

## Free People Demand a Free Press

newspaper published in Genesee County. The "Daily Advocate" was published from 1859 to 1860, making a record of two daily papers at one time in Batavia.

"The Morning Call" was started as a daily paper, in January, 1882, and continued for a year. Another daily paper, "The Morning Advertiser," was published in Batavia for about two months, in 1888.

Bergen has had three newspapers, "The Bergen Herald," in 1879; "The Bergen Star," established in 1889, and "The Bergen Enterprise," founded in 1898. The same year "The Corfu Enterprise" was started.

### RELIGION

Near the turn of the century, the small settlement which sprang up around Ganson's tavern, on the eastern edge of what is now Le Roy, was known as Ganson's Settlement. The Rev. David Perry of Richmond, Mass., preached the first sermon in this wild region to ten or twelve pioneer families in 1800.

Among them was "one male professor of religion," named Carver. He continued public worship with the help of Judge Platt until "found unworthy of his sacred duty," early records state. His successor was no better. "An odd enigmatic person, very fervent," he soon obtained a liquor license and opened a dram shop. This ended his ministry.

In 1802, the Rev. J. H. Hotchkiss, a Presbyterian, preached to sixteen or eighteen families here, "a rare occurrence among them," he later wrote. By 1807, "Reading Meetings" were taking place in the school house.

Judge Platt read prayers, Capt. Austin and Richard Waite, the blacksmith, read psalms and hymns, and Esquire Bates the sermons. Funeral services were left to Major Nathan Wilcox.

"The Fireside Journal" was established in Oakfield in 1887; "The Oakfield Reporter" in 1889, and "The Oakfield Independent" is being published in 1952 by Ackley D. Wicks.

"The Daily News" was established as a morning paper, June 25, 1878, by Mix Brothers, in Batavia. In 1881, it was purchased by Griswold and McWain, and continues under that name in 1952, another newspaper record of seventy-four years uninterrupted publication as a daily paper.

The fascination of publishing, and the importance of newspapers in the lives of the people, in bringing the news of local, area and national, as well as international events, tragedies, achievements, and celebrations such as the Genesee County Sesquicentennial Celebration, is well shown in the long record of news publications in the county since its founding, in 1802.

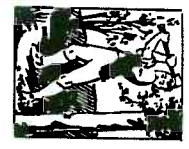
### ALABAMA

In 1866, a very large white oak was cut down upon the farm of Mr. True, in the town of Alabama. It was evidence of the wonderful strength and fertility of the soil. It measured four feet through at the butt, was straight for 60 feet to the first branch, where it was three feet in diameter. It showed, when cut, 12 circles, or year's growth, to the inch, thus making it about 504 years old. The most remarkable feature on splitting up one of the cuts, about 20 feet from the butt, was a cavity in the heart containing a pint of sound beech nuts. The trunk was split up, making 1200 fence stakes, 500 other pieces and eight cords of wood.



Gideon Dunham, Sr., a Revolutionary soldier, came in 1804 and kept a tavern until his death in 1841. He had a noted peach orchard and it was a celebrated resort for pleasure parties who went to "Gid's" to eat peaches and hear him swear."

## Through the Years, Freedom Under Law



Our people are fortunate in being heirs of the New England heritage of self government. Nurtured to a high standard of perfection in Town Meeting, exalted by the close relation between church and state, enlightened by the consistent encouragement of education, it was then brought in full bloom to this region. Here, its benign influence long has been apparent.

We were fortunate to begin civil government with a system of law and order already tailor-made. The following incidents will point up the need and wisdom of such a system.

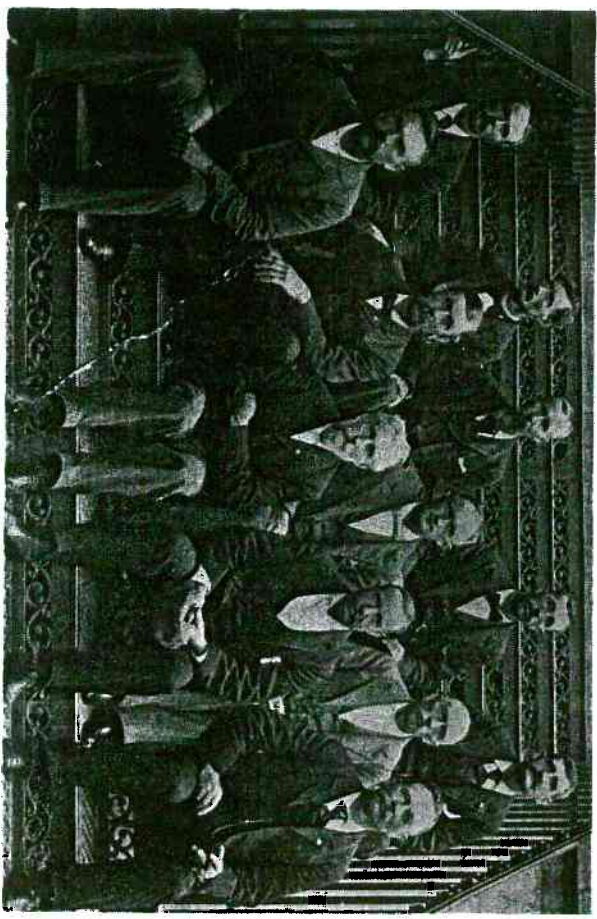
The first to rock the area was the McLean murder case, first in the new county, June, 1807. McLean, Orr and Mc-

Laughlin, all squatters south of the young Scottish settlement, had been to Caledonia, where they drank moderately.

A dispute arose over a tree that Orr had cut on land claimed by McLean. With two blows of an axe, McLean struck down and killed Orr. McLaughlin interfered and met the same fate.

McLean hid in the woods, so the militia was called out to apprehend him. Fleeing eastward, several days later, he was recognized at a public house near Canandaigua, arrested, tried and convicted. He was publicly hanged at Batavia the following August.

Speaking of this, one historian records, "Such was the curiosity to witness an execution in those early days that surviving pioneers remember that some settlements were almost entirely deserted." (Continued on page 81)



Jury: Benham Murder Case [79]



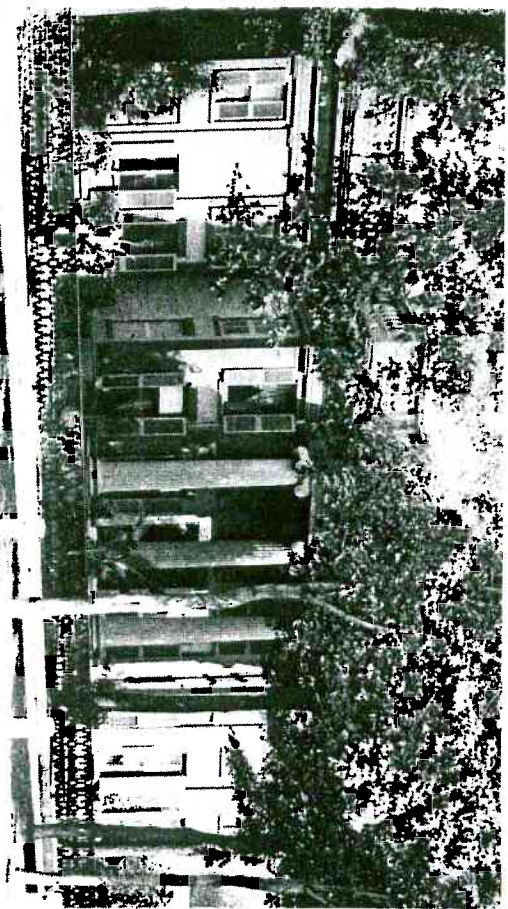
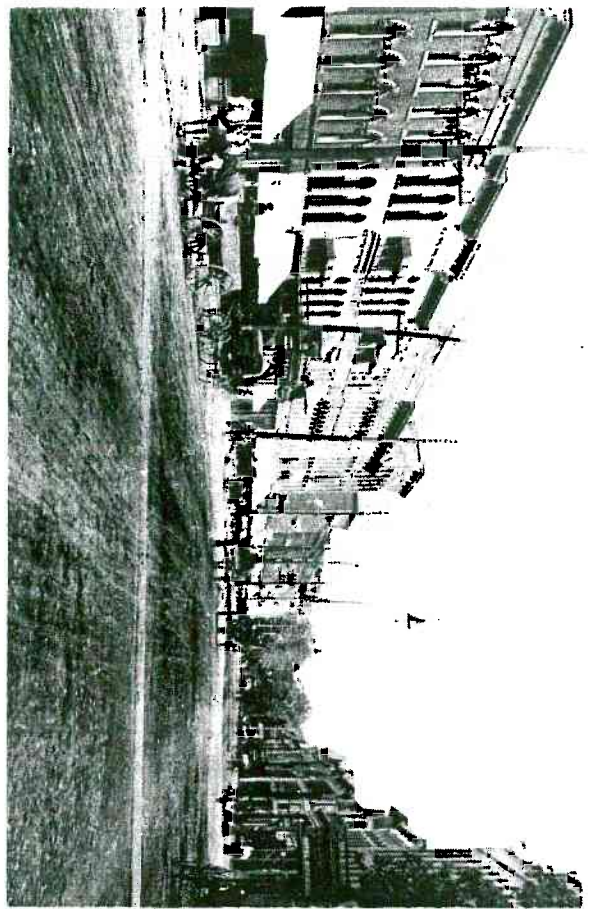


Fig. An early view of Main Street, Batavia  
from Deane Farmstead's home. Main Street, 1875.

## Through the Years, Freedom Under Law

(Continued from page 79)

ed; men, women and children on foot and horseback, wending their way through forest paths and woods roads to Batavia."

In July, 1822, a man named Farnsworth was tried on the charge of forging U.S. Land Warrants. So intense was the public interest in this case that people came from miles around to listen to the proceedings. Sentiment was uniformly against the accused, who was convicted and sentenced to be hanged in September.

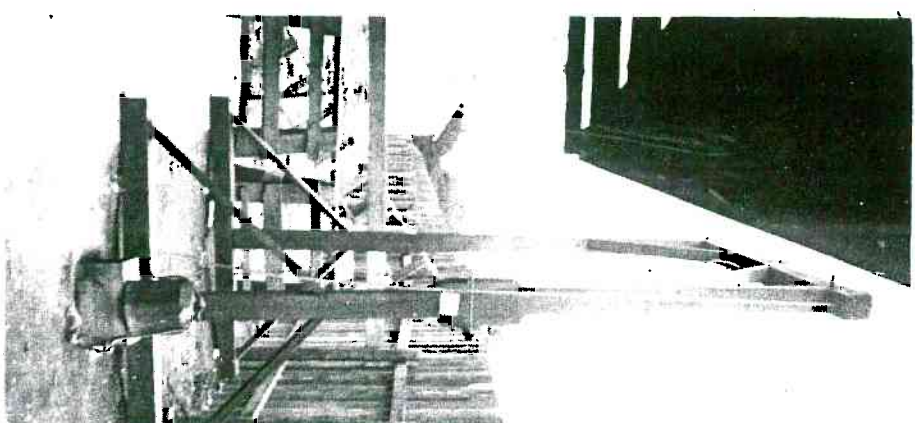
The defense appealed to President Monroe for pardon. On the appointed day thousands flocked to Batavia to witness the execution. Just as the final preparations were being made word arrived from the President, staying the sentence six months, during which a full investigation was made.

It was found that no law of the U.S. had been violated and that the farcial trial and conviction were without legal authority. Farnsworth was discharged from custody and pardoned.

But the public had not long to wait for the greatest sensation in county history to break. The abduction and unexplained disappearance of William Morgan followed the partial publication of supposed Masonic secrets in 1826 convulsed not only this area but much of the nation as well.

A huge gathering of anti-Masons took place in Le Roy in 1828 and out of this grew the Convention method of selecting presidential candidates now in vogue in both great parties.

On the day after New Year's, 1830, Samuel Davis, keeper of a tavern east of Le Roy was murdered in his own house. The immediate provocation was the refusal by Davis to give up a child of James Gray, Jr., that was indentured to him. The Grays, both father and



The Old Gallows, Batavia

grandfather, a soldier of the Revolution, who were intoxicated at the time were tried and convicted. The father explained his crime on the Gallows—the last public hanging in the County. The grandfather, largely because of his war service, was sentenced to states prison but received a pardon from the Governor.

The tavern keeper was buried on his own farm in a field on the brow of the hill where later the D. W. Airport was built. His tombstone bore, following his name, a legend to the effect that he was murdered by the Grays, James, Sr.,



## Through the Years, Freedom Under Law

and James, Jr. People yet living recall seeing where this provocative reminder was chiseled off the marble by unknown hands.

In 1897 Howard Benham, a native of Byron, but then a resident of Batavia, was twice tried for the murder of his wife by prussic acid poisoning and was sentenced to death, to the universal satisfaction of the general public.

Practically on the eve of execution and on the basis of new evidence, he was granted another trial.

The most eminent toxicologist in the country testified for the people. It is charged, however, by some that the defense, through the use of liquor just prior to their testifying, rendered two of the vital prosecution witnesses impotent. As a result, the people's case collapsed and Benham went free.

But retribution is said to have been swift and severe. Within three years seven members of his family were dead: his father, mother, three sisters, his wife

### MERCHANTS

Brisbane and Cary were the only merchants in Batavia until 1810. The growth of the village was very rapid from 1808 until 1812. Dr. Dwight, in 1804, passed through the place and states that "it contained from 20 to 30 houses, most of them built of logs, the rest small, chiefly one story. The court-house has three stories, the second of which is the county jail. When we were there that season so many persons were ill of diseases common to this region that those who remained well were scarcely able to nurse the sick."

and himself — he a victim of typhoid fever while traveling as a salesman.

A quarter of a century later the secluded hamlet of Linden was filled with terror at the thought of an unknown killer stalking its environs. The first to die was an elderly spinster who is reputed to have had a predilection for speaking without restraint. She was found murdered in her cellar. The hunt for the perpetrator was still going on when three more persons were found murdered.

"Who will be next?" the anxious residents asked. A State Trooper Patrol was stationed in their midst for two years to quell their fears. Suspicion fell indiscriminately on all; nasty rumors circulated of protection being bought by the guilty one, but the murders were never solved. There are some reputed to feel that death has long since claimed the perpetrator; others are equally convinced that he still walks.

Notwithstanding this bizarre recital, Genesee County enjoys the reputation of being a law-abiding area — public reaction to heinous crime being one of righteous indignation.

Perhaps the clearest observation to be drawn is that when law observance gives way, it does so with unrestrained fury.

### ROADS

"The Winter sleighing is a valuable accommodation counterbalancing the inconvenience of bad summer roads. During the three or four months in which the snow is on the ground, the settler is furnished with a beautiful, natural turn-pike, better than any macadamized road in the world; and this occurs at a season when he has abundant leisure to take his produce to market and to visit his friends at a distance." Early handbook.

### BYRON CENTER

The village flourished with the opening of the railroad. It soon became known as a principal pork and grain market in the county.

## The Arts Become Articulate



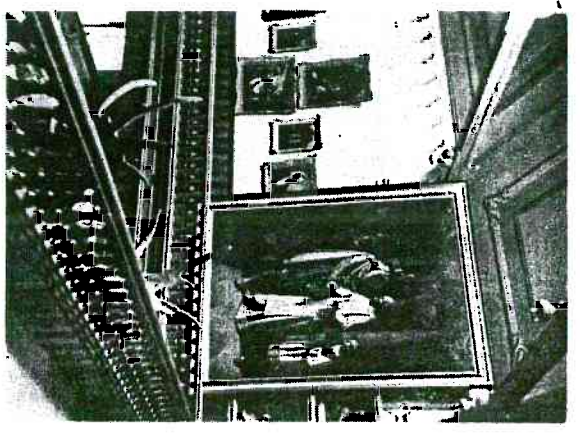
Altogether too little known is the record of Genesee County in the field of art, letters and music. We are too prone to recall the poets Hosmer and McNaughton near Caledonia; the prolific novelist, Mary Jane Holmes at Brockport; Carl Carmer, whom we associate with Albion; the cultural centers of Rochester and Buffalo; and then, by inference, think of present Genesee County intervening as sort of an intellectual and artistic vacuum. But this is to ignore the truth, for we have our bright chaplets, too!

The Presbyterian churches of both Batavia and Le Roy honor Calvin C. Colton as an early pastor about 1820. He later became connected with a Connecticut academy, the outgrowth of which is now Trinity College, Hartford. Among his works are, "Life and Papers of Henry Clay," "The Junius Tracts," "Four Years in Great Britain," and "Tour of the American Lakes."

Batavians recall a number of literary lights as their neighbors.

John H. Yates wrote a book of poems and the Dedictory Ode for the public dedication of the Holland Land Office in 1894. This proved to be the greatest civic demonstration ever staged in the county and in attendance were six members of President Cleveland's Cabinet. Many of his poems were set to music, were popularized by Sankey and others, and are to be found in hymn books still in use in the various churches.

Nathan A. Woodward, lawyer and poet, wrote "Pebbles and Boulders." Mrs. Bessie (Chandler) Parker wrote poetry under her maiden name.



Staunton Conservatory, Ingham University, Le Roy, 1872

Miss Anna Bowen wrote sentimental poetry, which was published nationally. Caroline, sister of Edward W. Arwater and wife of the Rev. John H. Mason, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Batavia, was the author of many works of fiction including "The Lily of France." She was nationally famous.

But perhaps the most famous of all works associated with Batavia is Morgan's "Secrets of Masonry," not actually a literary work, but stolen (apparently) from an English work.

Nearly every adult living is familiar with the writings of Arthur Brisbane, brilliant columnist for the Hearst newspapers, whose ancestral home is now Batavia City Hall.

Another interesting work said to have been printed in Batavia but bearing a Stafford, N. Y., imprint, is Tennant's "Botany," 1837. Its author, Abel Tennant, is described as an herb doctor in the Roanoke-Bailey's Mills area, and practiced in what is now the township of Pavilion.

(Continued on page 85)

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### The Arts Become Articulate

(Continued from page 83)

Both Bergen and Le Roy claim an interest in the Reverend Galusha Anderson, for twenty years president of the University of Chicago. He is the author of a delightful book, "When Neighbors Were Neighbors," a story of love and life in the olden days among his own relatives in these towns.

The existence in Le Roy of a women's University unquestionably exerted a strong influence locally in both arts and letters. Even Batavians may have a tenuous though much closer tie with the institution than they realize, for its erstwhile chancellor, Samuel D. Burchard, is the person who uttered those fateful words, "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," which are credited with the first election of Cleveland. Through a Batavian's friendship reaching into Cleveland's second cabinet, Batavia was able to attain its finest hour.

Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Episcopal Bishop of Western New York and son of Ingham's chancellor, was the author of a number of religious works.

Rev. Wm. L. Parsons, professor of Moral Philosophy, was author of the "Believer's Victory Over Satan's Devices."

Dr. Henry Van Lennup, unsurpassed as an oriental scholar, was a voluminous author on the "Land of the East."

Miss Julia Willis Kempshall, Ingham graduate and instructor, penned "Out of the Ruts," a story for girls and their elders.

Two more graduates authored books — Ada (Walker) Camehl of Le Roy, the "Blue China Book," and Emelene Abbey Dunn, Rochester, "Mediterranean Picture Lands."

Then there is an eerie volume entitled, "The Autobiography of a Disembodied Soul," by Monroe Guy Carleton, who spent his boyhood in Mrs. East's house, Red School House Corner, Pavilion.

Two miles to the east of this spot grew up the Rev. Orton Carmichael, whose



Joseph Burke, world famous violinist, who lived in Alexander.

wife was Evangeline Hazelton. He is the author of "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address" and of "A Shadow on the Dial"

The Rev. Ray Allen, born at Union Corners, Pavilion, wrote "Jesus That Wonderful Man," and other books on the various apostles.

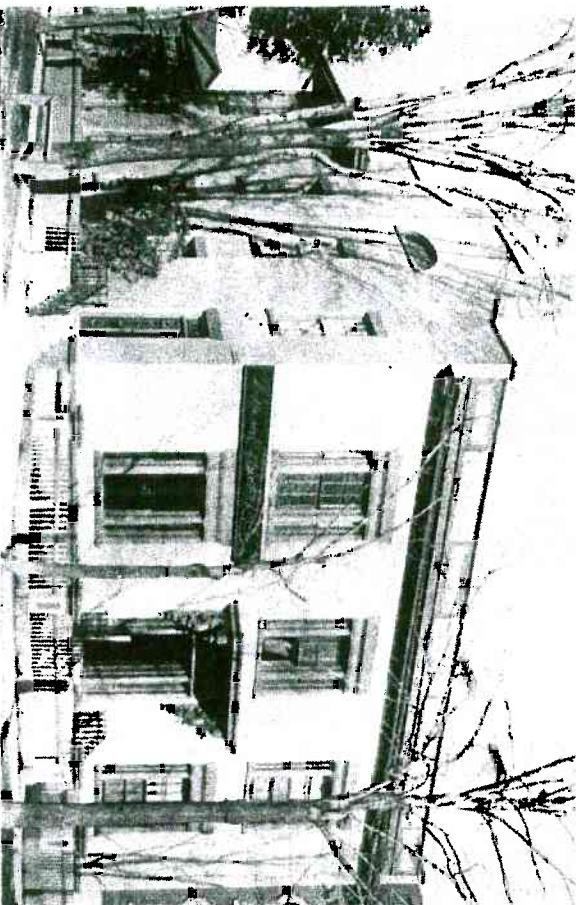
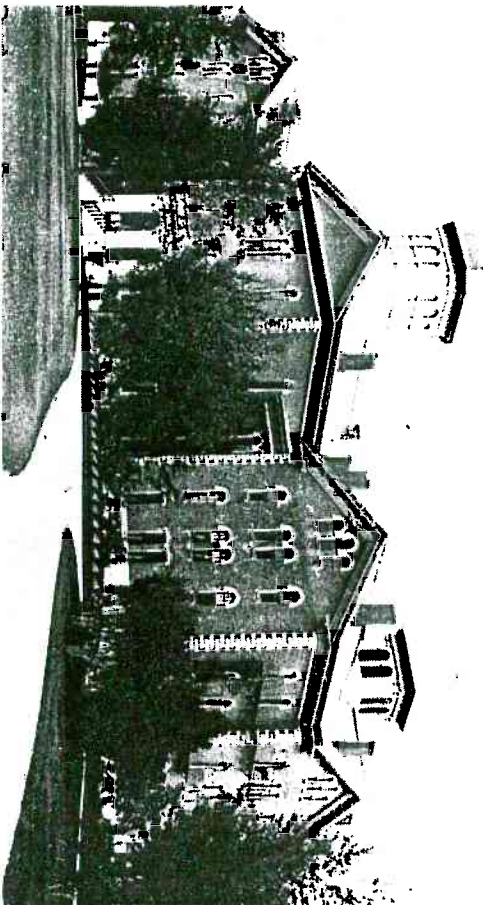
Elizur B. Hinsdale, who lived as a boy at the Stone School House between Stafford and Le Roy later became a prominent lawyer in New York. He wrote an "Autobiography With Reports and Documents."

Celia Sealey, who later married John Fargo south of Le Roy, is the author of a book of poems, "Echoes From the Garret." She was a friend of the well known writer, Mrs. Fortesque, whose second husband was an uncle of "Teddy" Roosevelt.

Mrs. Elizabeth Allen Olmsted, born at Mumford and early graduate of Ingham, wrote the "Founder's Ode," and published "Poems of the House."

Angelica Bishop, artist wife of Dr. Solomon Barrett of Le Roy, wrote a





Top: Former State School for the Blind Administration Building, site of Avenue Hall  
Bottom: The former high school building, now the Le Roy High School

## The Arts Become Articulate

(Continued from page 85)

touching little poetical work, "The Linden Tree Cottage and the Accepted Sacrifice."

Maude Radford Warren, graduate of Le Roy High School, is the author of a novel, "The Land of the Living."

A book published last year by Claude Reddish is called, "A Chronicle of Memories." He and his sister, Meta, grew up in Le Roy.

Justus Miles Forman, author and playwright who perished on the Lusitania, was born in Le Roy. He wrote voluminously including, "Jason," "Buchanan's Wife," "A Stumbling Block," "The Island of Enchantment," "The Garden of Lies," "Journey's End," "Monsigny," "Tommy Carteret," "The Unknown Lady" and others.

And twenty-five years ago, Jesse Sprague, born at Jug City, was read avidly in the Saturday Post. His success stories dealt with the Alger-like rise of obscure ventures.

In Le Roy, Walter Butts wrote children's stories.

Among more recent books are Mary Root's (Le Roy) "History of York;" J. Lee Broughton's, "The Pavilion Community;" A Le Royan, Michael V. O'Shea, professor of education, University of Wisconsin, has written, "Mental Development and Education;" Agnes Hoffmaster, Batavia, wrote, "Joseph," a religious book.

The most recent area publication is, "Your Weight and Your Life," by Alfred L. George, M.D., Batavia. Audrey Ganes Schultz is a writer of mystery books.

After what might be termed a period of athletic orgies, the revival of interest in art and painting is phenomenal. Every town has its devotees, and there are some who have attained national prominence.

In the early days the artist painted tavern signs and such quite as often as portraits. Such a one was Benjamin

Coolley who painted the famous "Globe and Eagle" tavern sign, now the Wiss House in Le Roy, as well as portraits. Solomon Southwick of Albany, presiding at the Anti-Masonic Convention there in 1828, sat for his portrait.

Itinerant portrait painters took up residence in the villages for a time and painted the local gentry. One of these, Charles R. Palmer, was in Le Roy from 1839 to 1841.

Phineas Staunton, head of the art department at Ingham, and a member of the Smithsonian expedition to South America, has left many fine works, the most impressive being one of Henry Clay addressing the Senate. This was submitted in a \$5000 competition for a picture to be hung in the Kentucky State Capitol, was adjudged the best, but was rejected because of the prominence of a Northerner in the immediate background. It now belongs to the Central School District.

Irring R. Willes won National Academy recognition. The Ingham influence in art and music was nationwide due to the many teachers who went from there throughout the land.

Heppie E. Wicks, Frank Eastman Jones, Ida C. Taylor, Grove Gilbert and Antonio Barone have each upheld this fame in painting.

In Batavia, George B. Edwards, whose wife was a sister of General Upton, enjoyed a fine reputation as an artist.

Out on the Alexander Road lived Joseph Burke who was violin soloist with Jenny Lind and, in his day, as famous as she. He was born in Dublin and appeared in Shakespeare at the age of 11. He later turned to music and directed orchestras as well. He was first president of the New York Philharmonic Society. Later in New York he gave piano lessons to Winston Churchill's mother. Mrs. Harry Page now owns his Steinway Grand.

And this recalls Professors Appi and Schmitz, one of whom came to this country with the Swedish Nightingale.

Kate Tyrrell, whose father was a prominent Batavia lawyer, was a fine



## The Arts Become Articulate

coloratura soprano. She sang in Rochester and Buffalo churches until well along in years.

George Gilbert Caught, educated as a lawyer in England against his will, came to Batavia as organist at St. James Church. He was a violinist, pianist and teacher as well.

Mera Reddish, who married Major Rayne in London, reached grand opera

fame in Milan and South America, after a childhood in Le Roy.  
Another Le Royan, Phil Gleason, reached the Hall of Fame as clarinetist with Paul Whiteman's orchestra.

In years past, the Park School in Batavia which stood in the large parking area and whose head was Mrs. Ellen Hooker, was long famous for its music.

Mrs. Crosby Adams, teacher of piano at Ingham, whose long and full life of nine decades just came to a close, left a legacy of teaching and composition as a heritage.  
Are there still those who scoff?

## They Came Out to Vote in 1803

The first political election in the Town of Batavia, which comprised the Holland Purchase, brought out almost 100% of the voters. For many, this required a day's trip over rough trails.

The event occurred on March 1, 1803. Peter Vandeventer had just cleared an area ("just enough," one old settler said, "to keep the trees from falling on his house") and built a log tavern.

Although it was 100 miles from the most distant portion of the new county, Vandeventer's tavern was centrally located among the established communities—hence was chosen as polling place. New Amsterdam was 22 miles west, and the East Transit community 25 miles east.

There was considerable rivalry between the eastern and western parts of the town, and the small tavern soon was overflowing. Enos Kellogg, one of the commissioners to organize the town, sensibly moved the poll to the middle of the road.

Kellogg announced that Peter Vandeventer, the land-lord, and Jotham Bemis of Batavia Village, were candidates for supervisor.

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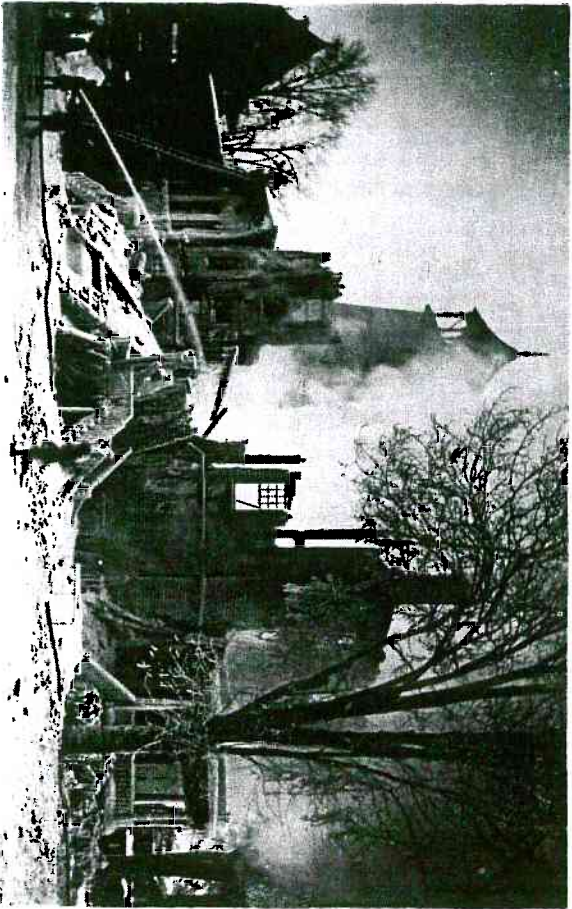
## We Fight Each Others' Fires



Early in our country's fire fighting history our citizens relied upon the efforts of the people of each community as a whole, in extinguishing the fury of conflagrations. Leading citizens

appreciated and realized need of cooperative effort. On the evening of April 20, 1824, "The Batavia Fire Company," was formed, naming William Seaver as Captain. Its by-law demanded that, "in the event of fire, they repair, with all possible dispatch, to the place of rendezvous, and, then and thereafter, conduct themselves in orderly and efficient manner in the discharge of their duties in the extinguishment of fire, under penalty of five dollars for each neglect or offense or disregard of discipline." Each had to possess himself of a strong leather bucket, leg it to the holocaust, as expedi-

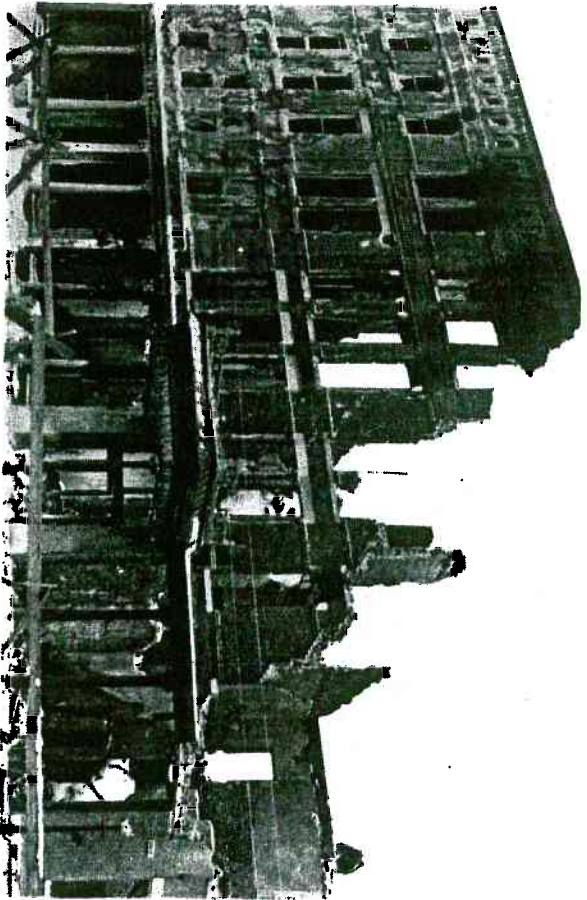
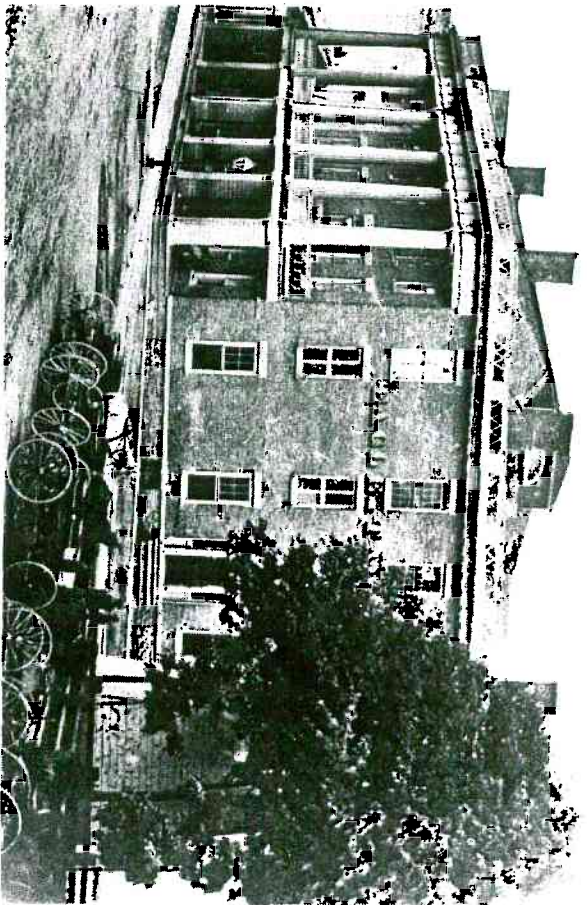
tiously as the banging of the bucket against his limbs allowed, there obeying the directions of the Village Trustees, in the formation of bucket lines.  
Soon \$270. was borrowed, on the Village's credit, and, upon petition of 47 men, Triton Hose Company was organized in 1830, which utilized the new hand engine the Trustees had bought. After one fire the Tritons addressed another petition to the Trustees, to the effect that "the engine was comparatively good for nothing." In '33 the Trustees invested \$500. in a new apparatus, plus \$50. for hooks, ladders and axes, this being the first introduction of these implements here.  
No one knew better than Captain William Seaver how inefficient that old engine was, for he reported to the Village Board that "it could only be worked by six men at one time, three on each crank, (Continued on page 91)



Death of Ellicott Hall, 1918.

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Top: Old Eagle Tavern, Batavia, built on site now occupied by the Richmond Hotel. Burned 1887.  
Bottom: End of the St. Anne Hotel, formerly the Eagle Tavern.

## We Fight Each Others' Fires

(Continued from page 89)

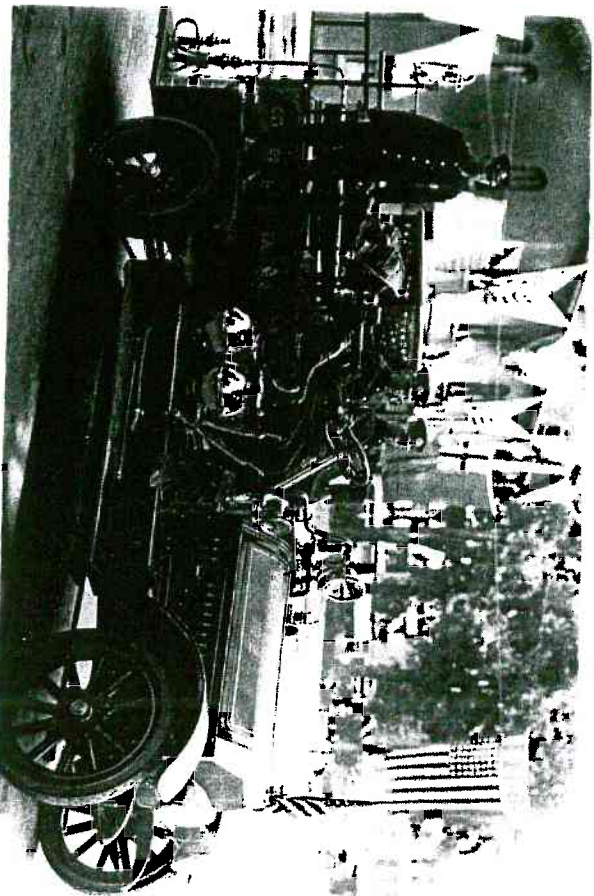
like turning a grind-stone, and its effect on fire was relative to a pewter syringe on the crater of Mt. Aetna." "Galloping Grasshopper" was the farcical name applied to the Triton Fire Engine, after the fire of May 30, 1834 which destroyed Eagle Tavern, one of the predecessors of Hotel Richmond. The machine jumped around, went up in the air, and finally gave up the ghost.

Batavia had no water mains or pumping station in '51, for which reason the Trustees caused two large reservoirs to be constructed below the surface of Main Street, one at Jackson and Main, the other at State and Main, together with a dug well, with inclosed pump in the vicinity, for exclusive use of the Fire Department. That year, the old fire engine was swapped for a new one, \$200. Being paid to boot. Le Roy had two cisterns on Main St. used for fire purposes.

When, in '62, the Trustees established fire districts, there was keen demand for firemen of "sinew, streamline and floating power, to ring fast the alarm, for one minute, then the district signal a minute, and repeat for 15 minutes." As to the leather buckets, lads were rewarded by their owners for caring for and returning this equipment to a drying room. Often citizens received bumps on their heads from buckets heaved from windows. It was the custom, when bucket owners were unable to respond to an alarm, to cast their buckets from their windows into the streets so that another, not so fortunate, might utilize it.

Getting the jump on other companies, with their "jumper," was matter of great pride and joy in early days. When alarm and location were sounded, citizen "smoke-eaters" fairly flew from company quarters and homes to grab the ropes and pull the heavy equipment to the indicated fire location.

Among the first large fires was that of March 4, 1833, when an old wooden building at Main and Jackson Streets,



The old horse-drawn engine. Home built at Batavia from the advertisement.



## We Fight Each Others' Fires

housing a billiard parlor and saddler's shop, caused a big blaze. The same year a fire, in a frame building opposite Eagle Tavern, swept East along Main Street, destroying all stores as far as State Street, the loss being estimated at \$2,500, which was considered large then. In '34 the fire started in Eagle Tavern was described in The Republican Advocate: "Every building was a blazing heap of ruins, from Eagle Tavern, to Main and Jackson Streets, where, by indefatigable and persevering efforts of the fire company, the march of the destroyer was, at length, stayed." The most conspicuous and valuable portion of the Village was annihilated at that time.

The big blaze of February 17, '50, originating in a frame building near Park Place, swept eastward, until every building to Bank Street was consumed. No fire ever caused greater alarm and impending disaster than when the old McDonald mill, standing on the present Fire Headquarters-Sewage Pumping site, burned August 21, 1884, for McDonald had a contract with the Village to provide it with water. The water works, consisting of two pumps, in a little house, stood 15 feet from the mill. As the fire progressed, the pumping station became so hot that the Engineer was forced to leave the pumps. On that occasion all of the Officers of the Fire Department were attending a firemen's rally at Medina. The Village Trustees acted as the fire managers. Buffalo sent a Chief, 15 men, a steamer and 2,500 feet of hose by special train. The only water available was from an old well, to which Buffalo's pump was connected. However, the mill building and water pumping plant were completely destroyed. There are Batavians who yet retain vivid recollections of January 8, 1886, when St. James Hotel, immediate predecessor of Hotel Richmond, burned.

Among other fires in the county were the \$17,000 fire which destroyed part of

## We Fight Each Others' Fires

the Oakfield business section in 1891, the \$30,000 Le Roy Salt Co. fire the same year, and the Marthews Maling Co. fire in Le Roy in 1894. Bergen was partially destroyed twice, January 16, 1866 and March 1, 1880; the last fire covered an area of five acres with \$120,000 damage.

In Le Roy, until the department was motorized, there was keen competition between livery stables to see who would reach the firehouse first to hitch a team to the apparatus and haul it to the fire. Before that the equipment was pulled by hand. The pullers got five or ten dollars per fire.

The "Annual Inspections" were gala occasions. In '77 the "Le Roy Bucket Company" was a guest, being met at the East End by Batavia Cornet Band, and escorted to Court House Park, from which the line of march proceeded West to Eagar's Brewery, countermarching to "Cemetery Street," then back to the park for inspection. The Le Roy boys then partook of a bountiful lunch, with ample extras. This was followed by the customary deluge of "six fine streams," Main Street being resplendent with rainbows from falling spray. The pipe-men, as usual, drenched everyone and everything, which, the press said, was a "practice that should be stopped."

Department members were required, by the Village Trustees, to attire themselves at their own expense, in leather cap, peacoat and pantaloons of Russian duck.

Genesee County now has two well organized, co-ordinated, trained and efficient fire fighting units. The "Genesee County Volunteer Firemen's Association" incorporates the departments of all thirteen towns and the City of Batavia. It concerns itself with the legal, convention, parade and conflicting dates of its activities of its constituent departments.

The Supervisors enacted a resolution, adopting the State plan by which the State pays the expense of the training of both the local instructors and firemen students. The several Fire Departments of the county each delegate a member to

Its aim is to co-ordinate fire protection and other disaster aids and activities. No fire district shall be left without adequate protection at all times.

This is a long step from the time when every house had a gaily painted leather bucket hung near the front door as its only available means of fire protection.

### WIARD

Thomas Wiard was a blacksmith and farmer in East Avon. In 1806 he engaged in the manufacture of the old-fashioned "bull plow" which was then used by the pioneer farmers. In 1815 he began purchase from Jethro Wood, the inventor of the first successful cast-iron plow, the necessary castings, and these he wooded and completed in his shop. In 1819 he erected a foundry and manufactured all parts himself. After the works burned in 1876, the firm removed to Batavia.

### BERGEN

"The pioneers of Bergen, who laid at the same time the foundations of the church and the town, were a noble race of men. Unlike most early settlements, the population was not mixed, but homogeneous. Nearly all of them came from Connecticut and Massachusetts, and brought with them the sturdy New England virtues of industry, integrity, and high moral aim."

### DARIEN

"Darien City was so named by some eccentric individual when there were only a few houses built. It is situated towards the southeast part of the town on Murder Creek (so-called from the supposition that a murder had been committed near it at an early date). Before the advent of the railroads it was a place of more active local trade and manufacture than at present."

ELBA

"Elba village is located a short distance south of the center of town and is most beautifully situated. It was called 'Pine Hill' at an early date, and by many 'The Pinery.' The land from which the village plot was taken was originally the farming lands of Asa Babcock, John Willis, Charles Woodworth and Thomas Davis."

### BATAVIA

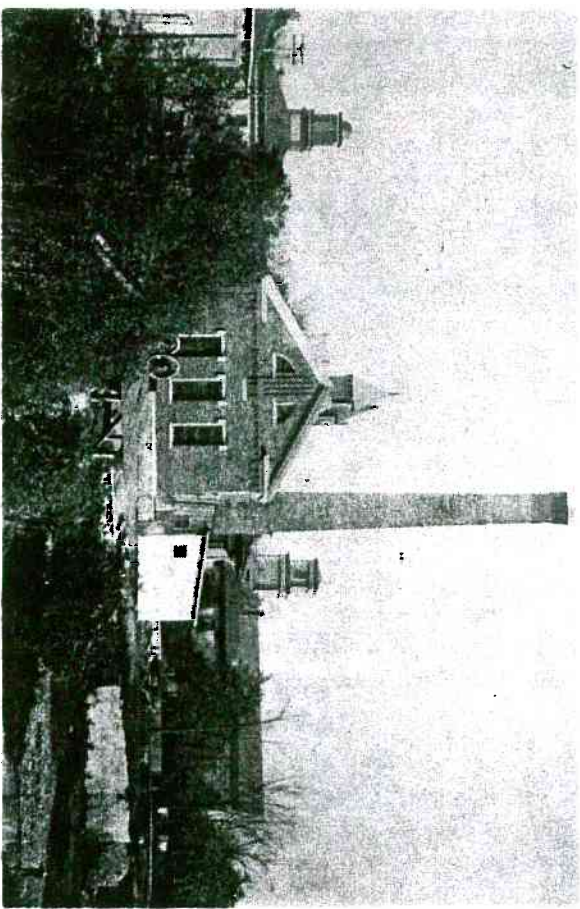
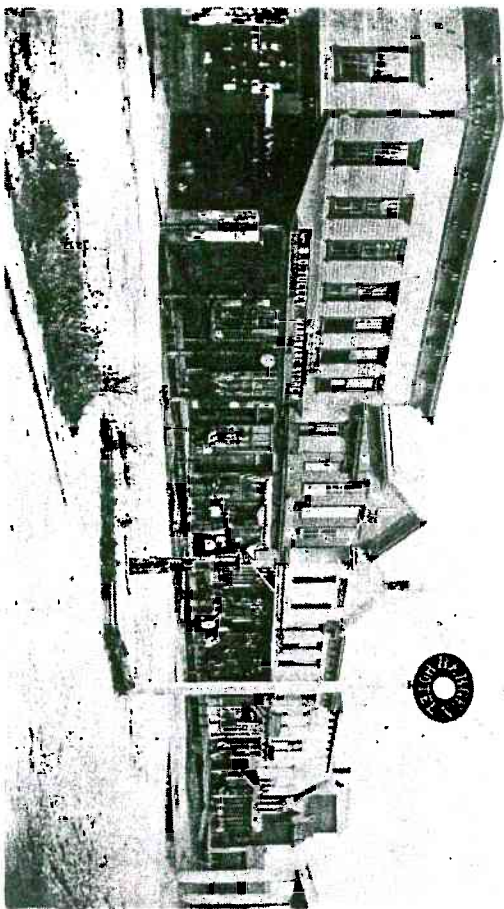
A road through the village being of vital importance, Mr. Elliott engaged John Lamberton (with the assistance of one Mayo) to cut a road 100 feet wide and two miles long from the west bounds of the village east. This is now Main Street. The contract price was \$12 per acre, the timber to be cut up for logging.

### FUN

"In the year 1805, we settled upon a farm near Batavia. There then were inhabitants enough to make an agreeable neighborhood. We used to have ox-sleds; occasionally it would be out to Dunham's where we used to avail ourselves of the services of the left-handed fiddler, Russell Noble. Some of our earliest parties were got up by first designing the log house of some settler and each one contributing to the entertainment; one would carry some flour, another some sugar, another eggs, and so on to make up a rustic feast. Frolics in the evening would attend husking bees, raisings, quiltings, and pumpkin parings. All were social, friendly, obliging; there was little aristocracy in those primitive days."

—Mrs. Anna Foster





Top—Business section, Bergen, in 1880  
 Bottom—Court House tower and St James Church tower seen from the old waterworks on the Tonawanda Creek, Batavia

## If Need Be, A Land to Die For



Early INDIAN WARS, certain archeologists believe, were fought in original Genesee County by Esquimos, Mound Builders, Algonkians, Neuters, Senecas and Tonawandas, who, in that sequence, have inhabited it. The Kawkah (Neuter) Nation was a buffer state between the Iroquois Five Nations and the Hurons or other Western enemies of the Iroquoian Confederacy.

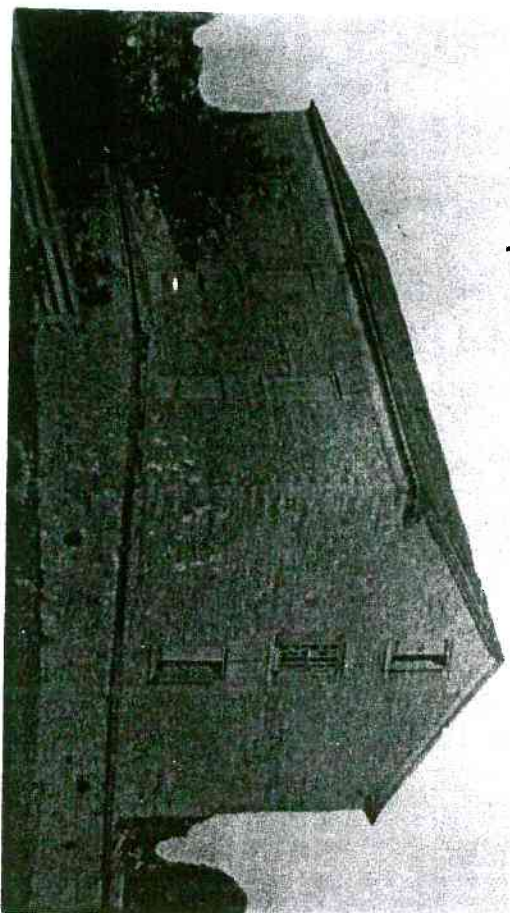
One of the Neuter's larger villages, TU-SHU-WAY, later became Batavia. Largely because it refused to join the Confederacy, the Neuter nation was defeated in war about 1650, adopted and absorbed by the Senecas who then occupied this territory. By reason of long friendship with the British, the Senecas fought on the British side in the Revolution.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR . . .**  
 Fort Niagara, in original Genesee Coun-

ty boundaries (though not yet organized), remained the undisputed possession of the British during the entire war. Joseph Brant, the Mohawk Indian ally of the British, in the Spring of 1780-81, with Colonel Butler, made devastating raids further east.

When General Washington sent General Sullivan and General Clinton to punish the Senecas, their expedition reached the Genesee, wiped out the Seneca villages and food stores. It abandoned its original intention of capturing Fort Niagara, and returned home.

**THE WAR OF 1812** found Britain possessed of three formidable strongholds along the Canadian side of Niagara frontier—Fort Erie, Chippewa and George—while our only one was Fort Niagara. The population west of Genesee River was then 25,000, mainly centered along Buffalo Road. Preparations for war were inadequate with no military other than a few small local companies,



The Arsenal which stood at the intersection of Main Street and Lewiston Road built about 1811,



## If Need Be, a Land to Die For

maintained more for parade than shooting. None-the-less, stirring military events took place in original Genesee County in 1812-14. The war proclamation of President Madison, June 26, 1812, was carried by horse-mounted courier along the ancient Indian trail through Batavia to Fort Niagara and Black Rock. This spread the war news locally before it was known by officers on the frontier. Other than the Fort Niagara garrison, our armed force along the Niagara frontier numbered 600 volunteers, recruited by the Governor mostly from these parts. Eight days after news came to Western New York of the declaration of war, this force had reached 3,000. It was under command of General William Wadsworth, grandfather of our former Member of Congress, Hon. James W. Wadsworth, Jr.

One source of apprehension, in the earlier stages of this war, was fear that the Seneca Indians once again would become allies of Britain. Highly important military campaigns were fought along the Niagara frontier, on both sides of the Canadian-American border at Queenston Heights, Chippewa and Landy's Lane and British Forts George and Erie. Buffalo was burned, Black Rock, Niagara Falls, Lewiston and Youngstown destroyed; Admiral Perry won a notable naval victory on Lake Erie, after which he sent his historic dispatch: "WE HAVE MET THE ENEMY AND THEY ARE OURS." An American arsenal, considerable military stores and military headquarters were at Batavia. The village became the final rallying point of the badly defeated remnants of the Niagara Frontier American Army, during the first year of the war, and of homeless refugees. Batavia's more valuable records were carried east of the Genesee River.

Joseph Ellicott's residential house here was headquarters of officers of the



General Ely Samuel Parker, Seneca Chief, descendant of Red Jacket and of Jikonsasih, "Mother of Nations." He wrote the terms of the surrender at Appomattox.

American Army; his Land Office a hospital, to which Major General Winfield Scott of the Niagara Frontier Army was brought to recuperate after being wounded seriously at the front. Batavia's hospitality greatly alleviated the condition of injured and fugitive.

The so-called LAND OFFICE WAR was an interesting incident in local history. It was an outgrowth of prolonged discontent among many settlers who had fallen behind in their payments. The Holland Company always had been most generous in its credit arrangements. In 1835 it closed its business by selling out to a group of capitalists which instituted an additional charge for the renewal of contracts. Irrate settlers dubbed this the Genesee Tariff. Flames of ill feeling

## If Need Be, a Land to Die For

were fanned at numerous protest meetings throughout the Purchase.

On May 13, 1836, a mob of between 700 and 1,000 Chautauqua County men, augmented by remnants en route, armed with flint-lock muskets, crow-bars, sledge-hammers and bludgeons, marched along Walnut Street, from a rendezvous at Alexander, halting at the bridge, instant upon destroying the Holland Land Office. This had been converted into a fortification, stored with arms and ammunition, protected by two strong log block houses at its Main Street Corners.

George Holden wrote of this scene: "The troops were drawn up in two lines, extending from the creek across the road. As the mob came up I saw the guns come down to a level, the guns in the rear rank pointing between the necks of the men in front. Other muskets were sticking out of the Land Office in all directions. It seemed as if there was not two inches of space anywhere without a musket. Had they fired, the slaughter would have been simply awful. The mob halted as the muskets came down; and, after a moment, I saw Hill, their leader, give a signal to bear around to the right. The order to recover arms was given, and the bloodless battle was over. I followed the defeated army out West Main Street to the green in front of the old arsenal where they lay down for a while. They then arose and dispersed."

THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES . . . From early morning on April 15, 1861, until the fratricidal strife came to an end at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, April 9, 1865, Genesee County gave the best of its young men to the Nation's cause. It gained honor and fame unexcelled by any other county of the country.

That first day twenty volunteers enrolled at Batavia, a proportionate number in Le Roy and in all of the County's towns. Forty-eight of Batavia's young



General Emory Upton, Batavia, West Point's immortal tactician.

men enlisted there April 20, 1861. April 24, '61, Augustus I. Root, of the County Seat, enrolled there and on April 29th, he formed the first War of the Rebellion military organization in Genesee County. This became "K" company of the Twelfth New York State Volunteer Infantry Regiment, of which he was commissioned Captain, May 13, 1861. This company "K," with its Twelfth regiment, was the first Genesee County military organization to participate in a War of the Rebellion engagement, taking a leading part in the first battle, of July 18, 1861, at Bull Run. In a bayonet charge, in face of fierce rifle fire from Confederate James Longstreet's entire Rebel division, the regiment suffered in this one engagement a loss of over 400 in killed, wounded and prisoners.

On this day, during the reforming of the regiment, a youthful Lieutenant rode up and said: "I know these boys; they're from Batavia; let me lead them." The

(Continued on page 99)