majority were unimpressed by its appearance on the American scene.

Here in Gouverneur only a handful of local residents had telephones. Their sets were crude "contraptions" that provided voice communications generally between a man's home and his place of business over a single telephone wire. Transmission qualities were bad and the range of the telephone was limited to a very short distance between two points.

First Office

The late B. G. Parker was publishing the Gouverneur Free Press in an office on the second floor over what is now the B. O. Kinney Drug Store. In a small room adjoining the newspaper, Mr. Parker opened Gouverneur's first telephone office.

The office had no switchboard. It did have two wall-type telephones. From these telephones customers could make calls to such "far-away" places as Ogdensburg and Watertown over lines constructed by the Bell Telephone Company. According to a well-known Gouverneur resident, "you had to shout at the top of your lungs on a call to one of these places, and you could only guess at the sounds coming back over the line."

On an incoming call to a Gouverneur resident, a messenger boy summoned the called person to the office, or if no direct communication was desired, he delivered a written message dictated to the operator by the caller.

Exchange Service

It was in the autumn of the following year — 1885 — that exchange telephone service was established in Gouverneur. A switchboard through which each telephone in the community was connected to every other one, went into operation. Only one operator was needed to handle calls

to and from Gouverneur's 36 telephone customers.

Mr. Parker continued as telephone manager, and his employees on the newspaper soon found themselves engulfed in telephone work. They "doubled in brass," getting out a newspaper and attending to the telephone needs of the community.

Early Employees

Harry C. Rogers, well-known Gouverneur real estate man and former town clerk, was a printer's devil on the newspaper during the day, and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. he manned the switchboard.

Two local women, Miss Laura Cocroft and Miss Estella M. Ackerman, were employed by Mr. Parker as proof readers for his paper and as operators for his telephone exchange.

As the popularity of the telephone and the newspaper increased in Gouverneur, it became necessary to move to larger quarters. About 1887 Mr. Parker had developed the St. Lawrence block and moved his newspaper and telephone offices to the second and third floors of a building near the Masonic Temple. A long distance office was 'under the stairs' on the first floor. The proprietor of a first floor store answered the calls for the long distance line.

There was no all-night service and the telephone office was open Sundays only from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

However, as more and more Gouverneur residents came to realize the advantages of a telephone in the home for use at any time of the day or night, public demand resulted in the establishment of night service.

A messenger boy or an apprentice from the newspaper slept on a cot in the telephone office. When a call came through to the switchboard a "buzzer" sounded awakening the boy, who, completed the call.

To summon the operator, telephone users gave the crank on their telephones a few vigorous turns. This action generated electricity which caused a "drop" to fall at the switchboard, signaling the operator to answer.

Before the turn of the century it was necessary to add two additional operator-positions to the switchboard, bringing the total to three. There were about 100 tele-

phone customers in Gouverneur at this time.

Original Numbers

Two telephone numbers assigned in 1898 and 1901 have never been changed. They are both on the same party line and are held by next door neighbors. Miss Ruth G. Easton of 15 Trinity avenue has number 107-W, which was first assigned to her aunt. The other number, 107-J, was given to Dr. J. M. Spencer and is now held by his daughter, Miss Julia Spencer at the family homestead, 29 Trinity avenue.

Among other early telephone subscribers were Amasa Corbin, Charles Anthony, Stephen Van Duzee, Newton Aldrich and Henry Sudds.

Telephone service in this community became more popular after 1900. This public acceptance of Bell's "toy talking piece" resulted in the operation of a second telephone company here in 1906.

North Western

The North Western Telephone Company of Carthage opened an office in the residence of Mrs. Theron G. Morehouse, who still resides in Gouverneur at 118 William street. Mrs. Morehouse was in charge of the office. The North Western company had a switchboard with only one operator-position and "very few subscribers."

Meanwhile, the Central New York Telephone and Telegraph Company office which Mr. Parker was managing under a Bell operating license, moved to larger quarters at Park and Main streets above the present Army and Navy store.

Two separate telephone companies, whose lines were not interconnected, posed a problem. Many customers had to subscribe to both companies. They had two telephones, which was expensive and a duplication of service.

Mountain Home Co.

After a year, the North Western company and the Central New York company merged becoming the Mountain Home Telephone Company, and the inconvenience of two telephone companies was eliminated. Mrs. Morehouse joined the Mountain Home company and served as chief operator until 1915 when she retired. She was replaced by Miss Eleanor Ruby Fletcher who resides at 194 East Main

street. Miss Fletcher was chief operator until her retirement in 1950.

The name of the Mountain Home Telephone Company was changed to the Northern New York Telephone Corporation in 1923. Nine years later the Northern New York Corporation merged with the New York Telephone Company.

Increased demands for telephone service in 1913 had necessitated a move to the present telephone central office at 38 Church street in the Gouverneur Savings and Loan Association building.

A new common-battery switchboard with six operator-positions was installed. To signal the operator, customers merely had to lift the receiver and a lamp flashed at the switchboard. Mr. Parker, Gouverneur's telephone pioneer, continued as manager until his death in 1927.

Army Needs

Between 1913 and 1940 the number of telephones increased

from about 400 to slightly over 1,000. In the summer of 1940 the telephone company was presented with one of its greatest challenges in Gouverneur. The Army had moved into the area for extensive maneuvers.

Temporary telephone facilities, including many miles of telephone wire and cable, were installed to care for the Army's communication needs. Experienced operators were transferred here from other towns, demonstrating the flexibility of the New York Telephone Company in dealing with special problems.

At this stage in Gouverneur's telephone development, several improvements had been introduced. Long distance circuits were placed inside cable as protection against the weather, and repeaters—which amplify voice currents—were installed to improve transmission over long distances.

During the war years—1940 to 1945—demands for telephones in-

creased in Gouverneur, but the telephone company was unable to meet them because materials used in the telephone business had gone to war. The number of telephones here increased to only 1,300.

To operate Gouverneur's telephone system 34 telephone operators and 14 plant department employees are required. R. E. Williams is the local telephone manager.

More than 11,000 daily originating calls are handled at the 13 operator-position Gouverneur switchboard. Of this number 1,100 are long distance calls from residents in Gouverneur and the six communities for which Gouverneur is a long distance operator office: Star Lake, Richville, Oxbow, Edwards, DeKalb and Macomb. During the busy summer season these calls increase to 14,900 and 1,400 respectively. Mrs. Della W. Evans is chief operator. Plant department activities are under the direction of Leo Mayville, wire chief.



THERE ARE 13 POSITIONS in the present switchboard of the New York Telephone company in Gouverneur. Working at a portion of the board are, at the left, Mrs. Elsie Fleming, Miss Norma Hatch and Mrs. Ruth McAdam. In the rear are Miss Patricia Hawn, Miss Betty Mastro, Miss Doris Rose, Miss Mary Cole and Miss Carol Frawley.

A Half-Century of Theater in Gouverneur

It has been nearly 50 years now since the first nickelodeon heralded the opening of the modern Gralyn theater movie, with five cent admission. Today Mr. and Mrs. James P. Papayanakos are owners and operators of the Gralyn, as well as the Union Hall movie at Church and William streets, and the Hi-Way Drive-In movie which was opened in 1950 one mile out on the Somerville road.

Willet T. Bowne and Stephen B. Van Duzee built the first hall for shows and public use in 1875 at William and Church streets, fronting on Church.

Mr. Bowne owned 40 feet of the frontage and operated a hardware store on the first floor, 2-4 Church street. Mr. Van Duzee owned a furniture and cabinet store in the remaining 60 foot frontage of the first floor, the equivalent to 6-10 Church street. The public hall was laid out on the second floor, with the stage toward the Presbyterian church. A wide stairway in the center of the building provided entrance to the second floor.

Offices and lodge rooms occupied the two upper floors in front.

This first Union Hall burned in October, 1877, and was immediately rebuilt by the same men, with other associates. This hall was used by prominent theater groups and speakers for more than 30 years. An inclined floor was installed in 1902.

The Union Hall was first to show talking movies, on July 21, 1913. The operator of the projector at the rear of the hall also powered a small belt running overhead and back of the screen to victrola record giving sound to the actors. Except for one interruption when the record got out of line with the performers, these Edison Talking movies were reasonably good, but made no great impression at the time.

By the end of the first decade of 1900, the old time opera house was beginning to feel the pressure of the silent movie. Some churches in Gouverneur had motion picture showings before the start of commercial ventures. Robert Magee, Park street shoe dealer, appears to have been the first in Gouverneur to start a movie show, in 1907, at 11 Park street, now the Montgomery Ward company office. Mechanical difficulties of

the early projectors made pioneering in this business somewhat uncertain.

Others operating the Park street location were John B. Shaff, then Henderson and Hayes, followed by Seymour and Hayes, from Malone or nearby. The movie house was named Wonderland. The first long term operator was William H. Gauthier of the Malone area, who started operations in 1909.

The Fairyland at 17 Clinton street had been started before 1910 by Edwin Fredenburg and Lorenzo Smith.

Roy W. Bush, hardware dealer who had been in the former Bowne store since 1911, bought the Bowne building in 1915. The Union Hall, which had begun to feel the pressure of the silent movie, was closed in May, 1916.

Mr. Gauthier ceased operation of Wonderland, foreseeing that the movie business needed larger quarters, and opened a movie in the small upstairs section. In 1919, through the help of Barnard G. Parker, he opened a ground floor movie with a front covering the present Lido restaurant and Niagara Mohawk Power company office. He cut a hole through the floor from the upstairs movie and used that section for a balcony.

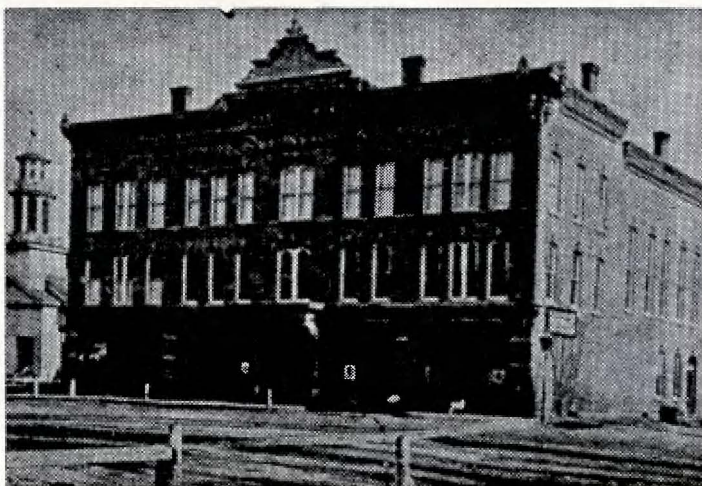
Fairyland Theater burned on December 29, 1917, in the major Clinton street fire of that date, which left Mr. Gauthier alone in the movie field. With the closing of the old Union Hall, the village had no large public hall and World War I meetings were held

in the First Presbyterian church.

J. Claire Carpenter, son of J. Henry Carpenter, hardware merchant, came home from World War I in 1919 and in July started construction of an auditorium at the rear of his deceased father's store to seat over 800 people, using the store as an entrance and lobby. He named his venture the Gralyn Theater which was opened on January 10, 1920 with Sigmund Romberg's Maytime. Only partially completed and poorly heated, the zero temperatures outside at the night of the opening made ironical the title of the first production.

Mr. Carpenter encountered financial difficulties serious enough to cause bankruptcy, and in July, 1922, James P. Papayanakos of Watertown bought the Gralyn from the stockholders who had taken over the movie house, and took possession on August 8, 1922. His brother, Harry, was operator for the first two years.

The entire Union Hall building burned on July 17, 1922. Edwin C. Leahy, who had purchased the hardware store and business of Mr. Bush the previous February rebuilt immediately and continued the hardware store until 1937. He sold the business and ran the Owl restaurant for a year, and then leased the property to the Grand Union grocery. In 1940, Mr. Papayanakos bought the building and remodeled it into a movie which was opened in September, 1941 and renamed Union Hall in commemoration of the old Union Hall.



OLD UNION HALL