

# **HISTORY OF BATAVIA**

## **1801 TO 2015**

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**Batavia City Historian**  
**2015**

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to future Batavians who may read this publication years into the future.  
May they find it both interesting and useful.

## Author

Larry Dana Barnes is the current historian for the City of Batavia, New York, a position mandated by State law. Born on October 19, 1940 in Dansville, New York, he grew up in Jamestown. He is a graduate of Jamestown High School, Jamestown Community College, Harpur College, State University of Iowa, and, most recently, Genesee Community College.

The author taught courses in psychology while serving on the faculty of Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica, New York from 1966 to 1968 and then at Genesee Community College from 1968 until his retirement in 2005. After earning an associate's degree from G.C.C., he also taught courses in industrial model-making.

Although formally educated primarily in the field of psychology, the author had a long-term interest in history prior to being appointed as the Batavia City Historian in 2008. In addition to being the City Historian, he has served as President of the Landmark Society of Genesee County, is a member of the Batavia Historic Preservation Commission, and works as a volunteer in the Genesee County History Department. He also belongs to the Genesee County Historians Association, Government Appointed Historians of Western New York, and the Association of Public Historians of New York State.

The author is married to Jerianne Louise Barnes, his wife of 50 years and a retired public school librarian who operated a genealogical research service prior to her retirement. They are the parents of Diana Elizabeth Fox, assistant clinic coordinator and clinician for the Orleans County Mental Health Clinic in Albion, New York.

In addition to an interest in history, the author enjoys reading, writing, photography, bicycling, hiking, camping, and travel. Among his travel destinations have been visits to the other Batavia communities in the United States—Batavia, Ohio; Batavia, Michigan; Batavia, Wisconsin; Batavia, Illinois; Batavia, Iowa; and Batavia, Arkansas.

# Acknowledgements

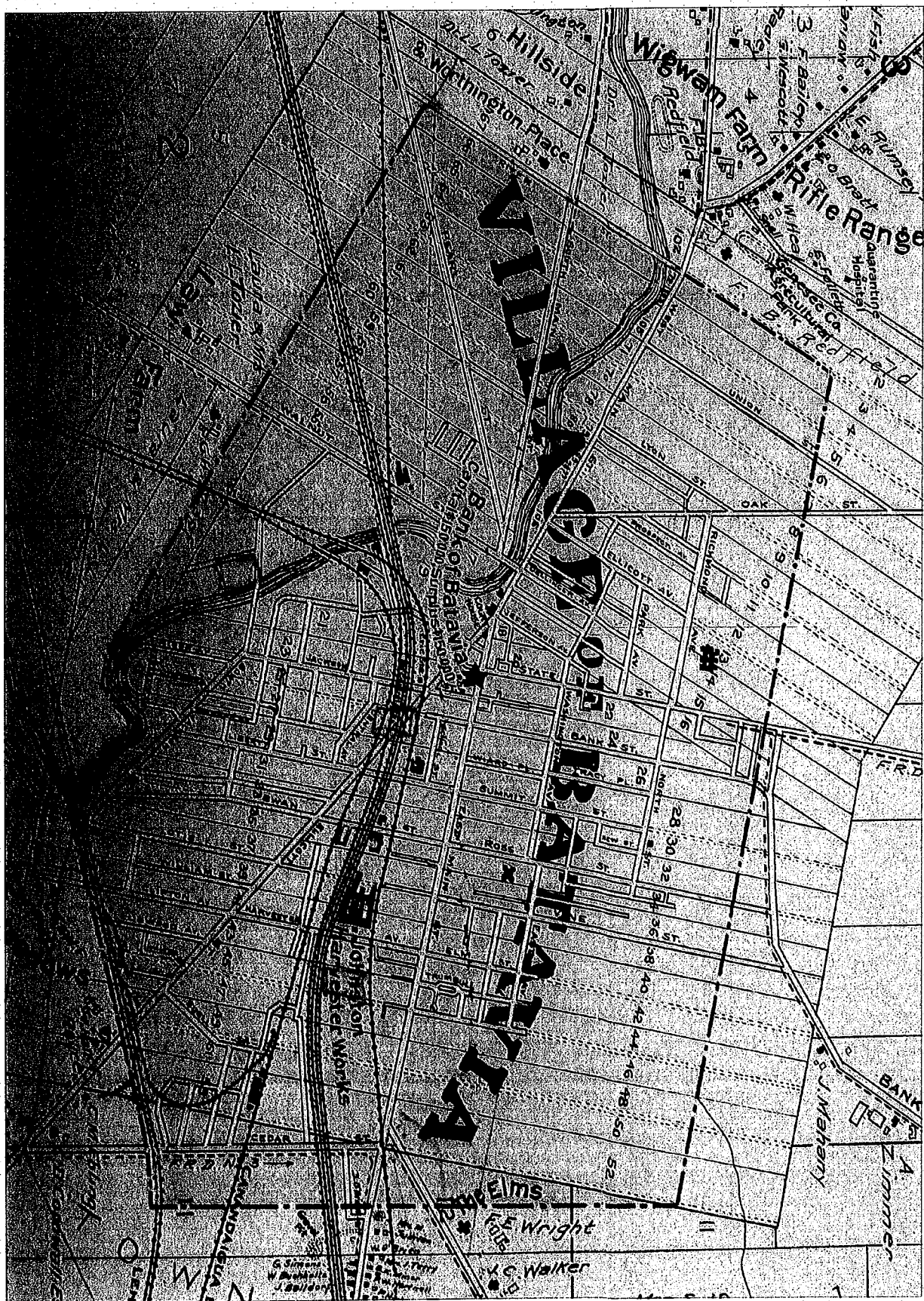
This book could not have been written without the recollections, research, and publications of five other authors in particular. They include William Seaver, his son David Seaver, Judge Safford E. North, F. W. Beers, and Ruth M. McEvoy. As will be evident from the citations, this book draws heavily from their earlier work.

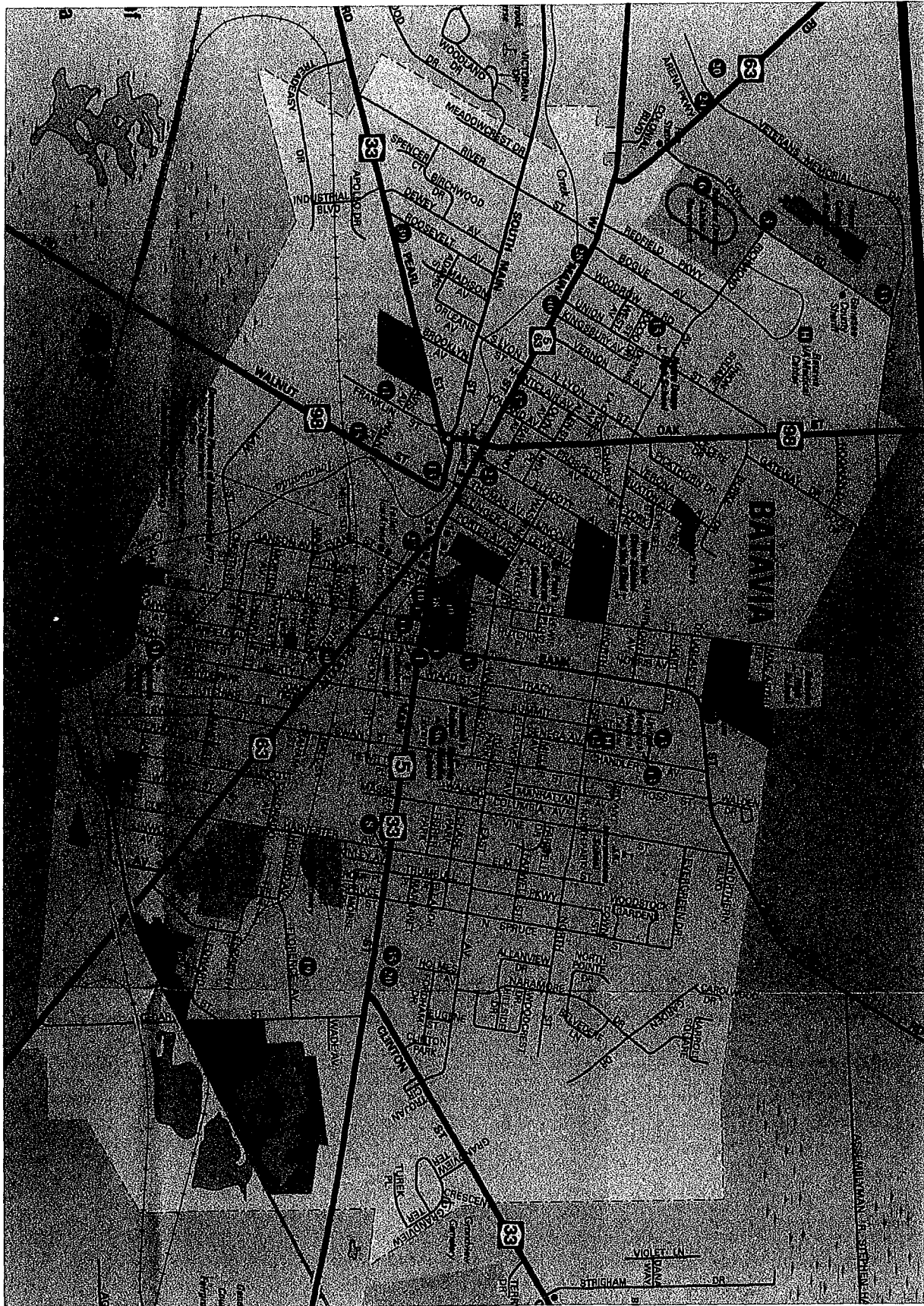
Two local institutions and their staff have also been extremely valuable resources. They are the Genesee County History Department, where Judy Stiles has been very helpful in locating information stored in the Department's archives, and the Richmond Memorial Library, where Kathy Facer has been of considerable assistance in utilizing the local history and microfilmed newspaper collections.

Two individuals made significant contributions to the writing process itself. They are Jerianne Barnes, the author's wife, who served as "first reader," and Alison Minard, a friend and Batavia history buff, who served as "second reader."

As is true of most books of the genre to which this publication belongs, the final product reflects the input of many different people and a multitude of sources.







# Introduction

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### Goals

This book mainly focuses on the history of Batavia, New York from 1801 when it was established by Joseph Ellicott to 2015 when the city celebrates its centennial. It also briefly reviews the history of the area prior to 1801 and offers predictions about the community's future beyond 2015. In doing these things, there are four goals:

1. A book that is highly readable for the average resident and is designed to make the subject matter readily accessible.
2. A book whose contents can be easily expanded, without major rewriting, when new information becomes available.
3. A book that is not only of interest to those now alive, but will be of interest and use to those alive decades, perhaps even centuries, into the future.
4. A book that offers speculation on the community's future, in part by extrapolating from the past and in part by considering a number of possible scenarios that have been offered regarding the future course of human affairs and the planet in general.

### Organization

There are 24 chapters in this book. The first chapter deals with an overview of the area's history prior to 1801. The last speculates about Batavia's future beyond 2015. The remaining 22 each cover a single decade beginning with the years 1801-1810 and proceeding by intervals 10 years in length. Within each decade, the subject matter is further organized into sections covering the following topics:

Infrastructure (including streets, roads, sidewalks, bridges, street lights, traffic signals, water supply, sewage and trash disposal, storm sewers)

Transportation (including travel by foot, horseback, wagon or other horse-drawn vehicle, boat or other water vessel, bicycle, trolley, train, bus, taxi, airplane or other aircraft, automobile, motorcycle, truck)

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Housing (including private homes, mansions, apartments, assisted living facilities, low/moderate income housing, subsidized housing, senior housing, facilities for mentally challenged/mentally ill, public accommodations—rooming houses, hotels, motels, inns)

Energy sources (including water, ice, wood, wind, solar, geothermal, coal, oil, gas, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel)

Communication (including oral communication, the written word, the printed word, post offices, telegraphs, telephone, radios, televisions, newspapers, magazines, internet, social media, flyers, billboards, signs, broadsides, historic displays)

County, village, city boundaries

Government/governing structure (including federal, state, county, village, and city government and governing structure; zoning; codes; code enforcement; planning; historic preservation; political parties; taxation; government buildings)

Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

Factories/industries

Banking/financial services

Education (including public schools, private schools, finishing schools, trade schools, parochial schools, colleges, institutes, home schooling, state schools)

Religion (including specific denominations, houses of worship, revivals, missionaries, funding)

Libraries/archives/museums

Cemeteries

Crime/crime control/law enforcement (including federal, state, county, village, and city crime control and law enforcement; crimes; punishment; jails; courts; judges; juries)

Firefighting (including equipment, volunteer fire fighters, paid fire fighters, fire stations)

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Healthcare (including illnesses, physicians, treatments, public hospital facilities, private hospital facilities, nursing homes, sanitariums, hospice care, veteran care, drug and alcohol treatment, family planning, health officer, health department, board of health, quarantines)

Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

Disasters (including fires, floods, economic depressions and recessions, extreme weather—heat, cold, snow, wind, tornadoes)

Entertainment and recreation (including parks, theaters, opera houses, fairgrounds, fairs, professional sports, amateur sports, playing fields, ice arenas, roller skating rinks, boating, swimming, shooting ranges, gaming, casinos, legal vs. illegal entertainment and recreation, horse tracks, horse racing, automobile racing, water parks, drama groups, vaudeville, circuses, circus grounds)

War/impact of war (including War of 1812, Land Office War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, WW 1, WW 2, Korean War, Middle East wars)

Families/persons of special note

Private clubs/social organizations/ service organizations/ non-profit groups providing services

Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

Urban renewal

This organization allows a reader to focus on a single area of interest, e.g., education or religion, and note the course of development across a period of over 200 years by reading just the relevant sections in successive chapters. This organization also allows further additions (or deletions), e.g., to sections on infrastructure or housing, without re-writing whole chapters of the book.

Should another author, at some point in the future, wish to expand this book to include years beyond 2015, this organization provides an established framework for doing so. It is only necessary to add future chapters with each covering a later decade and each covering the same topics.

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## Sources of Material

The material in this book has been taken from a variety of sources. Chief among them are five other books that have been written about Batavia's history. These sources include:

1. William Seaver [1], *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* (Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849). This publication was written by an early Batavian who moved to the community in 1817. It appears to be the earliest effort to record Batavia's history in any kind of systematic manner. A copy can be found in the local history collection of the Richmond Memorial Library. Seaver was a drug store owner, printer, and the publisher of the newspaper, *Spirit of the Times*. He also served the community in a number of positions including postmaster and president of the village trustees.
2. William Seaver [2], *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* (Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849). At first glance, this publication appears to be simply a copy of the first. However, closer inspection reveals that it contains additional information including facts that postdate Seaver's death in 1871. It is known that Seaver's youngest son, David Seaver, was revising and updating his father's publication when David died in 1892. This appears to be the unfinished revision. It can also be found in the local history collection of the Richmond Memorial Library. In citations for information taken from these first two sources, they are distinguished by the numerals "1" or "2" after the author's name.
3. Safford E. North, *Our County and Its People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* (Boston: Boston History Company, 1899). Born in 1852, North lived his entire life in Genesee County. After studying law in the offices of two area attorneys, he was admitted to the bar in 1878. Among other positions, North served as district attorney and Genesee County judge.
4. F. W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* (Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890). This publication is one of many similar publications printed in the Northeastern United States during the late 1800s.

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5. Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* (Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993). McEvoy was the City of Batavia Historian from 1971 to 1985. She also served as Director of the Richmond Memorial Library from 1963 to 1971.

In addition to these five primary sources, three other books, two publications written by William Brown, Jr. and one by the author, have also been utilized. They include:

1. William F. Brown, Jr., *Genesee's Rich and Famous: Dean Richmond, Edward Newton Rowell, Orator Francis Woodward* (Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1989).
2. William F. Brown, Jr., *The Mancusos of Batavia* (Batavia, N.Y.: ?, 1986).
3. Larry D. Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011).

Beyond these books, the author has also drawn on research he has published in 27 monographs which are in the local history collection of the Richmond Memorial Library and/or in the archives of the Genesee County History Department. These monographs include the following publications:

1. A brief history of the League of Women Voters in Genesee County, New York.
2. A brief history of the Law Mansion.
3. Batavia City Council members who have served under the city manager form of government: 1958-2008.
4. A Polish revolutionary in Batavia, his wife, and a house divided: the story of Henry Glowacki and his family.
5. Batavia's "mobile homes:" houses in Batavia that have been moved from one location to another.
6. The Brisbanes of Batavia: a tale that includes an utopian dreamer, bigamy, great wealth, a libel suit between family members, major philanthropy, and decades of intrafamily litigation over property.
7. The Stevens family of Batavia: a story of four generations that began with a law student from Princeton who became Genesee County's first clerk.
8. The Cary family of Batavia: The story of a family that begins with the founding of Batavia and ends with the razing of the Cary Mansion in 1964.
9. A brief history of Batavia's public hospitals: from one to two, then three, back to two, and then one, again.
10. Batavia's route to becoming a city: a surprisingly difficult path 11 years in the making.

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11. The “naked lady” in Austin Park.
12. Bicycles built by the Cooley brothers.
13. A tale of two cities.
14. Batavia’s “first great tabernacle campaign.”
15. A sculpture’s sorry saga.
16. A brief history of the Batavia Youth Bureau with emphasis on the early years.
17. Gentner’s hotel and restaurant.
18. Batavia’s ever-changing streets.
19. A history of St. Mary’s rectory and convent.
20. An overview of the Joseph Ellicott mansion in Batavia
21. Wall photographs displayed at the Merrill-Lynch office in Batavia, N.Y.
22. 13-15 Jackson rear: an historical review.
23. The 1977 reapportionment of city wards.
24. A brief overview of the charter commission appointed in 2000.
25. The 1957 adoption of the city manager form of government: a brief overview.
26. A brief history of Batavia’s city historians: 1919-2009.
27. Hey mister! Want to buy a courthouse?

In addition to the above sources, the vast majority of the remaining historical references contained in this book consist of newspaper articles published in Batavia’s newspapers. Of particular value in this regard has been the index of selected *Daily News* articles, dating from 1878 to about 2001, that was developed by Ruth M. McEvoy. It is available through both the Richmond Memorial Library and the Genesee County History Department. Early newspaper articles have also been discovered through online digital copies accessed through [Fultonhistory.com](http://Fultonhistory.com).

Finally, other sources used in producing this book include deeds, early maps, minutes of the village and city government, historic documents stored in the City of Batavia vault, and miscellaneous online websites.

In most instances, when the author has stated an alleged fact, whether books, monographs, newspaper articles, or other sources have been used, a citation has been provided regarding its source. This has been done so that the reader can readily consult these same sources should he or she wish to do so.

A final observation: the author has found innumerable errors in many of the other local publications that pertain to Batavia’s history. The reader should be alert to this common problem and recognize that this book, subject as it is to human error, likely also contains



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mistakes despite the author's best efforts to minimize their occurrence. In short, don't automatically assume that everything you read is necessarily the "gospel truth!" The great majority of the time, it probably is, but sometimes it may not be so.

# HISTORY OF BATAVIA

## PART 1

Pre-1801

1801-1810

1811-1820

1821-1830

1831-1840

1841-1850

1851-1860

1861-1870

1871-1880

1881-1890

1891-1900

## Before There Was A Batavia

For current residents of Batavia, it is difficult to imagine what was here in the centuries and millennia before our own time. However, in order to gain some context for the last 214 years, we ought to go back at least to the last glacial period, the end of which is thought to have been about 10,500 B.C.E, i.e., approximately 12,500 years ago. The great sheet of ice that covered our part of the world is known as the "Wisconsin Episode." Ice covered most of Canada, the Upper Midwest, and New England. The Great Lakes are a result, just five of the ways in which the geography of North America north of the Ohio River was radically altered. ("Last Glacial Period," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 16 April 2014)

As the last glacier receded, our area initially was a tundra before eventually becoming heavily forested. Among the forms of animal life that returned to the area were mastodons. These very large animals were a mammal species related to elephants and became extinct perhaps 10,000 years ago during a period of mass extinction perhaps due to rapid climate change. ("Mastodon," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 16 April 2014) The *Daily News* of October 13, 1908 reported the discovery of mastodon bones and teeth in a garden near Willow Street in Batavia, property then owned by ex-mayor Willis D. Sanford ("Great Bones Brought to Surface," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 1908). In the last four decades, remains of mastodons have been found at the "Hiscock site" in the Town of Byron north of Batavia.

One of the most interesting local changes produced by glaciation was a change in the route taken by the Tonawanda Creek. Originally it continued flowing north from Batavia and its waters eventually ended in Lake Ontario. It is only since the last glacier that it has turned west at Batavia and flowed into Lake Erie. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 August 1907)

According to the Buffalo Museum of Science, the first humans to inhabit our region showed up about 11,000 years ago. They were nomadic and followed herds of animals. Eventually, humans in this area became less nomadic and lived in villages, grew corn, squash, and beans, and used pottery as indicated by earthworks and other evidence of prehistoric human activity. Those inhabitants, of which little is known, were conquered and exterminated by the Seneca Indians ca. 1650 C.E. ("Tonawanda Creek Watershed Map Guide," *Tonawanda Creek*

*Watershed Committee, n.d. and Seaver 2, A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 1-2)

The Seneca Indians were part of an association of six linguistically-related tribes thought to number about 5,500 when the first European explorers encountered them in the 1600s. Initially five tribes were involved consisting of, from east to west, the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. Early in the 1700s, they were joined by the Tuscaroras who immigrated from present-day North Carolina. While referred to by European settlers as "The Iroquois Confederacy," these six tribes referred to themselves as "The Haudenosaunee," i.e., "people of the longhouse." The Confederacy is thought to have been established at some point in the period between 1350 and 1600 C.E. (Loretta Hall, *Iroquois Confederacy*, online, accessed 22 February 2013)

Among the Iroquois, extended families of up to 50 people lived together in bark-covered, wooden-framed houses 50-150 ft. long. Villages of 300-600 people were protected by triple-walled stockades of wooden stakes 15-20 ft. tall. The men set out on hunting expeditions to provide meat and hides while women tended to farming. The hunters used bows and arrows for larger game and blowguns for smaller. About every 15 years, depletion of nearby game, firewood, and soil would lead to moving. The men would find and clear an alternative site and the village would then rebuild. Historically, there was no private ownership of land. Instead, tribal land was held in common. (Loretta Hall, *Iroquois Confederacy*, online, accessed 22 February 2013)

Iroquois tribes were each organized into eight clans. At birth, individuals became a member of his/her mother's clan. Members of the same clan were regarded as blood relatives even if in different tribes. Each clan was led by a clan mother. In consultation with other women, the clan mother chose one or more men to serve as the clan chiefs. Each chief was appointed for life, but the clan mother and her advisors could remove him from office for bad behavior or dereliction of duty. (Loretta Hall, *Iroquois Confederacy*, online, accessed 22 February 2013)

In the period immediately preceding the establishment of Batavia, this area was heavily wooded. Contrary to what some have claimed, there was no Indian village here. However, there were two Indian trails that intersected just as, today, state highways intersect in Batavia. One of the trails ran from the Hudson River to Lake Erie. The other ran from present-day Geneseo to present-day Lewiston. ("Tonawanda Creek Watershed Map Guide," *Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee*, n.d.) Seaver described the Indian trail from the Hudson River to Lake Erie as well beaten, about 1 ft. wide, and worn 3-6 inches deep. It crossed the Genesee River near present-day Avon and continued west to a point about two miles east of the present

site of the 1841 Courthouse in Batavia. There it avoided ponds and marshes in the area by bearing off in a southwest direction to the east bank of the Tonawanda Creek near the great bend. Circling the bend, it continued on high ground to the present-day intersection of West Main Street and Lewiston Road. From there, it turned northwest toward present-day Oakfield. A summer trail served as a cut-off when the ground permitted and followed the route of present-day East Main Street and East Main Street Road. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 3-5)

While there was no Indian Village here and the area was heavily wooded, there was a space grassy and devoid of trees, amounting to between two and three acres, located between the present sites of the 1841 Courthouse and Holland Land Office Museum. There was also a large natural spring there. The area served as a campground and meeting place. According to Seaver, it was called "De-on-go-wah" which translates as "the grand hearing place." (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 3-5)

During the American Revolution, the Iroquois were more or less allies of the British and conducted raids on the New York and Pennsylvania frontiers. This fact precipitated the "Clinton-Sullivan Campaign of 1779" when General George Washington sent American forces to destroy the villages and food supplies of the Cayuga and Seneca Indians. By the end of the expedition, Sullivan's army had destroyed over 40 villages and destroyed at least 160,000 bushels of corn and an untold number of other vegetables and fruit. Meanwhile, over 5,000 Indians fled to Fort Niagara near Lewiston to seek protection from the British. ("The Clinton-Sullivan Campaign of 1779," *National Park Service*, online, accessed 17 April 2014)

Despite the support that the defeated Iroquois had given to the British during the American Revolution, in a 1784 meeting with the Iroquois at Rome's Fort Stanwix, New York State granted recognition to Indian ownership of most of the land in the western part of the state (Frederick Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 20). However, Indian ownership of this land then became complicated by competing claims between New York and Massachusetts that resulted from the charter originally granted to the Massachusetts Colony by a British king. Both states claimed this area as their own. The problem was resolved by a 1786 agreement between New York and Massachusetts that involved drawing what was called the "Pre-emption Line," a line that passed near present-day Geneva and ran from Lake Ontario to the Pennsylvania state line. Under terms of the 1786 agreement, New York was to govern the area west of the Pre-emption Line while Massachusetts took title to the land. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 1) The resulting conflict between both Indian

and Massachusetts ownership of the land was handled by the understanding that any party purchasing land from Massachusetts also had to remunerate the Iroquois (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and biographical record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 21-22).

Massachusetts set out to sell its western New York holdings to private investors. Sales were made to many different individuals with the land in the Batavia area and westward eventually being purchased in 1791 by Robert Morris, the same Robert Morris who played a major role in financing George Washington's military campaigns in the Revolution and after whom one of Batavia's schools was later named. Two years later, Morris, in turn, entered into an agreement with a group of Dutch investors who sought to buy most of the land in his possession. Those investors came to be identified simply as "The Holland Land Company." The land they wanted to buy was later commonly referred to as "The Purchase." (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 1)

Before the Holland Land Company would pay Morris, it insisted that all possible Seneca Indian claims to the land be extinguished first. As a consequence, in 1797 negotiations between Robert Morris and the Senecas took place near present-day Genesee at a place called "Big Tree." Following several days of difficult talks, a settlement was reached (some say with the help of bribes paid to key women in the tribe) and the Senecas formally relinquished all but a small portion of the land for a payment of \$100,000. The areas retained by the Seneca Indians became reservations. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 1)

Once the Holland Land Company was satisfied that it would have clear title to the land, dealings with Robert Morris were concluded and preparations for surveying The Purchase were begun. The plan of the Holland Land Company was to divide the land into large segments which would then be quickly sold off to major developers. The individual chosen to perform the necessary survey work was Joseph Ellicott. The choice of Ellicott was a good one because he and his brothers had established a reputation for great skill in earlier work they had undertaken throughout the country. Among the most notable surveys done by the Ellicotts were the western border between New York and Pennsylvania and the City of Washington, D.C. The survey work on The Purchase commenced in 1798. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 2)

The survey was essentially completed by January of 1800. At this time, Joseph Ellicott returned to Philadelphia where he met with Paolo Busti, the American representative of the Holland Land Company, presumably to discuss the survey results. Later in the same year,

Ellicott was appointed the resident land agent in charge of selling the land on The Purchase. For his work as the resident land agent, it was agreed that he would receive a liberal salary, a grant of 6,000 acres of land, and a 5% commission on sales. (Frederick Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1790* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 188) After his newest appointment, Joseph Ellicott returned to The Purchase and spent the next two decades shaping the development of western New York.





## The First Decade

### Overview

It's probably the case that most communities in this Country started when some settler, for personal reasons, chose the location for a farmstead, mill, or perhaps an inn and, over time, development evolved from this beginning. Batavia, however, was a planned community chosen to be a significant settlement from the very beginning, laid out in advance of development, and even given a name before anyone lived here. The location was selected because it served the interests of the Holland Land Company which was in the business of selling land to settlers. Most potential settlers would be coming from the East and likely following Indian trails and, later, the roads that followed the same routes. Joseph Ellicott recognized that a community where Batavia now stands would be well situated in that it would be near the eastern boundary of The Purchase and at the junction of the major Indian trails coming from the East. In response to Ellicott's decision to build here, his immediate superior, Paolo Busti, wrote in June of 1801, "It was to be wished that your first establishment should be central [i.e., in the center of The Purchase]...but I cannot but approve your selection in Township 12, Range 2...as a proper site for erecting a town." (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 6)

Among the very first matters undertaken was choosing a name. The correspondence between Joseph Ellicott and Paolo Busti regarding a proper name has survived the more than 200 years that have passed. Ellicott proposed to name the new community after Busti, suggesting "Bustiville." Busti, in turn, suggested "Ellicottstown." They finally settled on "Batavia," the name then given to an area of the nation now called "The Netherlands." (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 6-10) This choice appears to have been made to honor the homeland of the men who were the ultimate superiors of both Busti and Ellicott, the men who constituted the Holland Land Company.

In the decade from 1801 to 1810, the population of the community of Batavia can only be estimated. The available figures are all for the Town of Batavia of which the community of Batavia was just a part albeit the major part. That means the population of the community itself, in each case, was smaller than the numbers which follow. Unfortunately, it's not possible to know exactly how much of an adjustment to make. In any event, the population of the Town

of Batavia including the community of Batavia was 40 in 1801, 56 in 1802, 230 in 1803, 300 in 1804, 415 in 1805, and 524 in 1806, 607 in 1807, 617 in 1808, and 1,160 in 1809. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 169)

## 1: Infrastructure

In 1801, Benjamin Ellicott and John Thompson surveyed out and plotted the community of Batavia (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 11). Street and road construction seems to have gotten underway in earnest starting in 1802. John Lamberton and Simeon Mayhew began cutting a thoroughfare in February 1802 that extended two miles east from the current location of the point where West Main Street and Lewiston Road intersect. The eastern point appears to have been near the current intersection of East Main Street and Trumbull Parkway. Their contract called for cutting a swath 100 ft. wide, cutting up the downed timber to make it fit for logging, but leaving to others the task of clearing the logs (principally the landowners bounding the road). (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 11) This stretch became what is today West Main, Main, and East Main streets.

In 1802, after finishing today's Main streets, Lamberton took a similar contract to cut and clear a strip two rods (33 ft.) wide all the way from Batavia to Attica (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 28-29). The section within the current City limits is present-day Walnut Street. The first bridge in Batavia crossed the Tonawanda at the north end of this thoroughfare (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 13) and may have been built at this same time.

Also in 1802, Isaac Sutherland was employed to build a road north to the "Pinery" (present-day Elba) for the purpose of bringing pine timber to a saw mill on the Tonawanda (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 10). Ironically, the stretch within the present City limits became today's Oak Street.

Up until at least 1805 or 1806, a great portion of the central part of Batavia was swampy or low, wet land known among early settlers as the "Frog Pond." A high point at the approximate intersection of present-day Court and Main streets was referred to as "The Island." (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 20) Such land probably explains the decision to construct much of the main east/west

thoroughfare with a corduroy surface built by laying logs crossways to the direction of travel ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 July 1949). A *Daily News* article from 1910 reported coming across the old corduroy surface when current excavation work was being done on East Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 November 1910).

In the first decade of Batavia's existence, there was no public water or sewer system. Residents presumably relied on private wells for water and outhouses or latrines for dealing with human waste. The wells were most likely dug by hand, but because the water table was so high they didn't need to be very deep. Trash and garbage would have been disposed of in whatever manner was convenient to individual property owners.

### 2: Transportation

In the years 1801-1810, there were two ways of getting from one place to another: overland or on water. Travel overland was by foot, on horseback, or by riding in a conveyance drawn by horses or oxen. On water, the options were by watercraft one rowed or by watercraft driven by the wind via sails. None of these was very rapid.

When it came to travel overland, the trails or roads were in such a condition that progress could be excruciatingly slow. For example, when Joseph Hawks came to Batavia in 1802 driving a yoke of oxen and a wagon, it reportedly took him three days to go just 18 miles (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 170). In 1803, the newly-formed Genesee County Legislature formally resolved that 20 miles would be considered a full day's journey as it went about establishing remuneration of legislative members for time spent travelling to and from meetings (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 40). Given what was regarded as a full day's journey, it appears that most such individuals were presumed to be traveling on foot. It is a distance consistent with what recreational hikers of today are able to travel over hiking trails through fields and forests.

Travel by watercraft on Tonawanda Creek was not practical because it was generally very shallow and did not connect to likely destinations. Canoes and rafts may have been used on occasion, but the historic record makes no mention of such travel during this time period.

As roads improved, public stage coaches appeared. The first known stage coach is purported to have begun operation in 1808 and ran through Batavia on a route between Canandaigua and Buffalo. The conveyance was actually an old covered wagon without springs and was said to bear a strong resemblance to vehicles used by Connecticut peddlers. (William Seaver 2, A

*Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 63) By 1809, someone named Horace Gibbs reportedly had a stable of 75 horses and operated a daily line of stages between Canandaigua and Buffalo (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetter and Biographical Record of Genesee County, NY., 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 176). It's not clear whether the first stage and those that appeared the following year were operated by the same proprietor or different individuals.

### 3: Housing

We don't know how many dwellings existed at the end of the first decade when the population of Batavia approached 1,000. Neither do we know much about their appearance in most instances beyond assuming that they were nearly all wood-frame structures. However, here are some highlights of what we do know about the earliest homes.

The first dwellings built in Batavia were necessarily made of logs. That is because there was no sawmill and it was too difficult to transport sawn lumber from places to the east where sawmills existed. The very first log house was reportedly erected by Abel Rowe, who arrived in March of 1801. It was located directly opposite where the Holland Land Office Museum now stands. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 5) Soon after, Stephen Russell put up a log house, the second in the community, on the same side of the street as Rowe's, but near where Main and Court streets now intersect (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 5). In June of 1801, John Thompson built a log house that was situated a little east of the current intersection of West Main Street and Dellinger Avenue. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 20).

When a saw mill was finally in operation on the Tonawanda, the first frame dwelling was erected. It occupied a "conspicuous position" approximately where the U.S. Post Office currently stands. It was built by Isaac Sutherland in the Spring of 1802 and briefly served as a residence for himself and his family. Within a year, he sold it to James Brisbane, first merchant and first postmaster. However, Brisbane did not himself occupy the dwelling until a few years later when he married Mary Stevens. In the meantime, it served as the home for James W. Stevens, Mary's brother and chief clerk of the Holland Land Office. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 14-15)

Although lumber for frame dwellings became available early in 1802, builders must have continued to erect log structures as well. A traveler who passed through Batavia in 1804 noted

that it contained 20-30 homes and most of them were built with logs. The relatively few frame dwellings were described as generally small and chiefly one-story. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publishers, 1890] p. 180)

The most impressive dwelling in Batavia during this time period was the home that Joseph Ellicott began erecting in stages starting ca. 1802. This mansion was located at the current intersection of Main Street and Dellinger Avenue. It eventually consisted of a large 3-story main building and two wings. The first and second floors of the main portion each had ten rooms. The third floor was a finished attic having five rooms. The home was reportedly furnished in fine taste. A feature said to fascinate visitors was an 8-ft. tall musical clock built by Ellicott's father and willed him by his mother. (Ellicott Mansion file, archives, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.)

A reading of the descriptions of the early dwellings suggests that they often not only sheltered their owners, but provided lodging to travelers. For example, in a letter dated May 1801 from Joseph Ellicott to John Minor of Geneseo, Ellicott refers to Abel Rowe's log structure as "Rowe's Hotel" (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 5).

### 4: Energy sources

The energy sources available to Batavians in the years 1801-1810 were very limited. One could burn wood and candles and one could use the falling water of a stream. Buildings were heated by burning wood in fireplaces or stoves. Food was cooked using the same wood-burning devices. Light after sunset was provided by burning candles fixed in holders of some sort.

Early on, the Tonawanda Creek was used to power a saw mill and, a little later, a grist mill. To achieve this, a dam was constructed across the Creek to create a reservoir. Then a raceway roughly parallel to the Creek carried water from behind the dam to a waterwheel. After turning the wheel and thus expending its energy, the water was returned to the Creek, now at a lower elevation than the water behind the dam.

The first dam was erected in May 1801 by Benjamin Ellicott (Joseph's brother) and John Thompson. Constructing a mill site was a challenge given Batavia's relatively flat topography. Ellicott and Thompson initially planned to place the dam a short distance downstream from the final location, nearer the footbridge now spanning the creek, but "on taking a level" discovered

that the banks of the Creek were not high enough to prevent the backed up water from overflowing the adjacent land. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 18) The final location was apparently close to where the current dam behind the 1997 courthouse stands, but not at the exact same location. The original dam remained in place over 30 years before it was torn down in 1833 (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 29).

Windmills were not unknown in 1801, but there is no record of wind power being used by Batavia's early settlers. Similarly, machinery powered by animals was also being used in one place or another, but again there is no record of this being the case in early Batavia. The oil of sperm whales was very popular, for burning in lamps to provide illumination, elsewhere in the country, but it seems rather improbable, given the challenges of transporting such oil, that it was used in early Batavia.

### 5: Communication

Communication in the years 1801-1810 was by two means only: 1) by the spoken word in face-to-face oral exchange and 2) by the written word, either through putting words to paper by hand or by the use of a printing press.

According to William Seaver, prior to settlement of the Holland Purchase, a "post road" had been established between Albany and Lewiston that passed by the bend on the Tonawanda, but except at Lewiston there was no post office west of the Genesee River. This changed in 1802 when Joseph Ellicott successfully petitioned Post Master General Gideon Granger for a post office at Batavia. Ellicott suggested James Brisbane for the position of Postmaster, a suggestion heeded by Granger; and in August Brisbane began keeping a post office in his general store located immediately east of the current post office on Main Street. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 15-17)

Initially, mail delivery to and from Batavia occurred only once every two weeks. It was sometimes carried on foot, other times on horseback. At first, the route proceeded from Canandaigua to Batavia to Lewiston to Niagara Falls to Williamsville to "the Indian Village" to Batavia and then back to Canandaigua. Soon, however, mail traveled from Canandaigua through Batavia directly to Buffalo and back. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 15-17)

The post office at Batavia at first was identified as "Genesee Court House" (a court house having been built by then) because at the time there existed a post office in Greene County by the name "Batavia." By 1804 when our post office finally acquired a sign, the situation had changed and the name "Batavia" was being used here. The sign, currently preserved in the archives of the United States Postal Service, was painted by Mary Stevens, sister of James W. Stevens and future wife of James Brisbane. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 15-17) Her offer to paint it may have been prompted by romantic interests she had in Mr. Brisbane.

The first newspaper to be printed in Batavia, the "Genesee Intelligencer," was printed on a broken-down press brought from Manlius, NY in 1807 by Elias Williams. The first issue, described as "sorry looking," featured ads from the Holland Land Co., the report of an elopement, and an item about a runaway apprentice boy for whose apprehension a bag of bran was offered as a reward. The "Genesee Intelligencer" was superseded by the "Cornucopia," a newspaper that began publication in 1808. It was published by Benjamin Blodgett and a partner by the name of "Peek." When Peek died in 1811, the newspaper died as well. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 21-22)

### 6: County, Village, City boundaries

At first, all of Western New York was part of Ontario County. Then, in 1802, Genesee County was split off from Ontario County, becoming the area in general encompassing present-day Niagara, Erie, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany, Wyoming, Genesee, and Orleans Counties, and encompassing parts of Monroe and Livingston Counties. Genesee County, at this time, was divided into four townships, one of which was the Town of Batavia. By 1810, four of today's counties had been carved out of the original Genesee County: Allegany in 1806, Cattaraugus in 1808, Chautauqua in 1808, and Niagara in 1808. Batavia in 1801-1810 was not yet an incorporated community and, therefore, it had no legal boundaries nor did it have its own governing body.

### 7: Government/governing structure

When Genesee County was created, Batavia became the county seat just as it is today. As one of the conditions for the creation of the County, a court house had to be erected at the expense of the Holland Land Co. The location chosen was that which today is occupied by County Building 1 at the intersection of Batavia's Court and Main streets. (William Seaver 1, A

*Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 13) Prior to the incorporation of Batavia as a village in 1823, residents of the community were governed by the County and Town of Batavia governments which operated out of this court house.

The erection of the Court House was under the supervision of Joseph Ellicott and D. A. Ogden. The initial plans were obtained by Ogden from a New York City architect. Ellicott found them suitable for a place like London or Amsterdam, but not Batavia. Consequently, Isaac Sutherland and Samuel F. Geer were employed to design a more appropriate structure, one that would house the court facilities, jail, and jail keeper's quarters under one roof. Furthermore, a decision was made to construct the building of wood since, Ellicott claimed, brick "of this country" was scarcely fit for building unless constantly kept covered with thick paint and oil. Otherwise, it would molder away in a few years. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 14)

By late October or early November of 1802, the frame, made almost exclusively of oak, was up. Raising the frame was a "Herculean" task taking three days and requiring all the men that could be mustered in the surrounding countryside, even from as far as Buffalo. The structure was enclosed later in the fall. Although the building was not completely finished until 1804, it was possible for the first session of court to take place therein during the Spring of 1803. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 14) Many are surprised when they learn that the southern half of the Court House was later occupied by a tavern for a 10-year period beginning in 1808 (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 43). It would appear that it was possible to over-imbibe, be arrested and convicted of a related crime, and then be incarcerated all in the same structure! The building survived until 1918 when it was destroyed by fire.

## 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

We presume that there were law-breakers in early Batavia that existed in significant numbers just as was true of other communities. This section is not intended to provide a full account of such misbehaviors. However, there are three facts that bear noting.

The chief law enforcement officer in early Batavia was the County Sheriff. In the very first year of the gaol's existence, the Sheriff, Richard M. Stoddard, went before the Genesee County Board of Supervisors and complained about the facility, declaring it insufficient for securing his prisoners. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 40) It's not known what action, if any, was taken by the Supervisors.



Within a year after the first court proceedings in the Genesee Court House, the first grand jury indictment against a woman occurred. In June of 1804, Catharine Hustler was charged with assault and battery. When her case went to trial, Hustler was found guilty and fined six cents. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 56)

In 1807, the first execution in Western New York took place in Batavia. In June of that year, James McLean had been found guilty of murder. In August, he was taken to the place of his execution, a public event that drew a huge crowd. According to reports of the occurrence that day, when McLean was being executed using a gibbet (not a gallows), the rope broke and McLean collapsed on the ground still quite alive. Although McLean expressed a strong desire not to be subjected to his punishment again, given that he had apparently killed two men, a second attempt was deemed fitting. Someone was sent to the general store for a second rope which proved strong enough to do the job. It has been recorded that William Keyes had been paid \$8.25 to build the gibbet and eight gallons of brandy were supplied to the guards for their role in the execution. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son] p. 58)

### 9: Retail establishments/ other commercial enterprises

William Seaver, in listing the residents of Batavia as of 1801, identifies five as carpenters, one as a blacksmith, and one as a tailor (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 20). However, none of these individuals appears to have been operating a retail establishment or other commercial enterprise housed in a commercial building.

James Brisbane is credited with operating the first retail establishment in Batavia. Brisbane, employed by the Holland Land Co. during the survey of The Purchase, had been the "principal clerk" of a company-owned supply storehouse located in Stafford from October 1798 until January 1800. At the conclusion of the survey, he returned to Philadelphia from whence he had come. However, just two years later, in the Spring of 1802, he was back in Western New York, financed by a \$3,000 loan from the Holland Land Co., for the purpose of setting up his own general store in Batavia. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2019] pp. 2-3). James Brisbane purchased the goods for this store in New York City and brought them to Batavia by going first up the Hudson River to Albany, then up the Mohawk River, next along Lake Ontario to near Lewiston, and eventually overland by way of Buffalo,

then called New Amsterdam (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 15).

The general store itself was located in the second frame structure to be erected in Batavia, a building erected that same Spring by Isaac Sutherland and Samuel Geer and intended to serve as a joiner's shop. Brisbane purchased the building before it was completed and finished the construction in a manner making it suitable for a store. It was located just east of the current post office building (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 3). James Brisbane continued to own this general store, although not always under his direct management, until 1822 when it was torn down. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & son, 1849] p. 15; Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 4) His customers were not only fellow settlers, but Seneca Indians as well. Apparently to serve the latter, he reportedly employed a clerk by the name of "Tiffany" who was proficient in the language spoken by the Senecas. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographic Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 179)

During the ensuing years in the period 1801-1810, additional retail establishments were built and operated by other individuals. For example, Timothy Burt of Canandaigua and Richard Stoddard of LeRoy in 1803 erected the second general store in Batavia, a small frame building not far from Brisbane's. A year later, Stoddard sold his interest in the store to Isaiah Babcock. In two more years, that business failed. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 19; William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 50)

In 1808, Ebenezer Cary occupied the former Babcock and Burt building and operated a store there until his own building was erected the next year. James Brisbane and Ebenezer Cary were the only merchants from 1808 until 1810 when Ephraim Hart built a store and hired Clark Heacox to manage the business for him. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographic Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 180)

As the population grew, so did the demand for taverns. By 1803, there were two or three (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 15).

### 10: Factories/Industries

It would be many decades before Batavia would become a community of factories, but even in the decade 1801-1810, certain operations were essential to a community on the frontier. The two most critical were a saw mill and a grist mill.

As indicated earlier, the first structures built in Batavia were made of logs because it was too difficult to transport sawn lumber from mills to the east. Early on, an effort was made to address this situation. In early December of 1801, Joseph Ellicott wrote to Paulo Busti about the progress to date. He wrote that a saw mill was costing a great deal of labor because the location was not "a natural seat," but a "convenience" of this sort was absolutely necessary. He expected it to begin operation within a week. A few days later, Ellicott wrote that despite continuous rain, sickness, and 10 inches of snow, the saw mill shortly should be able to supply Batavia with boards, an article much wanted. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 9-10) The saw mill was built by Moses Eggleston and situated on the south side of the creek (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 19-20), a location suggesting that a bridge across the Tonawanda must already have been in place. The mill survived over 20 years, being torn down in 1822 (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 29).

Prior to the completion of a grist mill, all breadstuff for settlers had to be procured east of the Genesee River and brought to Batavia on pack horses. This led to shortages and, for example, on one of those occasions in November of 1804, Joseph Ellicott observed that not a "morsel of bread" was to be seen in Batavia, despite plenty of pork and potatoes. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 19-20.) Almost two years earlier in February of 1802, Ellicott had expressed the need to procure a good mill-wright to construct the running gear. So, when a mill was finally completed in December of 1804, it had been a long time coming. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 11). It appears that the grist mill was on the north side of the creek. Captain Elijah Spencer was the first miller (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 30).

### 11: Banking/financial services

There were no local banking or financial services as such in the period 1801-1810. In fact, there was none west of the Genesee River. They weren't to come for nearly three decades.

### 12: Education

There were no public schools in the very earliest years of the period 1801-1810. For the most part, children were probably home-schooled to the extent that they received a formal education. On the other hand, Beers reports that a Thomas Layton, who settled in Batavia in 1801, was a teacher of the young prior to 1810 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 182). We don't know exactly what that means. Did some children go to Layton's dwelling for schooling? Did he go to their homes? How was he remunerated, assuming he was? What was the nature of the schooling he provided? Did it extend beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic? Many of Batavia's early settlers were well-educated adults, so it seems likely that they would have wanted the same for their children.

There is indirect evidence of there being a school building erected at some point within the decade, perhaps towards the end. William Seaver, in writing of the organization of a Congregational Church society in 1809, states that a meeting was held for that purpose "at the Center School House" (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the History of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 27-28.) Exactly where the Center School House was located, when it was erected, and whether it was a public or private school is unknown.

### 13: Religion

According to Seaver, for several years after the first settlement of Batavia, little attention was paid to religious matters except that religious meetings were occasionally held by pious laymen or, at irregular intervals, by itinerant preachers. Many early Batavians were described as men of particularly liberal views, "almost free thinkers." One Presbyterian of the time later noted, "Mr. Ellicott disregarded the Sabbath and was hostile to religious institutions...it was a common observation that Sabbath-day did not extend westward beyond the Genesee River." When a member of a missionary society arrived in Batavia in 1805 to preach, he notified residents of his planned evening lecture, "but nobody came." (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 6)

The first organization of a religious society didn't occur until mid-September in 1809. At that time, the Rev. Royal Phelps, a missionary from the Hampshire Missionary Society in Massachusetts, presided and officiated at a meeting forming a Congregational Church. Eleven persons became members. About a week later, Phelps preached at Jesse Rumsey's barn and administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This was probably the first time that the sacrament was ever administered in Batavia. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 27-28)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

Consistent with the educated status of many of the first settlers, Batavia's first library came into existence just three years after the community's establishment. In November of 1804, subscribers met at the home of Abel Rowe to elect officers and trustees. They resolved to call themselves, "Chairman, Trustees, and Associates of the Batavia Library." The library was incorporated pursuant to an act of the New York State Legislature passed in April 1796 for the purpose of governing the creation of public libraries in the state. This first Batavia library survived at least until 1826 when the last recorded reference was made to it. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 83-84 and Miscellaneous Record, Liber 1: 33, Genesee County Clerk's Office, Batavia, New York.

### 15: Cemeteries

The first land set apart for a cemetery was lot 180 in the then western part of Batavia. Before then, burials would likely have occurred on private property. This first burial ground was located near the Tonawanda on land along the east side of the current South Lyon Street. Although the record shows that the lot was deeded in August of 1820 from Joseph Ellicott to Benjamin Ellicott, James W. Stevens, and others in trust for public use, its use as a burial ground reportedly began about 1810. In any event, it was a poor location because it was semi-annually subjected to floods. By 1822, a need for other arrangements became obvious. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 86-87)

### 16: Firefighting

In the years 1801-1810, there was no fire department and no fire-fighting equipment. The best that could be hoped for in the instance of fire was a hastily organized bucket brigade throwing water on the flames with the water secured from wells or perhaps the Tonawanda.

### 17: Healthcare

Batavia in the early years was not a particularly healthy place to be living. The swampy environment was the perfect breeding ground for swarms of mosquitoes. In fact, the Senecas, who were perhaps too smart to ever have built one of their own communities here, referred to Batavia by the term, "Ge-ne-an-da-sase-ka," which translates as, "Mosquito Town." (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 27) In an 1801 letter from Joseph Ellicott to Paulo Busti, he noted that almost the whole of the people in Batavia had been afflicted with the bilious and other fevers (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 9). The symptoms of bilious fever include, besides fever, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Among the other "fevers" to which Ellicott was likely referring, a common one was called, "ague." It was a malarial fever marked by recurring chills.

Healthcare in 1801-1810 was limited to the care that an individual physician could provide. Such doctors were typically not graduates of a school of medicine, but rather individuals who acquired their knowledge and skills through a combination of association with another "physician" or through trial and error. Batavia's first doctor, Dr. David McCracken, was one such person. William Seaver described him this way: he was "not well trained, but that was balanced by a natural endowment" (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 38).

Dr. McCracken came to Batavia in 1801 and took two lots of 40 acres each on the south side of Main Street, between the current Liberty and Jackson streets and extending south to the Tonawanda Creek. He erected a log house at that location. McCracken was said to be the most extensive and popular practitioner in the region and one of the most conspicuous personages in the early history of Batavia. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 38)

Not long after Dr. McCracken settled here, another physician, a Dr. Town, also moved to Batavia, but apparently left after only four or five years. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.; William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 38)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

Unlike later in the development of Batavia, in the years 1801-1810, the care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young was left almost exclusively to their family and friends. Still, it should be noted that there were "overseers of the poor" (sometimes called "poor

masters") from the very beginning. The first two, David Cully and Benjamin Porter, were elected in 1803 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 169). Such persons were charged with taking care of the poor using funds provided by the Town.

### 19: Disasters

There are no records of any true disasters besetting Batavia in its first decade. They will happen, but that's still down the road.

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

The earliest parties for pleasure were arranged by first designating the home of some settler and then each party-goer contributing something to the entertainment. One would carry some flour, another some sugar, another eggs, another butter, etc., the aggregate making up a feast. Parties alternated from home to home. These "frolics" typically occurred in the evening and would follow events such as husking bees, barn raisings, and quiltings. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 170)

By 1803, the arrival of a celebrated left-handed fiddler by the name of Russell Noble (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 170 ), combined with the existence of two or three taverns, set the stage for a "ball" every two or three weeks (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 15). Early Batavians obviously worked hard. It appears that they took time to enjoy themselves, as well.

### 21: War/impact of war

Militias were made up of all able-bodied males between 18 and 45 years of age, with a few exemptions (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 200). Evidently, by 1808, there were enough such men in the area to begin general training on an annual basis (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 202).

One day each year between September 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, at a place designated by brigade officers, the regiments were directed to assemble for training purposes. All the officers

of each regiment or battalion were also required to rendezvous two days in succession in June, July, or August for drill under a brigade inspector. General training was usually regarded as mainly a pleasant occasion to meet friends. The officers of the volunteer companies were said to be commonly selected chiefly for their handsome appearance and martial bearing rather than leadership skills. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 201-202) The short-comings of these latter practices would become evident when the War of 1812 came to Western New York.

In 1810, as the tensions that eventually led to the War of 1812 became of increasing concern, New York State authorities contracted with Joseph Ellicott to build an arsenal made of logs (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890]). This arsenal is believed to have been located on the east side of the present Walnut Street, probably not far from West Main Street.

### 22: Families/persons of special note

In the course of reviewing the development of Batavia during the first decade, many individuals have already been cited. To them should be added these two that the reader may find of interest. The first child to be born in Batavia, John S. Rowe, was born in 1802 (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 19). The first death was a Mrs. Layton who died in 1803. Her place of burial is unknown. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 86) Since there were no cemeteries as yet, Mrs. Layton's interment presumably would have been on private property somewhere.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

There do not appear to have been any private clubs, social organizations, service organizations, or non-profit groups providing services in the years 1801-1810.

### 24: Sex/sexual services/ sexual entertainment

Places of sexual entertainment or places providing sexual services would eventually appear in Batavia, but there is no indication of such places early in the community's existence. Information about the sexual lives of Americans in general, let alone just those in Batavia,



would not become available before the next century, so we know essentially nothing of this aspect of life in the early days.

### 25: Urban renewal

In the years 1801-1810, there was, of course, no “urban” to renew. That wouldn’t start to happen until years later.



## The Second Decade

### Overview

The second decade was one that would prove very stressful for the inhabitants of both Batavia and the rest of Western New York. One of the stress-inducing factors was the War of 1812 which lasted from June 1812 until February 1815. The other was the weather which, in general, was less than favorable in the period 1812-1817, but was especially a problem in 1816, "The Year Without a Summer."

#### War of 1812

The War of 1812 was between the United States and British forces, in particular those of Great Britain and British North America. (The area that constituted British North America is today's Canada, a nation that did not come into being until 1867.) The British were aided by a large number of Native Americans. A much smaller number of Native Americans sided with the United States. While the War is a significant part of both American and Canadian history, it has relatively minor significance for the British who were, in 1812, preoccupied with a long-term and major military conflict with the French.

The War began when the United States, on June 18, 1812, by relatively close votes in both the House and Senate, declared war against Great Britain. Fighting took place on the oceans, on the Great Lakes, and on land areas in North America. The issues that led to a declaration of war included: 1) Restrictions on trade imposed by the British who were seeking to weaken France, 2) Forced recruitment of American sailors who were captured on the high seas and impressed into the British navy, and 3) British military support to Native Americans who were trying to stop U.S. expansion along the frontier. An additional motive for the declaration of war may have been a desire by some Americans to annex the territory which 50 years later became modern Canada.

From the standpoint of residents of Batavia and Western New York in general, the most important aspect of this war involved the military action that took place on the Niagara Frontier. Before it was over, the communities from Buffalo to Lewiston were burned, Fort Niagara was captured by the British, and the area west of Batavia emptied of settlers as individuals and families fled the devastation.

Elsewhere, in the War of 1812, Washington, D.C. was burned in retaliation for the American destruction of York (later Toronto). The British attacked Fort McHenry on the Chesapeake Bay as part of a plan to take Baltimore. (The American defense of this fort led Francis Scott Key to pen the words of a poem that later became the lyrics for our national anthem.) Ports along the

Eastern Seaboard were blockaded by his majesty's warships. U.S. efforts to capture Quebec City failed. Detroit was lost to the British. Perhaps the two major bright points in the war, from the American perspective, were 1) a naval victory on Lake Erie under the leadership of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, and 2) the defeat of British forces at New Orleans in a meaningless battle that took place after a treaty had been signed ending the war. In the latter instance, the slowness of 19<sup>th</sup>-century communication prevented the warring parties from learning about the treaty until after the battle ended.

The War of 1812 officially ended on February 18, 1815 when the Treaty of Ghent was ratified by the U.S. Senate. Under the terms of the treaty, boundaries between the U.S. and British North America returned to where they had been when the war started. Historically, Canadians, whose militia played an important role in the fighting, have seen themselves as the victors. On the other hand, Americans have historically viewed themselves as being the victorious force. However, everyone seems to agree that Native American tribes, having suffered permanent losses in the conflict including the death of their leader, Chief Tecumseh, were clear losers in the war. Further discussion of this war occurs in a following section titled, "War/impact of war."

### Year without a summer

It was bad enough that Batavians living in the second decade had to contend with war. Abnormal weather made matters even worse. The period of 1812-1817 was one of exceptional volcanic activity. The sheer volume of volcanic dust shot into the atmosphere, by blocking sunlight, caused a general, albeit temporary, cooling of the earth's climate. The most significant of these eruptions was the 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora in the Dutch East Indies. Depending on the source one accepts, it was the largest known eruption in either 1,000 years or as much as 10,000. Either way, it was huge and during 1816 caused a significant drop in the temperature of the Northern Hemisphere.

The Northeastern United States was one of the areas most affected by the eruption. The impact was made greater by the fact that the cooling was most evident during the growing season. There were hard freezes in every summer month. Crop failures resulted and food shortages ensued. The year 1816 came to be known as "eighteen hundred and starve to death." Further discussion of this weather disaster is in a following section titled, "Disasters."

### Holland Land Company

In the period 1811-1820, the Holland Land Company continued to sell parcels of land throughout Western New York including in Batavia. Joseph Ellicott remained the resident land agent. The most notable development was the construction of a stone land office building in 1815, the building that currently houses the Holland Land Office Museum. The stone land office replaced the land office that had been across the street and part of Joseph Ellicott's mansion.

### Population

Despite these trying circumstances, it appears that Batavia continued to grow. However, as in the first decade, there are no certain population figures available for the Village itself. Until 1860, Federal Census records continued to lump together the Town and the Village of Batavia. This unfortunate situation is compounded by the fact that the Township kept shrinking geographically as other townships were split off from it, e.g., Bergen, Alexander, Pembroke, and Bethany in 1812 and Elba in 1820. Beers claimed that the Village had 1,400 people in 1825 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 183). Thirty-five years later, the 1860 Federal census for the Village reported 2,560 residents ("Genesee Community Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). Assuming Beer's figure was accurate and a steady growth occurred both before and after 1825, perhaps the Village had somewhere around 1235 people by the end of the second decade in 1820.

### 1: Infrastructure

With an increase in population, it seems probable that streets were regularly lengthened and/or new ones added during the second decade. However, Safford North makes a very interesting comment about such development. He writes:

"During the early days of the Village a favored few were permitted to purchase from twenty to forty acres of land fronting on [West Main, Main, and East Main streets], running back one mile in length...For years, these men held their broad acres undiminished by a sale. They were hostile to any street parallel to Main, which they would have considered an invasion of their sacred rights...As a natural consequence Main was filled with handsome residences. For years all taxes and improvements were lavished upon that broad thoroughfare. The result was that a residence upon that fine avenue became, to a certain extent, the arbiter of social position." (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 274)

It's not possible to ascertain the specific dates when the construction occurred, but North observes further that the first street opened by the "necessities of the pioneers" was Mechanic Street, now State Street. After that, he writes, there followed Center, then Bank, Liberty, Summit, South Liberty, Evans, Swan and Ross. He claims "they were generally occupied and built upon before they were legally opened...becoming streets from the demands of a growing population and not in conformity to any plan laid down in the original village plot." (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 274)

In the second decade of Batavia's existence, there was still no public water or sewer system. As earlier, residents presumably relied on private wells for water and outhouses or latrines for dealing with human waste. Some may have installed gutters, downspouts, and cisterns to collect and store rain water falling on building roofs. Trash and garbage would still have been disposed of in whatever manner was convenient for individual property owners.

### 2: Transportation

The chief transportation options remained the same as in the first decade: travel on foot, on horseback, or in a conveyance pulled by horses or oxen. However, with the improvement of roads, the speed of travel would have increased.

### 3: Housing

More people resulted in more houses, of course. In addition, those homes which had been constructed earlier and built of logs were being replaced with frame structures. An example was the dwelling of Dr. David McCracken, Batavia's first doctor. After living for several years in his log house on the south side of East Main Street, he built a small frame structure in which he lived until eventually moving to Rochester many years later. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 38)

The magnificent mansion that Joseph Ellicott was erecting in stages on the north side of West Main Street, at the current intersection of West Main Street and Dellinger Avenue, was beginning to be matched by other homes on East Main Street. Two examples are those of Trumbull Cary and George Washington Lay.

The Cary Mansion was a 24-room Greek Revival structure built in 1817. It was located on the north side of East Main Street between Bank Street and the current Wiard Street. An historic marker has been placed at the site. The impetus for the mansion's construction was allegedly an agreement between Trumbull Cary, erstwhile suitor, and his bride-to-be Margaret Elinor Brisbane, sister of James Brisbane. After years of courtship, supposedly Margaret finally agreed to marriage only after Trumbull promised to provide a mansion and a fine pair of horses to pull their carriage. (Larry Barnes, *The Cary Family of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] pp. 15-16) There will be several more references both to this structure and to Trumbull Cary in later sections of this book.

The Lay Mansion was built in 1820 by George Washington Lay, a prominent Batavian who became a member of Congress and also charge d'affaires to the courts of Norway and Sweden. Fifty-four years after its construction, the mansion was enlarged by John Foote Lay, George Lay's first son. The building remains standing, located on the southeast corner of East Main Street and Masse Place. George Lay's wife, Olive Foote, whom he married a year after the mansion's erection, was a relative of Trumbull Cary. (Larry Barnes, *The Cary Family of Batavia*

[Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] pp. 10 and 13) Intermarriage, of which this is the second example in as many paragraphs, linked together many of the early Batavia families.

### 4: Energy sources

From all indications, the energy sources available to Batavians in the years 1811-1820 remained the same as earlier. They included wood for heating and cooking, candles for illumination, and water power for operating mills.

### 5: Communication

As in the first decade, Batavians had only two means of communicating with each other and with the outside world: 1) oral exchanges face-to-face, or 2) the written word put down either by hand or by means of a printing press.

Mail delivery became more frequent in this decade. By 1817, mail reached or left Batavia three times weekly in contrast to once every two weeks back in 1802 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 178). However, delivery to each home was many decades into the future. Individual recipients went to the post office to pick up their mail. A free-standing post office building was still a century away, as well. In these early days, the post office was always housed in someone's store.

When the "Cornucopia" newspaper ceased publication in 1811, with the assistance of David C. Miller, a printer, Benjamin Blodgett began publication of the "Republican Advocate" and continued to do so for several years. Eventually, he sold his interests to Miller, and the latter became the sole proprietor. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 22) In 1819, the first issue of "Spirit of the Times" went on sale. It was first published by Oran Follett. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 23) This newspaper survived over 125 years, undergoing several name changes during that period: "Genesee Herald and Spirit of the Times," back to "Spirit of the Times," and then, finally, just "The Times" (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 72).

### 6: County, Village, City boundaries

In 1812, the Towns of Alexander, Bethany, LeRoy, and Pembroke were created. In 1813, the Town of Bergen came into being. And in 1820, the Towns of Byron, Elba, and Stafford were created. In many of these instances, the territory came out of the Town of Batavia, so by the end of this decade, the Town of Batavia was considerably smaller than at the start. In 1820, the Village of Batavia was still an unincorporated community and, therefore, still had neither legal boundaries nor its own governing body. However, pressure was building to address this situation and action was soon to occur in the next decade.

## 7: Government/governing structure

In the years from 1811 to 1820, the residents of the village continued to be governed by the County and Town of Batavia governments. The Court House built in 1803 at the corner of Main and Court streets continued to be the seat of government. In 1819, the County Supervisors expended \$2,500 to repair and modify this structure. Among the changes, John Hickox's tavern, which had been operating in the southern half of the building, was closed down. The whole upper part of the Court House was then transformed into court and jury rooms. Most if not all of the lower part, except for the jail, became the residence of the jailer. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 43; Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 277)

Until the end of this decade, government records were kept in a variety of places that, in retrospect, seem quite risky. For example, records were stored at one point in the Main Street harness shop of Simeon Cummings. Later, they were stored in the second story of Ebenezer Cary's general store, a brick building across Main Street from the Court House. Then, in 1820, construction was started on a stone County Clerk's office on the south side of Main Street a little east of where the 1841 Court House now stands. Deemed "fire proof," it finally provided a reasonably secure place for the storage of government records. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 45-46)

## 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

There appears to have been little change from the first decade in the matter of crime, crime control, and law enforcement. The chief law enforcement officer in Batavia remained the County Sheriff.

## 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

As the population grew, so did the number of establishments serving the residents of Batavia and the surrounding countryside. According to William Seaver, by 1819, there were six general stores in operation in contrast to only two 10 years earlier. Among them was still the first general store in Batavia, the one established by James Brisbane. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 39)

Also in 1819, according to Seaver, there were these other retail or commercial enterprises:

- 1 leather and shoe store
- 1 jeweler
- 1 milliner
- 3 tailors



- 1 hatter
- 5 taverns
- 1 meat market
- 1 bookstore
- 1 print shop
- 1 grocery

Seaver indicated that the bookstore, print shop, and grocery store were located on the ground floor of a two-story wood building called "The Recess." This structure stood on the north side of Main Street. (William Seaver, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 39) It is likely that the rest of the businesses cited above were also on Main Street.

### 10: Factories/Industries

Both the water-powered saw mill and, it appears, the water-powered grist mill remained in operation during the period of 1811-1820. During this decade, other businesses also began to appear. By 1819, Simeon Cummings was making saddles, Thomas Bliss was constructing cabinets and chairs, and two individuals, E. Towner and Oswald Williams, were tanning hides (William Seaver, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 39) In 1810, James Cochran had purchased property near Main Street on the east side of what is now Bank Street (Larry Barnes, *The Cary Family of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] p. 16). Then, at some unknown point afterwards, he built facilities for casting bells at that location ("Batavia Had Tokens Over a Century Ago," *The Batavia Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 March 1944). The latter facilities may have already become operational by 1820.

### 11: Banking/financial services

As the second decade drew to a close, Batavia was still without local financial services or a bank.

### 12: Education

North observed in his 1899 book on Genesee County's history that records of the early efforts to establish schools in Genesee County were either poorly kept or not kept at all (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 389). That was certainly true of Batavia where, except for a reference to a Thomas Layton as a teacher of the young from 1801 to 1810 and another reference to a "Center School House" in 1809, apparently no records exist from before 1813.

In 1811, a law was passed in the New York State Legislature that authorized the Governor to name five Commissioners who were to organize a system of common schools across the state. The law further required townships in the State to create school districts with three

Commissioners elected in each town and three Trustees elected in each district. Funding of the schools was to be by funds from the State and matching funds from the towns. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 391)

In November of 1813, a call went out in Batavia to all freeholders or taxable inhabitants of "School District No. 2," a district evidently created in response to the 1811 State law and which included much of the Village. According to this call, a meeting was to be held in December for the official formation of the district and the election of officers. At the December meeting, Simeon Cummings, Libbeus Fish, and Daniel B. Brown were chosen as Trustees, Robert Smith as Clerk, and James Cochran as Collector. (Frederic W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 208) The December 1813 meeting of District No. 2 freeholders and taxable inhabitants appears to mark the beginning of public schools in Batavia.

The location of the school building for District No. 2 was on the northeast corner of East Main and Ross streets. It was a structure that had been conveyed to Cummings and Fish in 1811. In later years, it purportedly came to be known as "the old brick school house." (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 208)

### 13: Religion

In contrast to the first decade, the years 1811 to 1820 saw considerable activity on the religious front. Several Protestant congregations were organized. They included a second Congregational Church, an Episcopal Church, something called a "Department" of the Genesee County Bible Society, and a Methodist Church.

The Congregational Church, formed in the previous decade, as earlier noted first met in Jesse Rumsey's barn east of the village. After that, it also met in a school house and private homes before, starting in 1813, meeting in the Genesee County Court House. It continued to meet in the Court House until a church building was erected 11 years later. The most significant development occurred in 1818 when the congregation shed its Congregational ties and became Presbyterian. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 218)

A second Congregational Church was organized in 1811 when a public meeting for that purpose was held at the Court House. It seems surprising that two Congregational Churches would be organized only two years apart in a community as small as early Batavia. On the surface, it could appear that confusing historical records might be causing one church to be viewed as two different ones. However, the 1811 church is clearly a different Congregational Church from the one organized in 1809. Lists of the early members from both churches have survived the passage of over 200 years; and the congregations were clearly composed of

different persons. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 27-28)

The Episcopal Church in Batavia had its origins in 1815 when, in June, a meeting was held in the Genesee County Court House for the purpose of incorporation. "St. James Church in Batavia" was chosen as the name. Nine individuals were chosen as Vestrymen. Two Wardens were also chosen including John Hickox, keeper of the tavern in the Court House. Coincidentally, early Episcopal services were held in Hickox's tavern. (William Seaver, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 30)

The Episcopalians approached the Holland Land Company for aid in the erection of a church. The company subsequently provided land on the current Ellicott Street and, furthermore, agreed to donate \$1,000 toward a wood building or \$1,500 toward one of brick. Ground was broken for a brick church in the Spring of 1816. Walls were finished and a roof put on by the Fall. However, this exhausted the available funds and the building stood unfinished until the next decade. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 31) It was an inauspicious start for what became, in later years, the preferred church of Batavia's elite.

In April of 1819, a meeting at "the Brick School House" was held for the purpose of forming a "Department" of the Genesee County Bible Society. No further information is available about this group. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p.37)

Finally, in December of 1819, a meeting was held in the Genesee County Court House for the purpose of organizing a Methodist Church. "The First Methodist Episcopal Church in Batavia" was chosen as the name. Five Trustees were also elected at this time. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 34)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The library that had been founded in 1804 continued to function.

### 15: Cemeteries

Burials in Batavia during this decade probably all occurred in the cemetery then on the east side of the current South Lyon Street. The practice of burying bodies on private land before this burial ground became available is illustrated by the following incident. According to Seaver, in 1820 workmen digging a post hole for a fence on Main Street (East Main Street?) discovered a complete human skeleton in front of the S. C. Holden residence. Upon investigation, it turned out to be the remains of a Mrs. Crow who had died at a very early day in Buffalo and was interred here by her family on that spot. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 86)

### 16: Firefighting

As in the first decade, in 1811-1820 there was no fire department and no fire-fighting equipment. As the village was growing and the risk of a major conflagration was also growing, there was increasing concern about this situation. It would prove to be a major impetus behind the move to incorporate during the following decade.

### 17: Healthcare

Healthcare in the second decade remained the providence of individual physicians. However, by 1819, their number had grown to five. Besides David McCracken, there was Ephraim Brown, John Cotes, Winter Hewitt, and John Z. Ross. By then, there also were two apothecaries: H. Tisdale's and Hewitt and Billing's. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 38-39)

While the "frog pond" and "island" in the center of the community may have been addressed by this time, apparently large areas of wet and swampy low land remained throughout the second decade. Thus, Batavia remained a relatively unhealthy environment. Safford North writes that sickness compelled many who had located in Batavia to leave. Many of them went to present-day Wyoming County where the surface was hilly. Malaria and its associated diseases created the greater portion of the sickness. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 269)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

During the second decade, a county poor house was still a few more years into the future, so care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young was still left almost exclusively to their family and friends. None-the-less, County-appointed "overseers of the poor" continued, as in the first decade, to provide some support. An example of such support, appearing in an early county record, was the statement that \$4.00 had been expended for the care of Betty Tiddy, "a pauper." (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 41)

### 19: Disasters

There were two disasters effecting Batavia in the second decade: The "Year Without a Summer" in 1816 and the preceding War of 1812.

The effects of the cold weather in 1816, weather produced by volcanic eruptions half a world away, were far-reaching and severe. According to Orsamus Turner, who in 1849 wrote of the impact, there was an almost total loss of "small crops" in Western New York. In most of the

settlements upon The Purchase, "an extreme scarcity of provisions prevailed." (Orsamus Turner, *Pioneer History of the Holland Purchase of Western New York* [Buffalo: Jewett, Thomas & Co., 1849] p. 536)

Other sources, filed in the archives of the Genesee County History Department, provide further evidence of the extent of this disaster. For example, at the end of June, frost killed cucumbers in the LeRoy area. In June, a person living in the Albion area froze to death. South of Batavia in Alleghany County, corn was so badly frozen in August that it had to be cut up for fodder. There was not grain enough to provide seed for the next year. Daytime temperatures rarely reached 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Throughout June, July, and August, farmers found it necessary to wear overcoats and mittens. ("Genesee County Weather/Year of No Summer," file, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.)

The actual cause of this dramatic change in the weather was not understood until several decades later. Consequently, many people living through the event became frightened and speculated that the sun had become exhausted. That fear could take extreme forms. For example, north of Batavia in what is present-day Orleans County, a farmer saw the situation as so hopeless that he killed all his cattle and hanged himself. Reportedly, he had unsuccessfully tried to induce his wife to also commit suicide in order to escape what he perceived as an inevitable death by freezing and starvation. ("Genesee County Weather/Year of No Summer," file, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.)

The cold of 1816 produced a severe impact in terms of depressed agricultural production and associated economic losses. However, an even greater effect on Batavia and Western New York was produced by the War of 1812, a man-made disaster. Details of the latter event have been reserved to a following section titled, "War/impact of war."

## 20: Entertainment and recreation

It is important to note that early Batavians had to rely on themselves for entertainment. For example, if they wanted to hear music, they had to produce it. It is doubtful that they ever imagined a day when one could hear recorded music or listen to a broadcast from some distant location. That made the 1803 arrival of Russell Noble, the fiddler, a significant event. It also made the organization of the first band an important occurrence. The latter reportedly took place in 1820 when a band was formed under the direction of Phineas Todd and someone by the name of Hunt. According to Beers, the group survived six years. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 238)

## 21: War/Impact of war

Combat during the War of 1812 took place in several locations in North America. However, from the perspective of Batavians, the most significant military arena was on the Niagara Frontier. The American military strategy called for invasions of territory now composing the nation of Canada. Capture of this territory may have been seen as an opportunity to permanently expand the United States or it may have been seen as a temporary occupation to use as a "bargaining chip" in negotiating differences with the British. Historians apparently disagree on this point. In any event, what President Madison and some others envisioned as an easy victory proved to be quite the opposite.

The American forces, particularly early in the conflict, proved often to be inept. Militia forces, especially, performed badly, sometimes even refusing to advance on enemy soldiers once beyond their home states. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 125) Fighting along the Niagara Frontier see-sawed back and forth as first the Americans, then the British, the latter aided by Native American allies, gained the upper hand.

During the war, the most significant chain of events in Western New York began in December of 1813 when American soldiers under Brigadier General George McClure, a militia officer from Steuben County, burned the Canadian Village of Newark (now present-day Niagara-on-the-Lake). This action destroyed all but one of the 149 dwellings and large numbers of women and children were forced into severe winter weather as they fled the community with nothing but the clothing on their backs. The destruction of Newark has been viewed historically as a cruel and pointless atrocity. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 132-133)

The British forces were quick to retaliate in kind. That same December, they captured Fort Niagara. Then they methodically burned Youngstown, Lewiston, Niagara Falls, Black Rock, Buffalo and intervening tenements and farm houses. American soldiers who were responsible for defending these communities, mainly militia men, performed badly and wound up fleeing in disarray. North, in describing their actions, characterized many of these men as "disgraceful cowards." He claimed that soldiers from Batavia were an exception in this regard, but one has to wonder whether his partisanship as a life-long resident of the community may have colored his perceptions. Terrified civilians all along the Niagara Frontier also fled in the face of the British onslaught. Often times, so great and disorderly was their effort to escape that family members became separated from one another. For weeks afterwards, the Niagara Frontier remained both deserted and desolate. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 135-137)

As soldiers and civilians fled eastward, Batavia was perceived as being at a comparatively safe distance from the enemy. And so, Batavia became a rallying point of what was left of the American military forces. It also became a refuge for homeless refugees. (Safford E. North,

*Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 137-138) Private homes were thrown open, barns and sheds occupied by refugees, and separated families were re-united. Joseph Ellicott's home housed army officers. The Land Office (still a wing on Ellicott's mansion) served as a hospital. Meanwhile, the most valuable effects of the Land Office were taken farther east beyond the Genesee River. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 34)

Residents of Batavia reportedly made large contributions of provisions, clothing, and money for the refugees. A plea for further aid was made to the State which subsequently appropriated \$50,000 for relief. Another \$13,000 came from other sources. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 137-138)

During the War of 1812, Batavia also played a role in two other ways beyond that which was just described. At some point in the course of the war, a cavalry regiment from New Jersey was quartered at the southwest corner of the current South Main and Walnut streets. Unfortunately, typhoid fever broke out among the soldiers and over 30 of these men died. The victims were buried in the South Lyon Street cemetery. ("Bodies Disinterred by Street Workmen," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 October 1903)

It appears that there was also a prisoner of war camp in Batavia. According to records in the possession of Orleans County historians, in 1813 a group of militia men from Gaines, led by Captain Eleazer McCarthy, stumbled across some British soldiers and their Indian allies at a tavern 12 miles east of Lewiston. The soldiers and Indians had stacked their guns and were heavily into drinking the liquor they had found. McCarthy and his men, sizing up the situation, immediately went on the attack, killing several Indians and wounding at least one soldier before the rest surrendered. The prisoners are reported to have been taken first to Lewiston, then to a prisoner of war camp in Batavia. This is the only known reference to such a camp and exactly where it was located and the duration of its existence is unknown. (Dan Winegar, "89 Cent Item Becomes Big Deal," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 August 1976)

At the close of the war, the wood arsenal that had been erected on the current Walnut Street was replaced with a more substantial stone structure. The latter, erected under State supervision by Isaac Sutherland, was located on the north side of the junction of Lewiston Road and West Main Street. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 38)

The War of 1812 can properly be viewed as a disaster. It brought great harm to a civilian population that was an innocent victim of international politics. Furthermore, it retarded growth in Western New York for years afterwards, at least until 1819. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 180)

## 22: Families/persons of special note

There are many individuals who were alive in this decade and already cited who could be regarded as of special note. However, in several respects one who has not been mentioned is perhaps the most interesting when taking the long view. That individual was still a child, the first son of James and Mary Brisbane. Albert Brisbane, born in 1809, went on to inspire at least 40 utopian communes, marry four women, bed many more, and sire Arthur Brisbane, the highest paid and most famous newspaper man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Albert's memoirs, he made clear that the direction of his life was significantly shaped by the home-schooling provided by his mother and other formative experiences of his childhood in early Batavia. A detailed accounting of Albert's life can be found in other publications including one by the author.

## 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

Two organizations of importance appeared in this decade. A Masonic lodge, Olive Branch No. 39, made its appearance in 1811. Its first meeting was in the public tavern of William Keyes. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 233) The lodge later moved to LeRoy. The Masons figured in one of the biggest mysteries of the next decade, the disappearance and presumed murder of Batavian William Morgan. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 137)

The Genesee County Agricultural Society was formed in June of 1819. At the time of its formation, the Society pledged to raise \$500 for a meeting and exhibition in October, with \$350 of that amount for premiums awarded to exhibitors. This was the beginning of the annual Genesee County fairs. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 106.

## 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

As with the first decade, we know little of the sexual lives of early Batavians in the years 1811-1820. Of some curiosity is the wide difference in the number of children born to healthy couples in a time when birth control options were limited or unknown. For example, in an era when women commonly bore eight or more children, some couples such as Mary and James Brisbane and Margaret and Trumbull Cary were exceptions. In these two examples, the women gave birth to only two children and one child, respectively. All three children were born early in the marriages and then there were no more. Some readers may find it of interest to speculate as to why this occurred. Difficulty in conceiving would not, on the surface, appear to have been an issue. Therefore, was the low level of childbearing a conscious decision in either instance? Did these couples practice abstinence after the early years of their marriages or is there another explanation? The Brisbanes and Carys were two of the three wealthiest families in



early Batavia. In what way, if any, did the wealth and status of these two particular couples play a role in terms of their childbearing? Answers to such questions have been discovered in modern research on the behaviors of 20<sup>th</sup> century men and women, but they are likely to forever remain a mystery in attempting to understand Batavians living on the frontier in the early 1800s.

### 25: Urban renewal

In the years 1811-1810, there was still no real "urban" to renew. A planned "renewal" wouldn't happen until more than 140 years later.



## The Third Decade

### Overview

There were perhaps six events of special significance as Batavia passed through its third decade: the first big fire, incorporation as a village, the departure and suicide of Joseph Ellicott, the creation of a county poor house, the construction of the Erie Canal, and the disappearance and presumed murder of William Morgan.

#### First fire

A major fire in the center of Batavia was probably inevitable. As the population grew, the number of business establishments built closely together also grew. The buildings were almost always of wood. Lighting was by candle light. Heating was by wood fires. There was no fire department or fire-fighting equipment. Some of the businesses, such as that of the silversmith, used open flame in the conduct of their trade. The "inevitable" occurred on the night of December 22, 1821. Three buildings were destroyed in the downtown area. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 39-40) There is more information about this fire and its effects in a following section titled, "Disasters."

#### Incorporation

On June 23, 1822, at a meeting of local residents, Silas Finch, William Wells, and Trumbull Cary were chosen to petition the State Legislature for an act of incorporation. Their subsequent petition later that year failed to gain adequate support, so they returned to Albany during the next legislative session and tried again. This time, the trio succeeded in their efforts and a charter was granted on April 23, 1823. For the first time, Batavia was an incorporated village with legal boundaries and its own governing body. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 40) There is more information about Batavia's new government in a following section titled, "Government/governing structure."

#### Joseph Ellicott

In the first two decades, Joseph Ellicott, who stood an imposing 6 ft.-3 in. tall, was by far the most important figure shaping the development of Western New York including Batavia. This was a direct result of his position as the resident land agent for The Holland Land Co. Among other things, he used the influence and power of his position to control political decisions at both the local and State level. Joseph Ellicott functioned as the "boss" of the political machine

that evolved in Western New York. (Patrick R. Weissend, *The Life and Times of Joseph Ellicott* [Batavia, N.Y.: Holland Purchase Historical Society, 2002] no pagination)

However, by the beginning of the third decade, as noted by Patrick Weissend, Ellicott's control began to crumble. Residents throughout The Purchase, including Batavia, started to publicly complain about The Holland Land Co. and Joseph Ellicott in particular. Ellicott's personality probably didn't help matters any. He has been described as being "short tempered, somewhat tactless, with an inner drive that made him rather dictatorial." Paolo Busti, Ellicott's immediate superior, realizing that Joseph Ellicott was no longer an asset to the company, asked for his resignation. At first, Western New York's best-known resident resisted, but in 1821 Joseph Ellicott finally gave up his position and left The Holland Land Co. (Patrick R. Weissend, *The Life and Times of Joseph Ellicott* [Batavia, N.Y.: Holland Purchase Historical Society, 2002] no pagination) Jacob S. Otto became the new resident land agent (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose and Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 24).

The next and final five years of Ellicott's life were a sad ending to a great man's story. He tried to buy the remaining land held by The Holland Land Co., but he couldn't get the financial support that was needed. His health was in decline. Then, in late 1824, the decline became more rapid. From the perspective of someone living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it looks like a classic instance of what often happens when one loses a reason to live, when life no longer has meaning. Ellicott's family took him to New York City where he was admitted to an asylum. Reportedly, his life there became "a twisted world of tormented thoughts, whirling confusion, and deep moroseness." Evidently, Joseph Ellicott's mental state finally became too much to bear and, on August 19, 1826, he hung himself. (Patrick R. Weissend, *The Life and Times of Joseph Ellicott* [Batavia, N.Y.: Holland Purchase Historical Society, 2002] no pagination) The man whose name lives on in numerous ways, e.g., Ellicott Street, Ellicott Avenue, Ellicott Creek Park, Town of Ellicott, and Ellicottville, was no more.

### Poorhouse

As indicated above, another significant event in the years 1821-1830 involved the poor. Prior to the third decade, the needs of the poor in Batavia were addressed mainly by individual overseers appointed by the Genesee County Legislature. This situation changed in 1826 when the County Legislators met for the purpose of establishing a poor house. (Susan Conklin, *Genesee County Home/Poorhouse: A Brief History*, online, accessed 3 January 2014) The Legislators' actions appear to have been prompted by a law passed by the New York State Legislature two years earlier in 1824. Although Genesee County was initially exempted from the mandate, the 1824 law required county supervisors to open poor houses, spelled out how they were to operate, identified the funding procedure, and identified who was to be admitted.

(Linda Crannell, *The Poorhouse Story*, online, accessed 3 January 2014) There is more about the treatment of the poor in a following section titled, "Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young."

### Erie Canal

The next occurrence among the most significant events in the third decade brought benefits to other communities, but, unfortunately, not to Batavia. That event, one dramatically altering transportation, was the construction of the Erie Canal which opened in 1825. Had the Canal passed through Batavia, the community would probably have been favorably impacted in ways that did not occur until the later arrival of railroads. Batavia had been the core from which the rest of Western New York was opened for settlement. At one point, the Village was the most populous community on The Purchase and might have remained one of the largest. However, Batavia lost its central location and a significant potential for growth when the Erie Canal was constructed 20 miles to the north. The communities whose development was spurred were places such as Rochester, Buffalo, and all the "ports" in between. Batavia was a victim of topology. The route finally chosen for the Canal was selected because it required far fewer locks and lesser expense than one that would have passed through present-day Genesee County.

### William Morgan

The final significant event of the decade, the disappearance and presumed murder of William Morgan, began in 1826 when Morgan was rejected for membership in the Batavia Masonic Lodge. Together with David C. Miller, a local printer, Morgan promised to gain revenge by publishing the Masons' secret rites. Morgan was last seen when, soon afterwards, he was spirited away by a group of men headed for Fort Niagara. The assumption of the public was that William Morgan was the victim of a Masonic plot. This led to the rise of an anti-Mason movement that impacted national politics. There is more about Morgan in a following section titled, "Families/persons of special note."

### Population

This overview of the third decade ends with an estimate of Batavia's population in 1830. As already noted in the previous chapter, Beers asserted that there were 1,400 people living in the Village in 1825 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 183). And, as also indicated in the previous chapter, the 1860 Federal census, the first one to separate the Village of Batavia from the Town of Batavia, reported a population of 2,560 individuals ("Genesee Community Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). So, assuming a

steady growth over that 35-year intervening period, perhaps the population of the Village had reached around 1,565 by 1830.

### 1: Infrastructure

There is little change to note in regard to infrastructure in the third decade. The streets remained unpaved, public sewers were still well into the future, and there was no public water system. At some point, the names of many streets changed, but the dates when these changes occurred have not always been recorded. For example, what is now Bank Street was originally Dingle Alley, then, later, Van Buren Street. What is now Clinton Street was called Pine Street. These two name changes appear to have occurred in the early 1800s, possibly during the period 1821-1830, but the exact year is unknown. Other changes occurred later and will be noted later in this book.

### 2: Transportation

Again, in regard to transportation, there is little change to note in the third decade. Railroads began to appear elsewhere in the United States during the 1820s, but it wasn't until the 1830s that one reached Batavia. The modern safety bicycle was not yet invented. So, the only real options available to Batavians for travelling overland remained the same: travel on foot, on horseback, or in a conveyance drawn by horses or oxen.

William Seaver reported that in the 1820s, there was local interest in having the Erie Canal built through Genesee County and through Batavia in particular (William Seaver 2, *A Historical Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 66). But, as we can all plainly see, that didn't happen. As observed in the overview section of this chapter, a route through the Batavia area would have required too many expensive locks. So, if anyone wanted to travel by water locally, the only option, then just as now, was the unsatisfactory choice of the Tonawanda Creek.

### 3: Housing

Over the course of the third decade, new housing continued to be built. One prominent example was the dwelling built by Stuckley Allen on the east side of Jackson Street, currently 113 Jackson. Still standing, it is a brick, 5-bay wide, Federal-style house. (*The Architectural Heritage of Genesee County, N.Y.* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, Inc., 1988] p. 61) However justified Joseph Ellicott's concerns about local bricks might have been when the Genesee County Court House was built in 1803, it appears that bricks used later, as with this structure, did not pose any problems.

Housing built in the years 1821-1830 typically consisted of single-family, or, at most, two-family structures. And, the Allen house being an obvious exception, most were frame dwellings.

Hotels or taverns that provided housing to transients date from the earliest days of Batavia. A particularly notable example from this decade was the one constructed in 1823 on the southeast corner of present-day Court and Main streets. Known as the Eagle Tavern, it was a three-story brick structure built by Horatio Gibbs. As will be noted later in this book, a series of successors were built over the years in this same location, as earlier structures burned, finally culminating in the famed Hotel Richmond. The latter was razed in 1961, ending nearly 140 years of lodging on the corner of Court and Main streets. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 67-68)

### 4: Energy sources

The energy sources available to Batavians in 1821-1830 continued to include wood for heating and cooking and candles for illumination. However, the Creek as an energy source appears to have faded. In fact, the water-powered saw mill was reportedly torn down in 1822 (William Seaver 2, *A Historical Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 29). The author has not found any indication of alternatives to water power being used in Batavia during this decade. However, it seems pretty obvious that something must have been needed and used. The likely alternative would have been steam power generated by wood-fired boilers. This possibility is made plausible by the fact that steam engines existed elsewhere at this time and were used for a variety of purposes ranging from stationary applications to boats to trains.

### 5: Communication

The first big breakthrough in communication, the telegraph, was a decade away. So, Batavians in 1821-1830 were still restricted to the same old means of communicating with each other and with the outside world: 1) oral exchanges face-to-face, or 2) the written word put down either by hand or by means of a printing press. The transmission of information was determined by the speed with which people could travel on land and/or by water. Consequently, there could still be a very lengthy interval between an event happening somewhere in the world and Batavians learning about it.

Locally, there was a lot of activity in terms of newspapers. "The Republican Advocate," referred to in the previous chapter, continued under David C. Miller until April of 1828. At that time, Miller took Charles Sentell as a partner until July of 1829 when Sentell was replaced by Charles W. Miller. (William Seaver 1, *A Historical Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: 1849] p. 22)

The "Spirit of the Times," also referred to in the previous chapter, continued under Oran Follett until May of 1825 when he sold it to his brother, Frederick Follett. (William Seaver 1, *A Historical Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 22)

"The People's Press," owned by an association of individuals and printed by Benjamin Blodgett, started in 1825 and continued for about one year. Then, it passed into the hands of Martin, Adams, and Thorp. Soon after, Martin retired, leaving the newspaper in the hands of Adams and Thorp. However, shortly after that, Thorp was replaced by McCleary. (Unfortunately, the first names of these individuals are not known to the author.) Then the paper merged with the "Spirit of the Times" and the original name became extinct. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849]p. 23)

Finally, two other papers emerged in this decade and then soon disappeared. Both were inspired by the excitement surrounding the William Morgan affair previously mentioned in this chapter's overview. "The Morgan Investigator" was a small newspaper published at the office of "The Republican Advocate." It began in 1826 and expired about a year later. "The Masonic Intelligencer" was started about the same time and lasted about as long. It was published in the office of "The People's Press." These two newspapers took opposing editorial positions. (William Seaver 1, *A Historical Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 23)

### 6: County, Village, City boundaries

Two significant changes occurred in the third decade. The first of these was a further reduction in the size of Genesee County. In 1821, a portion of Genesee County was split off and combined with a part of Ontario County to create Livingston County. Similarly, in the same year, a portion of Genesee County was split off and combined with a part of Ontario County to form Monroe County. Then, in 1824, Orleans County was carved out of what was left of Genesee County.



The second significant change was the incorporation of the Village of Batavia and the resulting establishment of legal boundaries. The boundaries, as of April 23, 1823 were as follows: As surveyed by Joseph Ellicott, "...beginning at a point on the East line of lot Number forty-four in said Village eighty rods north from the centre of Genesee Street thence westwardly parallel with the centre of Genesee and Batavia streets Eighty rods therefrom to the western bounds of Lot Number Three in said Village thence southerly on the west line of said lot number fourteen to the Southwest corner of said Lot, thence continuing in the same direction to the south bank of Tonnewanta Creek thence up the Southern bank of Tonnewanta Creek to a point eighty rods south of the Centre of Genesee Street thence eastwardly parallel with said Genesee Street to the East line of Lot Number Forty-five thence northerly on said line to the place of beginning." (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 279-280) See the Village of Batavia map showing the lot numbers as surveyed by Joseph Ellicott.

## 7: Government/governing structure

As of 1822, the Village had existed for 21 years, but it was still not incorporated and, therefore, the Village did not have its own government. One of the disadvantages that resulted from this state of affairs was the inability to form a fire department and levy taxes for its operation. A major fire in 1821 (see a following section titled, "Disasters") appears to have been the event that finally triggered an effort to incorporate. As indicated in the overview section of this chapter, the initial application to the State failed, but success was achieved the second time around. The Village of Batavia as an incorporated entity came into being on April 23, 1823. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 40)

The Village charter (the original now safely stored in the city's vault after being rescued from the city dump several decades ago) established a government overseen by five Trustees. The first Village officials were elected at a meeting held on June 3, 1823 in James Ganson's tavern and presided over by C. Carpenter and D. Tisdale, Town of Batavia justices of the peace. The Trustees chosen that day included Daniel H. Chandler, David E. Evans, Nathan Follett, Simeon Cummings, and Silas Finch. Also elected to office were Trumbull Cary as Treasurer and Parley Paine as Collector. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 41) In order to be a Trustee, one had to have been a resident for at least one year and have freeholds (real estate) to a value of at least \$500 or other property valued to at least \$1,000. The charter also provided for a "reasonable" fine, not to exceed \$10, that could be imposed on anyone elected as a Trustee who subsequently refused or neglected to serve. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1904)

Eleven days after the meeting at which the elected officials were chosen, June 14, 1823, the Trustees met for the purpose of making several appointments. Daniel H. Chandler was chosen as President of the Corporation, Oliver G. Adams as Clerk, Silas Finch and Nathan Follett as Assessors, Simeon Cummings as Superintendent of Streets and Sidewalks, and Robert P. Betts as Pound Keeper. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 41)

After incorporation, the Trustees at once adopted various "salutary" municipal regulations and the Village soon began to exhibit "manifest" improvements, particularly in regard to streets and sidewalks. Measures were also adopted in regard to fires, but lacking a means to purchase an engine, no fire company was organized until April 20, 1824. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 41)

Aside from a concern about fire-fighting, one can get a good sense of other early issues in the Village by looking at the first ordinance, one adopted on June 5, 1823. This ordinance dealt exclusively with impounding stray animals, fast riding (of horses) or fast driving (of sleighs, sleds, and carriages), and the definition of sidewalks. Specifically, it provided for how much the Pound Keeper was to be paid for taking swine and horses to the pound, made it unlawful to drive a horse at a run with a doubled fine for a second offense, and defined sidewalks as the area 12 ft. on either side of a street. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 285) The specifications for sidewalks were made necessary by a provision in the charter that required property owners to "make" and "improve" sidewalks adjacent to the streets bounding their land (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 283).

Nearly a year after the Village had become incorporated, on April 9, 1834, the State Legislature passed an addition to the original charter. Among the additions were these new powers granted to the Village Trustees: 1) The Trustees were given the full power and authority to determine the number of groceries in the village and to license same, 2) The Trustees were given the full power and authority to compel each and every house keeper or person in possession of any building to keep fireplaces, chimneys, and stoves clean and in good repair; also to provide themselves with one or more fire buckets, and 3) The Trustees were given the full power and authority to suppress and prevent nuisances. (From a copy of the original act stored in the vault of Batavia City Hall.)

Granting of these additional powers begs an obvious question. Why did anyone feel a need to control the number of groceries? Did the licensing requirement evolve out of concern with sanitation or other such issues? And, what nuisances motivated a desire for the power to suppress and prevent them? Only the answer to the last question becomes evident as the years continued to go by. (See the next chapter.)

## 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

During this era, executions not only occurred as an effort to control crime, but they provided entertainment as well. The latter was demonstrated by the crowds that turned out to witness an execution and the displeasure they displayed when denied the spectacle. For example, in 1822, a Mr. Farnsworth was convicted of forging U.S. land warrants and was sentenced to be hanged in Batavia on September 20<sup>th</sup>. A large crowd assembled to watch the execution when, to their great disgust, word came that the President had granted a 6-month reprieve. According to reports, the “murmurings of disappointed were loud and deep.” The disappointment became permanent when Farnsworth was eventually pardoned on the grounds that it appeared no crime against the Government had actually occurred. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 185)

The Village charter adopted in 1823 made mention of Justices of the Peace, but made no mention of law enforcement officers. The first such reference to the latter didn't appear until the supplementary act was adopted about a year later. (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 284) So, it appears that the Genesee County sheriff initially continued to be the chief law enforcement officer in the village. Under the addition to the Village charter passed by the State Legislature on April 9, 1834, a provision was made for an additional officer. Under this provision, freeholders and other persons qualified to vote at the annual meeting of Village residents were able to choose and elect a Village Constable. The Constable was vested with the same power and authority and subject to the same duties in civil and criminal matters as granted by law to the Town of Batavia Constables. (From a copy of the original act stored in the vault of Batavia City Hall.)

As noted above, the Justices of the Peace referred to in the 1823 charter were persons appointed or elected by the Town of Batavia (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 280). Therefore, persons arrested by the Sheriff or Constable presumably were arraigned before

these Justices and the court in which an accused was tried was either the Town or County Court.

It had long been the practice to imprison persons who didn't pay debts. That was still true in the third decade. An example of one such individual was represented by an advertisement placed in a Batavia paper in 1826. It read, "A gentleman confined in Batavia jaol, on strong suspicion of debt, offers his services to lawyers, printers, merchants, tavern-keepers, mechanics in drafting or copying declarations, making up roles (sic), wrighting (sic) deeds, mortgages, bonds, etc., posting books of every description." (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 185) Clearly this person was hoping to earn sufficient money to be released from imprisonment.

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

As the population continued to grow, so did the number of retail establishments and other commercial enterprises. In contrast to establishments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where customers commonly serve themselves, in these businesses the proprietor and/or staff generally served the customer. For example, rather than pick an item off the shelves and take it to a cashier, the customer would have indicated the merchandise desired and the clerk would have gone to obtain it.

### 10: Factories/industries

In 1821-1830, Batavia was yet to become an industrial center. Nonetheless, there were the beginnings of manufacturing. Breweries and malt houses were an example. The earliest such place on record was built by Libbeus Fish in 1827 (Ruthy M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 202). Fish's enterprise was located on present-day Elm Street. Such places seemed prone to fires and this particular one was no exception. In fact, it was succeeded over the years by several breweries at this same location, each of which burned (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 250).

Another Batavia factory was a foundry operated by James Cochran where, among other things, he cast bells and coins (*The Batavia Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 March 1944). It was located near Main Street on the east side of present-day Bank Street. Among the bells he cast in the current decade was one in 1823 for St. James Episcopal Church (William Seaver 2, *A Historic*

*Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 80) and another, also in 1823, for the Presbyterian Church (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 107). Bank Street was once called "Dingle Alley" presumably because of the sounds made as Cochran hammered on the bells he was making.

### 11: Banking/financial services

In May 1829, the first bank west of the Genesee River was opened in Batavia. In the first two years of its operation, the bank was located in the west wing of the mansion owned by Trumbull Cary. (The third year and after will be covered in the next chapter.) Incorporated as "Bank of Genesee," it evolved from a group of businessmen who frequently met at Cary's home. For nine years, it was the only bank in the Village. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 65) The original directors were Trumbull Cary, Alva Smith, James C. Ferris, Oliver Benton, Henry Hawkins, Gaius B. Rich, Jacob LeRoy, Jonathan Lay, Roswell Burrows, Israel Rathbone, Phineas Tracy, and Joseph Fellows (Larry Barnes, *The Cary Family of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] p. 22).

### 12: Education

On March 26, 1822, the Trustees of School District No. 2, the public school that had been established nine years earlier in 1813, gave a year-end report. According to this report, 155 children had been taught during the past year. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 208) That would appear to be approximately 10% of the total population, adults and children combined.

Seven years later, on Oct. 12, 1829, School District No. 2 was divided. All portions west of Center and Bank streets were set off as District No. 12. As will be observed in a later chapter, this division was temporary and 17 years later, the two districts were later reunited. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 208) Beers reported that meager records survived from this period, so what motivated these actions is not known.

Probably connected to the 1824 creation of School District No. 12 was an advertisement that appeared in a Batavia newspaper earlier in the year. It read as follows: "A number of gentlemen, in the village, have associated themselves together to establish and sustain a public school consisting of two departments for the instruction of young ladies and gentlemen in

higher branches of literature. Arrangements have been made to start operation as soon as suitable instructors are found. Male and female instructors are desired. The undersigned will make engagement with those who have experience, ability, and character. Trumbull Cary, William Seaver, Daniel H. Chandler. April 1, 1829." (An unidentified newspaper found online at [www.Fultonhistory.com](http://www.Fultonhistory.com))

In the years 1821-1830, in addition to the public schools, there were several private facilities, generally small and sometimes taught by just a single instructor. In 1822, Mrs. Rachel Stevens, wife of Benjamin H. Stevens, a hatter, came to Batavia with her husband and taught a private school for the next 27 years. In 1825, the Rev. James Cochran and a Miss Gardner taught private schools. In 1826, Messrs. Nixon and Stearns opened what they called "The Batavia Academy." In the same year, Mrs. Aiken, Mrs. Winchester, Miss Starr, Miss Plumb, Miss Colton, and Miss Deshon (none with first names known to the author) all advertised themselves as private teachers. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 182) Among the students attending the Batavia Academy were Albert and George Brisbane, Walter Cary, and Ellicott Evans (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 June 1886). With the exception of Mrs. Stevens' school and the Academy, most of the above ventures appear to have been relatively short-lived.

### 13: Religion

Before the third decade, there were no church "edifices" built in Batavia unless one counts the unfinished St. James Episcopal Church that was started in 1816. Religious services that occurred were typically held in the Genesee County Court House, school houses, or private homes. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 221) However, that changed in the years 1821-1830 with the erection of three churches.

Among the first church buildings was that of the Presbyterians. In order to permit its erection, James Brisbane's store, a little east of the current post office, was razed in 1822, thus removing the second frame structure to have been built in Batavia (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 15). A contract was then executed in February of 1823 between the church Trustees and Benjamin Allen and Thomas McCulley for construction of a building to be completed by July of 1824. A bell, weighing about 1,000 lb. was also procured from James Cochran. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 29) This building stood at an intersection of a new north-south street that intersected with Main Street. The former was initially called "Church Street," for obvious reasons. Later, it was renamed

"Jefferson Avenue." (Much more recently, the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Main Street was moved eastward, creating what is commonly referred to as "the Jefferson Avenue S-Curve.")

At about the same time as the Presbyterians were building, the First Methodist Episcopal Church was erected on the north-east corner at the intersection of the current West Main and North Lyon streets. In June of 1823, the Board of Trustees contracted with Thomas McCulley, Joseph Shaw, and Seymour Ensign for a stone building 40 ft. wide, 45 ft. deep, and 16 ft. high. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 35) The church was dedicated in June of 1824. The location was never considered a good one and after 16 years, the building was sold to the First Freewill Baptist Church of Batavia. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 221-222)

As the above two churches were being built, the Episcopalians went back to work on finishing their building that had stood in an unfinished state for six years. Arrangements were made with Trumbull Cary and William Davis for them to finish the structure, these two holding the building as security but relying on the sale of pews and slips (pews without doors) for prompt payment. The work was quickly completed reportedly at a cost of between \$4,000 and \$5,000. That same year, a contract was made with James Cochran for a church bell weighing 800 lb. in exchange for \$300 and a slip valued at \$75. In August of 1823, 32 members came forward and purchased slips and pews in the amount of \$5,100. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 32) It looked as if the Episcopalians had finally resolved their building problems, but as will be revealed in the next chapter, new building issues would soon arise.

While established congregations were busy erecting edifices in the third decade, one new congregation appeared in Batavia. In August of 1830, The First Free-Will Baptist Church was organized (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 93-94). Recall that this is the religious body that later acquired the Methodist Episcopal building.

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The library association formed in 1804 apparently ceased to function after 1826 when the last recorded reference was made to it (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 83-84). As an apparent successor, a literary society called "Batavia Forum" was organized in January of 1827. Ebenezer Mix was the

President. Under the auspices of the forum, a series of public lectures were sponsored. However, according to Seaver, the organization "faded away" after one or two years. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 84-85)

## 15: Cemeteries

The site of Batavia's first cemetery, the one located near the Creek on the east side of the present South Lyon Sreet., proved to be unsatisfactory. The main problem was periodic flooding. This inspired the creation of a new cemetery on the other end of the Village. The new site, designated as "Batavia Cemetery," was located on the east side of present-day Harvester Avenue. The early records in regard to this second cemetery are confused and contradictory. It probably began in 1823, possibly with property purchased from David and Mary Locke by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church and the Vestry of the Episcopalian Church. Ebenezer Mix purportedly surveyed the site and plotted burial lots that were then made available for a charge of \$5 each. In 1829, additional land may have been purchased from the Lockes. The first interment was of Mrs. Lydia Maria Ross, wife of Dr. John G. Ross, who died October 16, 1823. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 87; Various other historic accounts in the possession of the Batavia Cemetery Association)

It has been generally presumed that upon opening of the new cemetery, the old cemetery was abandoned and all of the bodies were reinterred in the new one. However, William Seaver, in writing on this matter ca. 1890, implied that part of the old cemetery continued to be used as a Potter's Field. To this he added the observation that in 1864 part of the Potter's Field section was sold to John Eagar, an action that required a special act of the State Legislature. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 87) Eagar then built a brewery at this location (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 202). According to Eagar's son, Herbert B. Eagar, at the time of the sale, nine bodies were removed from the area purchased by his father and reinterred in another section of the cemetery ("Potter's Field Remains," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1904). Years later, ca. 1904, the remaining area of the cemetery was sold to Andrew Rupp, presumably for the development of housing. Consequently, in July of 1904, Village employees opened the nine graves mentioned above, placed the remains in separate boxes, and transferred the bones to the Batavia Cemetery on Harvester Avenue. The remains of several other bodies discovered when the extension of Lyon Street was being opened were placed in an additional box and also reinterred in the Batavia Cemetery. ("Only a Few Bodies Found," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 July 1904)



### 16: Firefighting

The new Village charter gave the Trustees the authority to appoint and remove up to 50 firemen, regulate the times and places of meeting, appoint officers, make rules and regulations, and fix penalties. In April of 1824, the Trustees organized the first fire company, one consisting of 25 men. The rules required the firemen to go to fires with all possible dispatch and to conduct themselves in an orderly and efficient manner. A fine of \$5 could be imposed for a failure to meet this requirement. Interestingly, any person not a member of a fire company who refused to aid in fighting a fire when called to do so could also be fined \$5. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1904) The firemen were required to convene the first Saturday of each month (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 118-119), presumably for practice drills.

By 1829 the firemen wore a standard uniform. It consisted of a "Pea Coat," made with Russian Duck, and a wool hat having a round crown that was pointed and lettered "B.F.Co." Reportedly some citizens thought the firemen, when dressed for duty, resembled grizzly bears. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 118-119)

When the first fire company was organized, there were no funds for purchasing fire equipment. Evidently, the first such purchase did not occur until 1829. In September of that year, the Village Trustees paid the American Hydraulic Co. \$270 for a Coopers Patent Rotative Engine. This equipment was a rotary hand pump from which a long handle projected on each side. The handles were grasped by six men who typically found the necessary exertion sufficient to exhaust a man in only five minutes. This apparatus was so unsatisfactory the trustees initially refused to pay for it. The company then, in turn, successfully sued the Village. The pump was soon abandoned. It appears that three years passed before, in the next decade, the Trustees tried another purchase. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp.118-119)

### 17: Healthcare

The healthcare situation in the third decade appears not to have changed very significantly. There were competent physicians and those less so. Probably an example of the latter was Dr. Eleazer Bingham who, in an 1829 advertisement in a local newspaper made quite extraordinary assertions. He claimed to have renounced "quackery," i.e., standard medical practices, nearly four years earlier and was subsequently practicing medicine upon the principles of "philosophy, reason, and experience, the principles of which are laid deep as Infinity, broad as Creation, and

permanent as Jehovah's Throne." Bingham claimed to be a "towering genius" who had been able to trace "the stupendous laws of Nature through all their windings, and seek from the hidden treasures of the fields and forests a balm for every wound." As a consequence, he said, of the 1,246 patients he had treated, all but six were still in the land of the living. Furthermore, 20 of 24 cases of consumption that had been judged incurable were now in the enjoyment of good health. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 116-117)

Patent medicines made their appearance in Batavia at about this same time. These "medicines" were compounds promoted and sold as medical cures that in fact commonly did not work as promoted. The term "patent" is misleading because they were not patented, perhaps because they would then have had to disclose their actual ingredients. Typically, patent medicines made extraordinary claims regarding the number and kinds of diseases they could cure. For example, one claimed to cure cholera, neuralgia, epilepsy, scarlet fever, necrosis, mercurial eruptions, paralysis, hip diseases, chronic abscesses, and female complaints—all cured by the same medication. Dr. Richard Dibble was reportedly the first man in Batavia to advertise a patent medicine. Identified as "Whitwell's Opodeldoc," Dibble urged Batavians to purchase this product, and only from him, if they valued their life and limb. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 116)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In the third decade, overseers of the poor continued to provide some assistance to those in need. As an example, consider these numbers from the 12 months preceding April 21, 1823. In the Town of Batavia, which included the Village of Batavia since it had not yet been incorporated, five paupers had been supported at public expense for the entire year. Ten had been supported for part of the year. Among these 15 individuals, six were male, nine were female, and five were children. The total expense was \$241.70. (Linda Crannell, *The Poorhouse Story*, online, accessed 3 January 2014))

The local care of such individuals changed dramatically in the years 1821-1830. In November of 1824, State legislation provided for the establishment of county-run poorhouses throughout the State. Although initially exempted from a requirement to do so, in December of 1826 the Genesee County Board of Supervisors nevertheless met for the purpose of establishing a poorhouse. A brick building at the corner of the present Bethany Center and Raymond roads, originally a stage coach tavern, was chosen for the purpose. By January of 1827, it was ready to

receive paupers. (Susan Conklin, *Genesee County Home/Poorhouse: A Brief History*, online, accessed 3 January 2014)

The persons eligible for housing in the county poorhouse actually encompassed a fairly large range of categories. They included habitual drunkards, lunatics, paupers (persons with no means of income), state paupers (persons who were blind, lame, old, or disabled and had no income source), and vagrants. (Susan Conklin, *Genesee County Home/Poorhouse: A Brief History*, online, accessed 3 January 2014))

In 1828 a stone building was attached to the brick structure specifically for the confinement of lunatics and paupers committed for misconduct. A working farm and woods provided food and fuel. (Susan Conklin, *Genesee County Home/Poorhouse: A Brief History*, online, accessed 3 January 2014)

### 19: Disasters

The first fire of any real consequence in Batavia's early years occurred on the night of December 22, 1821. It was the triggering event that led to incorporation of the Village. The fire apparently started after hours in L. Baker's silversmith shop. From there, the flames spread and finally engulfed three buildings. The businesses destroyed, besides the silversmith shop, included a dry goods store operated by Messrs. Moore and Finch, a general store operated by James P. Smith, a watch-making business belonging to Charles C. Church, and David Miller's printing business. Nearby buildings, a dwelling owned by a Mr. Gibb and a grocery operated by a Mr. Davis, were saved by pouring buckets of water over their sides. A still air also helped to limit the spread of the flames. The total loss was estimated to have been in the neighborhood of \$10,000. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 39-40) The reader should keep in mind that this fire was fought without either a fire department or fire equipment. The successful effort to stop the flames was solely the work of local citizens hauling buckets of water.

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

By the third decade, Batavia had evidently become large enough to attract the interest of travelling showmen. In June of 1827, an article carried in a local newspaper reported on a visit by the theatrical corps of Messrs. Gilbert and Trowbridge. According to the paper, the plays performed, "The Soldier's Daughter" and "Poor Soldier," had drawn "respectable houses." However, the paper suggested that someone should stand near the back seats to preserve order since the boys seated there tended to be noisy. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and*

*Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 184-185) The performances were given in the County Court House. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 July 1950)

### 21: War/impact of war

The good news for residents of Batavia and the rest of Western New York in the third decade was the absence of war. Except for skirmishes with Native Americans, peace reigned on the Niagara Frontier and throughout the Country.

### 22: Families/persons of special note

Among local persons of special note in the years 1821-1830, William Morgan clearly belonged at the top of the list. Morgan was born in 1744 in Culpepper, Virginia. As a teenager, he was apprenticed as a bricklayer or stone cutter. In 1819, in his mid-40s, he married Lucinda Pendleton, a 19-year-old from Richmond, Virginia. Two years later, Morgan moved with his family, which grew to include two children, to present-day Toronto. After a brewery he operated there burned, he returned to the United States, living first in Rochester, then Batavia. Reportedly, he worked in stone quarries after his return to the U.S.

William Morgan attempted to join the Masonic lodge in Batavia, but was rejected. Perhaps that had to do with his reputation as a heavy drinker and gambler. Angered by this rejection, Morgan said he was going to publish a book titled, "Illustrations of Masonry," that would describe the secret rites of Masons in great detail. The local printer, David C. Miller, who had received the entered-apprentice degree but then was denied further advancement, reportedly was planning to fund the book.

On September 11, 1826, Morgan was arrested on the charge that he owed money to certain Masons. Miller bailed him out of the Genesee County jail by paying the alleged debt. A few hours later, Morgan was arrested again, this time for a loan he was alleged not to have paid back and for supposedly stealing a shirt and a tie. For this crime, he was jailed in Canandaigua.

During the night of September 11<sup>th</sup>, a man claiming to be a friend showed up at the Canandaigua jail, paid the debt, and secured Morgan's release. As he left the jail, Morgan was seized by men in a carriage and carried away. He was taken to the area of Fort Niagara and then disappeared, never to be seen again. The prevailing assumption among the public was that he was murdered by Masons as retribution for his threat to expose their secret rites.

Soon after William Morgan's disappearance, David Miller published Morgan's book. It became a best seller and, in fact, can still be read. Protests against Masons took place in New York and other states. A national anti-Masonic political party emerged and ran a candidate for the presidency in 1828. Eventually, the furor subsided, but until it died down, Masons in Batavia and elsewhere assumed a low profile.

### 23: Private clubs, social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

There may have been other social organizations in the third decade, but the only references known to the author pertained to the Masons. Frederick Beers, in writing of Genesee County's history, reported that the anti-Mason "excitement" interfered seriously with the Masonic movement; and for 16 years, until about 1842, Masons met only at rare intervals (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose, Publisher, 1890] p. 234).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There's nothing new to report from this decade in regard to sexual matters. However, one title of the plays put on by the Gilbert and Trowbridge troupe does give a person pause. "The Soldier's Daughter" sounds rather suggestive—at least to 21<sup>st</sup> century ears! What was it that so excited the "noisy boys" in the back rows?

### 25: Urban renewal

There certainly was some "urban" appearing in the years 1821-1830, but still not much in the way of "renewal" unless one counts the razing of Brisbane's general store in order to build the Presbyterian Church or the inadvertent razing by fire when three buildings went down during Batavia's first major conflagration.



## The Fourth Decade

### Overview

There were five events that had particular importance for the residents of Batavia in the fourth decade. These included multiple fires in the downtown area, an end to the Holland Land Company and its replacement by a new entity, the Land Office War, the arrival of the first railroad, and the Panic of 1837.

#### Fires

Four significant fires occurred in the 1830s: March 4, 1833, April 19, 1833, May 30, 1834, and November 8, 1837. Together, these fires produced massive destruction in the downtown area. There is more information about these unfortunate conflagrations in the following section titled, "Disasters."

#### Land companies

Another significant event of the 1830s was closing out of the Holland Land Company operations in Western New York. The company had begun sales of land on The Purchase in 1800 with the appointment of Joseph Ellicott as the resident land agent. Thirty-five years later, there was still unsold land. Nevertheless, a decision was made that it was time to cease operations. Beginning in late 1835, the unsold land and outstanding mortgages and contracts were sold to other investors. Among those investors were Trumbull Cary and George Washington Lay of Batavia, along with their friend, William Seward, future Secretary of State in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet. These three men acquired all of the outstanding mortgages and contracts and unsold land in Chautauqua County. (Walter Stahr, *Seward* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012] pp. 48-49)

#### Land office war

Cary and Lay, before being joined by Seward, sought to impose new terms on the settlers who still owed on their mortgages or contracts. The settlers strenuously objected to these changes; and on February 6, 1836, a mob destroyed the Mayville Land Office in Chautauqua County in the opening salvo of what was called, "The Land Office War." On May 13, 1836, a similar mob descended on Batavia, entering from the south along present-day Walnut Street,

and seeking to destroy the Land Office here. In this case, the attackers were met by armed force and without a shot being fired, they were driven from the Village. However, dissidents continued to agitate elsewhere in Western New York until eventually the Governor issued a proclamation opposing their efforts. This apparently ended the matter, at least in terms of violent resistance. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 48-54; William Seaver 2, *Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 112-115) There is more information about the Land Office War as it affected Batavia in the following section titled, "War, impact of war."

### Railroads

When the Erie Canal was built north of Batavia rather than passing through the community, transportation here remained limited to the ways common to the first three decades: travel on foot or by horseback or in vehicles drawn by horses or oxen. (Recall that travel via the Creek was essentially non-existent.) Then, in 1837, the first train arrived in Batavia on track laid from Rochester. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 66-67) This was a truly historic event. Batavians could now travel at speeds thought impossible just a few years before. For the first time, building materials, food, machinery, fuel, and other products could be shipped in and out of Batavia with relative ease and at a relatively low cost. This event marked the beginning of a network of rail lines that helped to eventually turn Batavia into a community of factories. There is more information about the first railroad in the following section titled, "Transportation."

### Panic of 1837

The year 1837 also marked a very negative turn of events, the "Panic of 1837." This nation-wide economic collapse should be called the "Panic of 1837, '38, '39, '40, '41, '42, and '43" because it lasted at least that long. It involved a period of severe economic distress. Banks collapsed, businesses failed, and thousands of workers lost their jobs. Unemployment may have been as high as 25% in some areas. Out of 850 banks in the United States, 343 closed entirely and 62 failed partially. Many individual states defaulted on their bonds. The causes were probably due to multiple factors, both domestic and foreign. ("Panic of 1837," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 26 January 2014) The effects were felt in Batavia as elsewhere, but it seems they were not borne equally by all residents. Further comments in this regard will appear later in this chapter.



## Population

This overview ends as did those of earlier chapters with an estimate of Batavia's population. As already noted twice before, Beers asserted that there were 1,400 people living in the Village in 1825 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose, Publisher, 1890] p. 183). And, as also indicated twice before, the 1860 Federal census, the first one to separate the Village of Batavia from the Town of Batavia, reported a population of 2,560 individuals ("Genesee Community Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). So, assuming a steady growth over that 35-year intervening period, perhaps the population of the Village had reached around 1,900 by 1840.

## 1: Infrastructure

As with the previous decade, there is little to note during the years 1831-1840 in regards to infrastructure. Streets remained unpaved, there were no public sewers, and there was no public water system.

## 2: Transportation

In the late 1820s or early 1830s, various applications were made to the State for railroad charters in this region. However, as the result of opposition from towns along the Erie Canal, several such proposals were defeated until, finally, an application for a railroad from Rochester to Batavia was passed by the State legislature on April 24, 1832. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 66-67) James Brisbane became the railroad company's principal incorporator and largest shareholder (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 5).

The incorporated railroad, known as the Tonawanda Railroad Company, had a total length of a fraction less than 32 miles. The average ascent was 12 ft. per mile and required two heavy embankments and two deep cuts east of Batavia. The total cost, including depots, was about \$375,000. The first train of cars arrived in Batavia on May 4, 1837. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 66-67) The engine of the first train was described as essentially nothing more than a wood-burning boiler on wheels. There was no cab and the engineer stood right out in the weather. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948)

The placement of the tracks in Batavia for this railroad established a precedence for the location of local rail service that remained in place until the 1950s. The rails came right through

central Batavia to a station on the northeast corner of Ellicott and Jackson streets. The track then continued a short distance farther to the bank of the Creek at the west end of the (grist?) mill. The fare for the trip between Batavia and Rochester was \$1.50 in 1837. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 66-67)

Prior to the arrival of the railroad, the only means of public conveyance was by stagecoach. For example, a stagecoach service existed in 1835 that took one to Rochester from Batavia via Albion and Brockport, a trip lasting eight hours. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News, Batavia, N.Y., 30 December 1950*) It's almost impossible to overstate the advantages provided by rail travel over such horse-drawn conveyances in terms of speed and the ability to transport heavy loads. Those advantages would come to serve Batavia exceedingly well.

### 3: Housing

As the population grew in the fourth decade, the amount of housing continued to grow as well just as had been the case in earlier years. Back in the chapter on 1811 to 1820, the reader may recall remarks made by Safford North in which he commented on the circumstances that led East Main Street to be filled with handsome residences (Safford E. North, *Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 274). One example of such a "handsome residence" was the home erected by Col. William Davis ca. 1839.

William Davis, like many early Batavians, invested in land, seeking to "buy low" and "sell high." In the course of his efforts, he apparently did quite well, at least for many years. As a consequence, in 1836, he purchased land on the north side of East Main Street between present-day Summit and Ross streets. Then, about 1839, he built a fine home on that location. This structure later became the central part of the mansion owned by Dean and Mary Richmond, a mansion generally regarded as the finest residence ever to exist in Batavia. (From deeds and other documents submitted by the City Historian to the William G. Pomeroy Foundation in 2013 as part of an application for an historic marker.)

Davis became an apparent victim of the Panic of 1837 as land lost value. From all indications, he held onto his fine home on East Main Street as best he could. However, when he died in 1842, his wife was forced into bankruptcy and she lost the building to creditors. Not long afterwards, widow Emiline Davis and her children moved from the area. The home was eventually acquired by the Richmonds in 1854 and, over a period of several years, was significantly enlarged. More information will be provided about this development in a later

chapter. (From documents submitted by the City Historian to the William G. Pomeroy Foundation in 2013 as part of an application for an historic marker.)

In terms of housing for the public, the most impressive example to date appeared in 1835 with the erection of the American Hotel. Located on the north side of Main Street, it was a 3-story building that cost over \$20,000. As such, it was the most expensive building in the Village. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 75)

### 4: Energy sources

As in previous decades, the energy sources available to Batavians in the years 1831-1840 continued to include wood for heating and cooking and candles for illumination. As noted in the preceding chapter, by then steam power may also have been employed, using wood-fired boilers, but the author has not discovered any references to this development. However, with the arrival of the steam railroad engine in the 1830s, it seems even more likely that steam-power would also have been employed for other uses.

The arrival of the railroad may also have introduced another energy source: coal. Coal was not found locally and, before the railroad, transporting it to Batavia would have been too costly and difficult to entertain using it. However, the railroad changed the picture in this regard. Later in the century, coal became a major energy source in Batavia. However, how early coal became available is not known. Conceivably, its first use may have occurred in this decade.

There is also a question regarding to what extent the Creek and water power continued to play a role during the fourth decade. William Seaver wrote that the first dam was torn down in 1833 and a new one constructed (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 29). It would seem that taking the time and spending the money to build a new dam would only have occurred if it served an economic function. An aesthetic or recreational role seems unlikely. Hence, it seems that water power must have continued to serve as an energy source in the 1830s, perhaps still powering the grist mill.

### 5: Communication

The first practical telegraphs began to appear late in the 1830s. Despite the fact that the earliest applications tended to appear in the operation of railroads and despite the fact that the

first railroad to reach Batavia became operational in 1837, it still seems unlikely that telegraph service appeared in Batavia before the next decade. Therefore, Batavians in the years 1831-1840 were probably still restricted to the traditional means of communication: 1) oral exchanges face-to-face, or 2) the written word put down either by hand or by means of a printing press. However, there would have been a gain in speed of transmission made possible through the more rapid travel and transport made possible by rail.

In contrast to the previous decade, the newspapers available to Batavians apparently remained relatively stable. One new publication emerged in 1840. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, William Seaver and Peter Lawrence began publication of a newspaper called, "Batavia Times and Farmers' and Mechanics' Journal. (Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 24)

### 6: County, Village, City boundaries

Apparently no recorded changes occurred in County or Village boundaries during the fourth decade.

### 7: Government/governing structure

Apparently no recorded changes occurred in the government or governing structure during the fourth decade.

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

Early in 1831, work began on a new jail authorized by the County Board of Supervisors to replace the one in the Genesee County Court House. Located at the northwest corner of present-day Court and Ellicott streets, it was constructed for around \$3,000. William Seaver described it as an unsightly building, ill adapted to its purpose, with escape comparatively easy. Advertisements of a "jail break" were issued about every six months and after only 19 years of service, a new jail was necessary. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 47)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

Ironically, a partial extent of retail establishments and other commercial enterprises in the 1830s can be grasped by looking at the list of such places that were destroyed by fire. They included:

- 1 blacksmith shop
- 5 law offices
- 6 tailor shops
- 1 cabinet shop
- 1 tin factory
- 6 groceries
- 1 milliner's shop
- 1 barber shop
- 2 jewelry stores
- 1 hatter
- 1 gunsmith shop
- 1 saddler's shop
- 1 shoe shop
- 1 dry goods store
- 1 book store
- 1 book bindery
- 1 watch maker
- 1 tin and sheet iron manufacturer
- 1 baker's shop
- 1 drug store
- 5 taverns/tavern houses

As can be seen in perusing this list, by the 1830s there was quite a variety of businesses.

### 10: Factories/industries

In the last decade, the beginning of breweries and malt houses was noted. Such operations continued into this decade and beyond. Similarly, James Cochran's foundry where he cast bells also continued to operate. New to the fourth decade were warehouses such as a produce warehouse erected by John L. Dorrance in 1837 on Ellicott Street. Soon after, E. B. Seymour built another warehouse, that one on Jackson Street. William Seaver attributed the erection of warehouses directly to the construction of the Tonawanda Railroad. (William Seaver 2, A

*Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 68) There may also have been other factories or industries that first appeared in the years 1831-1840, but they apparently have gone unrecorded.

### 11: Banking/financial services

As noted in the last chapter, the first bank west of the Genesee River, "Bank of Genesee," was opened in 1829. As also noted, during the first two years of its existence, it operated out of the west wing of Trumbull Cary's home on East Main Street. In January of 1831, the Directors appropriated \$5,000 (later increased to \$6,000) to erect a bank building. The chosen location was on the northeast corner of present-day Bank and East Main streets, a building lot purchased three months earlier. When the structure was completed, the main entrance was on Bank Street while an East Main Street entrance served the living quarters that were set aside for either the cashier and his family or another member of the banking concern. This building still exists in 2015. While banks elsewhere collapsed during the Panic of 1837, Bank of Genesee successfully weathered the financial storm. (Larry Barnes, *The Cary Family of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] pp. 22-23)

Late in the fourth decade, the Bank of Genesee was joined by another bank, the Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Genesee. The latter was organized in November of 1838 and began business January 1, 1839 with a capitalization of \$100,000. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 81)

### 12: Education

Although public schools were well established by the fourth decade, private schools were still quite common. Beers listed the following: Miss H. H. North and R. Hogue, Jr. in 1831; Miss Burnham in 1832-33; Mrs. Ford and H. H. Smead in 1833; E. C. Porter and Lester Cross in 1835; E. A. Hopkins and C. W. Wilson in 1836-37; and S. E. Hollister in 1840. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 182) In reviewing this list, it appears that none of the private school operations was long-lasting.

### 13: Religion

The "Baptist Society of Batavia Village" was organized on November 19, 1835 at a meeting held in the Genesee County Court House. The first Trustees were Richard Covell, Jr., John

Dorman, William Blossom, William D. Popple, and Calvin Foster. The next year, a church building was erected on the west side of Jackson Street, on a lot donated by William D. Popple, roughly opposite the present-day entrance to Jackson Square. Thomas McCulley was the mason and Thomas J. Hoyt the carpenter. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 96-98)

The reader will recall that the first Episcopal Church, begun in 1816, remained unfinished until 1822. However, a final completion of that structure did not end building problems for the Episcopalians. By 1835, this building had become so defective there was a desire to replace it with one safer and more substantial. Consequently, a new church built of stone was erected on the same site and the bricks from the first building were used to construct a parsonage immediately to the west. David E. Evans, the Holland Land Company resident land agent at that time, reportedly donated chandeliers manufactured in New York City, a subscription of \$1,500, and land for the parsonage. Trinity Church of New York City also donated \$1,000. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 33-34) As the reader will discover in the next chapter, this still didn't end building problems for the Episcopalians.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the "First Free Will Baptist Church" was organized in 1830. However, between 1832 and 1837, it had problems, especially with its leadership, and only occasional services were held. Finally, in 1838, the congregation reorganized and, a year later, the Baptists purchased for their use the former First Methodist Episcopal Church building at West Main and North Lyon streets. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 93-94)

When the congregation of the "First Methodist Episcopal Church" sold its building to the Baptists, it was without a regular church building for the balance of the decade. It met first in a structure known as the "Nixon Building" (probably a commercial building downtown) and then in a district school house. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher,, 1890] p. 222) An eventual construction of a new church building will be described in the next chapter.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints traces its origins to Palmyra, New York and the year 1830. Ruth McEvoy stated that services were held in Batavia beginning in the 1830s. However, no further information is available. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 126)

#### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

According to Beers, school libraries were established in 1835. He also said that every district received its "proportionate quota" for its library, but didn't explain exactly what that meant. The term may have referred to funding. On the other hand, perhaps it referred to the mandated minimum size of the library's collection. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 94)

Following the 1826 demise of the library association that had been established in 1804 and the brief life of the "Batavia Forum" established in 1827, another effort was made to provide library services for the public. In 1839, William Seaver organized the "Batavia Circulating Library." Membership cost \$4.00 per year or 50 cents per month. Books that were kept over five weeks were considered "purchased." ("A Cycle of Praise" [Batavia, N.Y.: St. James Episcopal Church, 1965], no pagination)

#### 15: Cemeteries

Apparently the care for the Batavia Cemetery was minimal at best. Frederick Beers said that the appearance became "forbidding." However, in 1840, a fence was erected to protect the graves and shrubbery from the "invasion of animals." (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose, Publisher, 1890] p. 187)

#### 16: Firefighting

In September of 1832, the Village Trustees again tried their hand at purchasing a pump for the fire department. Referred to as a Red Jacket goose neck engine, the pump was acquired from a John Anderson for \$600. Evidently it worked better than the Triton purchased three years earlier. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 119)

In March of 1833, the fire department was reorganized and increased in size. A hook and ladder company was established. The office of Chief Engineer was also created. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 119)



The reader may recall that one provision of the 1823 charter was the requirement that residents of the Village assist in fighting a fire when requested to do so. A fine could be imposed for refusing to help. In light of this provision, an observation by William Seaver following the fire of 1837 is particularly interesting: "It was a disgraceful sight to see some of our own citizens stand with their cloaks comfortably wrapped around them, viewing the ravages before them, without offering to lift a finger, while others, not residents of the Village, without a cent at stake, were laboring hard either to extinguish the fire or save the property of those endangered. Such men should be marked and remembered." (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 49) It appears that Batavia hasn't always been the home of good neighbors, as a later City slogan asserted.

### 17: Healthcare

On June 27, 1832, the Village Trustees established a Board of Health. The individuals appointed to the Board were William Seaver, Henry Tisdale, George W. Lay, Frederick Follett, and Daniel H. Chandler. Two days later, the Board met in the office of Daniel Chandler and selected William Seaver as President and Frederick Follett as Secretary. Also at this meeting, the Board resolved to publish rules and regulations designed to "prevent introduction of infections or contagious disease of any kind" into the Village "by the prompt removal of all nuisances therein." (From a copy of the original act and minutes stored in the vault of Batavia City Hall.)

Later in the year, on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Board took action against two such nuisances, a slaughter house and a yard in the rear of a livery stable. It appears that the slaughter house was shut down. (From records stored in the vault of Batavia City Hall.)

The year 1832 also was marked by a cholera epidemic. Cholera is an infection of the intestines caused primarily by consuming drinking water and food that have been contaminated by human feces. The symptoms include diarrhea and vomiting. Dehydration can become so severe that death ensues.

In August of 1832, the Board of Health directed Dr. John Cotes to go to Rochester for the purpose of learning about cholera, its treatment, etc. and then to return with a report of his findings. A sum of money was set aside to reimburse Cotes' expenses. Then, in November, the Board of Health purchased from Gilbert Seward, at a cost of \$108, a house, garden, and wood for the purpose of setting up a hospital for cholera victims. (From records stored in the vault of Batavia City Hall.) This building, located on the west side of Liberty Street, was the first hospital

in the Village. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1928) The building apparently reverted to other uses after the cholera epidemic passed.

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

No recorded changes have been found in the care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young occurred during the fourth decade.

### 19: Disasters

Four significant fires occurred in the 1830s. The first of these was discovered about 2 a.m. the night of March 4, 1833. It started in a building occupied by a billiard recess (parlor?) on the south side of Main Street near Jackson. The building immediately west, the location of a saddler, was also burned. So, too, were two smaller buildings immediately east, one a law office and the other a shoe shop. The fire was finally halted by tearing down two smaller buildings west of those that were consumed by the flames. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 45)

The next fire occurred barely more than a month later on April 19, 1833. It also started in the middle of the night. The fire originated in a small wooden building on the north side of Main Street roughly opposite Court Street. It proceeded eastward to the intersection of State Street (no longer existing) and westward some distance as well. The buildings destroyed included a tavern house at the corner of Main and State streets; an unoccupied building fitted up for a grocery; a small building used as a tailor shop; a building occupied by a grocer; a building housing a dry goods store, book store, and book bindery; a building occupied by a watchmaker, a jeweler, and a tin and sheet iron manufacturer; a small building used as a grocery and baker's shop; and a two-story building housing a tailor shop, a lawyer, a drug store, a grocery, and an apartment. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 45-46.)

About a year later, the worst fire of all broke out about 5 p.m. on May 30, 1834. It was a hot day, everything was exceedingly dry, and there was a strong wind from the southwest. The fire began in some combustible materials near barns and stables connected to the Eagle Tavern, the latter at the southeast corner of Main and Court streets. Burning shingles were driven by the wind great distances and landed on roofs as far east as Liberty Street. Soon almost every roof on the north side of Main Street was more or less on fire. The fire extended south along Court Street from Main to Ellicott, a short distance east on Ellicott, and along the south side of Main Street from the Eagle Tavern at the corner of Main and Court to near the corner of Main and

Jackson streets. Great numbers of men fighting the fire downtown were obliged to leave the immediate scene in order to protect their own property as the whole Village seemed threatened by the burning shingles that blew in the wind. Seaver described the small stream of water pumped by the fire engine on the inferno as about equal to a pewter syringe squirting water on Mt. Aetna. Perhaps total destruction was prevented from occurring when, after about 30 minutes, the wind shifted to the northeast. Altogether, about 25 buildings were destroyed. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 46-48.)

The fire of May 1834 wiped out a major part of downtown Batavia. The structures burned included B. Humphrey's Eagle Tavern; a tavern house occupied by H. Rowe; Taggart and Smith's law office; Jones and Leach's tailor shop; a law office and dwelling house owned by T. Fitch; a building occupied by a Mr. Buxton as a cabinet shop, Gilbert and Seward as a tin factory, and T. Cole as a tailor's shop; a dwelling house owned by a Mrs. Hewitt; a dwelling house occupied by Richard Smith; Allen and Chandler's law office; a dwelling house occupied by Mr. Ottoway and William Fursman; a small building occupied as a grocery; a small building occupied as a dwelling; two dwellings owned by H. and E. C. Kimberly; barns and sheds owned by A. Hosmer; and two dwelling houses owned by Jesse Wood. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 46-48)

The last significant fire of the decade occurred on November 8, 1837. It was on the north side of Main Street and burned a block of buildings. The fire started between 6 and 7 p.m. Fortunately, the evening was calm and fire fighters were able to stop the fire as it burned eastward by tearing down a building in its path. The losses included a building housing an apartment, a milliner's shop, and a tailor's shop; a barber shop; a jewelry store; another tailor's shop; a building housing a grocery and provision store; and a building occupied by a hat shop and a gunsmith shop. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 48)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

The year 1840 marked the first County Fair. It was housed in a building on Creek Road south of the Village. The facilities included a half-mile track. ("Site of First Fair Held in Genesee County," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15, July 1939)

## 21: War/impact of war

A general discussion of the Land Office War of 1836 was presented in the overview section of this chapter. Following is a more detailed account of what occurred in Batavia on May 14, 1836.

Word was received that an armed mob of 700 to 1000 men was marching north on the road from Attica toward Batavia. Bells throughout the Village were rung to sound an alarm. Upon sounding of the alarm, muskets were obtained from the arsenal in sufficient number to arm every citizen. A box of 1000 musket balls was taken to the Land Office and another box to the Court House where Sheriff Nathan Townsend had his headquarters. About 50 men were stationed inside the Land Office building. Then William Seaver, David Evans, William Davis, and Trumbull Cary rode toward Attica to scout out the invading mob. After determining that the mob was only four miles away and advancing rapidly, the men quickly returned to Batavia to prepare a defense. Soon the mob reached the present-day intersection of Walnut and South Main streets where it halted.

At this point, Isaac (?) Verplanck rode out to meet the dissidents and inquire as to their intentions. They answered, "to right themselves." When Verplanck asked what they meant by that, he was told that it was "none of his business." Verplanck then informed the mob that if they performed any "outrages" on either private or public property, they would be fired upon. Spokesmen for the mob then requested a meeting with David Evans, the resident land agent. Upon being so informed, Evans sent word back that he wasn't going to engage in any communication with an armed mob.

After receiving Evans' reply, the mob marched across the bridge and gathered in front of the Land Office. Four of them approached the building and again asked to speak with David Evans. Evans once more refused to talk with them. As this exchange was taking place, Sheriff Townsend suddenly appeared on the scene together with 120 men armed with muskets and fixed bayonets. The Sheriff approached the mob and informed them that if they attempted to destroy any building in the Village, his men would fire a full volley into them. When some tried to argue the legality of such an action, Townsend cut them off, assured them that he (Townsend) would give the order to fire, legal or not, and advised the mob to be off and very quickly at that.

With that warning, the mob moved west on West Main Street before stopping again. After a boisterous debate about how to respond, it broke up with some 40 or so individuals continuing on west and most of the rest walking back past the Land Office and south across the bridge

over the Creek. A small number of other men who lingered about the Village were soon arrested and jailed. So ended the War.

(All of the material in this section is from William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 48-54.)

## 22: Families/persons of special note

One of early Batavia's most prominent and influential citizens was a Polish immigrant who, as a teenager traveling without his family, arrived in Batavia in either 1833 or 1834. That individual was Major Henry Glowacki, born in 1816 into a prominent Polish family at a time when Poland was occupied by Russian and Austrian armies.

Major Glowacki earned his military title through attending military school and joining the Polish army. After participating in a losing revolt against the Russian forces of Czar Nicholas, Henry fled to Austria. Later, he was among a contingent of Polish exiles to whom the U.S. Congress offered land in Illinois. Purportedly, he was on his way to Illinois to inspect that land when he stopped overnight in Batavia and met David Evans. Even though Glowacki spoke little or no English at that point, Evans offered him a job at the Land Office as a scribe (in effect as a human copy machine).

Henry Glowacki soon became proficient in English although reportedly he never lost a strong accent. After only two years reading law under the supervision of his future father-in-law, Heman Redfield, he was admitted to the bar. Later Glowacki, entered into a partnership with Joshua L. Brown for several years, then with his son-in-law, Leroy Parker. Henry Glowacki was especially notable for his community service. He was a Village Trustee, served as President on the Board of Education for School District No. 2, served as a Trustee of the New York State Institution for the Blind, was Chairman of the Genesee County Democratic Committee, served on the party's State Committee, and was a delegate to the Democratic Party national conventions in five different years. Glowacki also invested heavily in property in the Village, acquiring considerable amounts of land. For a teenager who didn't know the language and who arrived without family connections, Henry Glowacki's subsequent life was a remarkable story.

(All of the material in this section is from Larry Barnes, *A Polish Revolutionary in Batavia, His Wife and Descendants, and a House Divided* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2008].)

23: Private clubs, social organizations/service organizations/non-profit  
groups providing services

The author has found no recorded changes in this area during the fourth decade.

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There is nothing new to report from this decade.

25: Urban Renewal

Out of sheer necessity and as the result of four major fires, the downtown area of Batavia was largely rebuilt in the period from 1831 to 1840.

## The Fifth Decade

### Overview

Several events of importance mark this decade. One is the arrival of additional railroad lines. Another, associated with the railroads, is a revolution in communication—the establishment of telegraph connections to the outside world. A third is another big fire. A fourth is the final division and reduction in size of Genesee County as Wyoming County came into being. And a fifth, coinciding with the creation of Wyoming County, is the construction of a new county court house. Each of these will be discussed in following sections.

The 1850 Federal census, as earlier, did not distinguish between the Town and the Village. However, this is the last decade in which it is necessary to form an estimate of the Village's population. Given that Beers asserted there were 1,400 people living in the Village in 1825 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 183) and the 1860 census reported a population of 2,560 individuals ("Genesee Community Information, *Richmond Memorial Public Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), assuming a steady growth over that 35-year intervening period, perhaps the population of the Village had reached around 2,230 by 1850.

### 1: Infrastructure

As with the previous decade, there is little to note during the years 1841-1850 in regards to infrastructure. Streets were still not paved, no public sewers existed, and there was no public water system.

### 2: Transportation

Recall that the first railroad reached Batavia in 1837 with the opening of a rail line between Batavia and Rochester. In 1842, the railroad was extended to Attica and a connection was made with the Attica and Buffalo Railroad in late December. The first train of cars coming from the east and headed for Buffalo passed through Batavia a few days later. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 67)

As noted in the last chapter, the first railroad depot was on the northeast corner of Ellicott and Jackson streets. In 1843, a second passenger depot was built on Ellicott Street on the west side of Jackson. There was a large addition on the west side of this structure that provided accommodations for transients and was known as the "Railroad Hotel." (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 67)

In 1844, the Erie Railroad built a line from Avon to Batavia. Later, it was continued on to Attica. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 20)

Travel by rail was far superior to travel by stagecoach. Beers noted that with the advent of the railroads, it was only about six years before stage coach runs were out of business (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 178). Travel by rail was also far superior to travel on the Erie Canal. By 1841, it was possible to travel between Albany and Buffalo by train (presumably passing through Batavia) in just 25 hours, "lightning speed" when compared to an average of 4 mph when traveling on a packet boat. ("New York Central Railroad," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 9 February 2014; "Erie Canal," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 9 February 2014)

### 3: Housing

Other than the continued construction of new homes, there was nothing particularly notable in regards to private housing in this decade. In terms of housing for the public, as indicated in the previous section, a hotel intended primarily to serve transients travelling by rail was constructed at this time as an addition to the 1843 depot. By 1849, there were six hotels in the Village (William Seaver, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 55-56).

William Seaver recorded, in 1849, the houses east of the Land Office that dated to 1820 or earlier and were still standing. By his count, there were 19 altogether. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 55)

### 4: Energy sources

The historic record is mute in terms of energy sources being utilized in Batavia during the years 1841-1850. It is pretty certain that wood was still being used for heating and cooking and candles for illumination. However, in addition to candles, lamps fueled with the oil of sperm whales may have been used for illumination by wealthier Batavians. We know that elsewhere



in the Country, sperm oil for illumination was extremely popular at this time because, among other things, it produced a smokeless flame (George Dvorsky, *1846: The Year We Hit Peak Sperm Whale Oil*, online, accessed 9 February 2014). As with most other consumer goods, the arrival of the railroads would have greatly facilitated access to this fuel. With the availability of transportation by rail, it also seems possible that Batavians now had some access to coal. Both coal and wood may have been used to heat boilers to generate steam for stationary engines. Coal may also have been used for heating and cooking purposes. However, it is not certain that this was the case.

The role of water power from the creek during the fifth decade is similarly less than clear-cut. Old maps as late as 1866 show a dam and raceway adjacent to a (grist?) mill, but it's not possible to tell whether water was still being employed to generate power. (*Topographical Atlas of Genesee and Wyoming Counties, New York, 1866* [Philadelphia: Stone and Steward, Publisher, 1866])

### 5: Communication

Until this decade, the only means of communication available to Batavians was by: 1) oral exchanges face-to-face or 2) the written word put down either by hand or by means of a printing press. Granted, such communication could be transmitted more quickly once the railroad arrived starting in 1837, but it still was far from being the instantaneous communication we enjoy today. Then, abruptly, communication nearly at the speed of light became possible when the first telegraph line was strung through Batavia in July of 1846. Press reports were first received in Batavia on January 1, 1847. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 July 1946) With that development, telegraph operators were able to tap out messages that could be immediately decoded hundreds of miles away. For the first time, Batavians could learn what was happening as it was happening in some distant place, rather than first learning of the event days, weeks, perhaps even months later. It is hard to overstate the significance of this development.

The temperance movement that culminated in the 1919 amendment to the U.S. Constitution, an amendment ushering in prohibition of alcoholic beverages, had a long history that went back to soon after the American Revolution. Over the years, this movement found a receptive audience in Batavia. Thus, Lucas Seaver tried publishing "The Temperance Herald," a small newspaper devoted to temperance and printed in the same office as the "Spirit of the Times." The first issue was in March of 1842. However, while there may have been a receptive audience, apparently it was not sufficiently large to make such a newspaper a successful

venture. It lasted only one year. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 24)

### 6: County and village boundaries

In 1841, Wyoming County was created from the southern half of Genesee County, the northwest corner of Allegany County, and a small portion of the northeast corner of Cattaraugus County. This was the last time that Genesee County would shrink in size.

By an amendment to the Village charter passed April 22, 1844, the bounds of the Village of Batavia were fixed as follows: Beginning at a point in the east line of lot number forty-four in said Village, one hundred rods north from the center of Genesee Street; thence westerly parallel with the center of Genesee and Batavia streets one hundred rods therefrom to the westerly bounds of lot number nine in said Village; thence southerly on the west line of said lot number nine, to the southwest corner of said lot; thence continuing in the same direction to the north bank of Tonawanda Creek, thence up the northern bank of said Creek to a point one hundred rods south of the center of Genesee Street; thence eastwardly parallel with the center of Genesee Street to the east line of lot number forty-five; thence northerly on said line to the place of beginning. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]). See the Village of Batavia map with lot numbers as surveyed by Joseph Ellicott.

### 7: Government/governing structure

About the same time as Wyoming County was created, a new Genesee County Court House was authorized and construction began in 1841. Unlike the first Court House that was made of wood, this one was built from stone. Except for the basement's interior, the structure was completed by 1843 and the first court session was held in February of that year. Soon afterwards, the basement's interior was also finished and it became the location for the County Clerk's office. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 54) The building still stands in 2015.

With the completion of a new Court House, the old one, which had been built in 1803, was not maintained and it became very much dilapidated. According to Seaver, by 1848, the wind "whistled unobstructed through its desolate walls" and many predicted the building's collapse. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 43-44) However, at the same time, the Town of Batavia wanted a town hall and, after considering other options including building a new structure, the Town approached

the County about the possibility of acquiring the old Court House. In November of 1849, the County Board of Supervisors approved an agreement that gave the Town use of the building. (Larry Barnes, *Hey Mister! Want to buy a Court House?* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2014] p. 1)

The May of 1850, the Town accepted the terms of the agreement (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 43-44). Under the agreement, the old Court House was to be repaired by the Town and then remain under the care and protection of a public officer, designated by voters at the Town's annual meetings, someone who was to have the exclusive power to grant permission for the building's use and occupancy. Upon failure to meet these or other conditions of the lease, the Court House was to revert back to the County. (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 322-323)

When the Town agreed to accept the terms of the agreement with the County, it also voted in May of 1850 to raise \$1,000 to defray the expenses of rehabilitating the old Court House. Subsequently, the Town Board contracted for the building's repair and work commenced. However, the workmen soon abandoned the task, claiming that the structure was unfit for repair. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 43-44) What happened next will be described in the following chapter.

## 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

As indicated in the last chapter, the jail built in 1831 proved to be unsatisfactory. Among other problems, escape was relatively easy. Consequently, a new jail was erected in 1850 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 38). The new facility was on the south side of West Main Street where Oak Street Extension is now located. It was a two-story brick structure, with living quarters for the Sheriff and his family, a large kitchen for preparing meals both for the family and prisoners, cells for inmates, and a jail yard to the rear. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 41) It served as the County jail for over 50 years and until a new jail was erected in 1902 at the corner of West Main Street and Porter Avenue. The building itself stood until the 1950s when it was razed during construction of the Oak Street bridge.

Perhaps because Batavia was the County seat, the residents of Batavia included a surprisingly large number of lawyers. By his count, William Seaver reported a total of 23 in 1849. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 55-56)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

In 1849, William Seaver put together a list of businesses in Batavia at that time. The list included the following:

- 3 forwarding and commission merchants
- 5 dry-goods stores
- 2 hardware stores
- 1 livery stable
- 4 cabinet makers
- 13 carpenters and joiners
- 7 blacksmith operations
- 1 gunsmith
- 3 saddle and harness makers
- 5 masons
- 1 stone cutter
- 2 furnace men
- 1 baker
- 2 butchers
- 2 druggists
- 7 grocers
- 2 jewelers
- 2 hatters
- 7 boot and shoe makers
- 7 tailors
- 1 book binder
- 6 painters
- 2 printers

Three of these businesses are probably unfamiliar to most readers, e.g., "forwarding and commission merchants" and "furnace men." As nearly as the author can determine, as Seaver was using the term, a forwarding merchant was someone who received and forwarded goods and was then compensated for the transportation costs by the owner of the goods. A

commission merchant apparently was someone who sold goods or merchandise belonging to another individual and received payment for doing so from the owner. ("Forwarding and Commission Merchants," *The Law Dictionary*, online, accessed 12 February 2014)

The author has not been able to determine the nature of the work performed by the furnace men to whom Seaver referred. It seems extremely unlikely that any buildings were being heated by furnaces in the years 1841-1850. The furnaces in question more likely involved applications that required very high temperatures, e.g., the manufacture of metal objects formed from liquid metal (Alison Minard, personal communication, February 2014). As noted in chapter two, one of Batavia's early residents was James Cochran who cast bells that hung in several of Batavia's buildings (*The Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 March 1944). Perhaps Seaver's 1849 listing of furnace men was referring to assistants who had survived Cochran's 1845 death or to others who might have succeeded Cochran himself. In this same era, furnaces for manufacturing iron, a process requiring charcoal, iron ore, and limestone, would have employed men who might have been called "furnace men," but such operations did not exist in this part of the Country because the necessary raw materials were not present (personal observations of the author).

### 10: Factories/industries

Breweries and malt houses first appeared in Batavia during the third decade, as was noted in the 1821-1830 chapter of this book. They continued to exist for quite some time. Yet another such operation appeared in 1850. At that time, John Eager purchased the stone church on West Main Street that the Methodists had built in the 1820s and converted it into a brewery. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 251)

Early in the decade, James Cochran continued to cast bells. One of those was cast in 1841 for the new stone Court House built at the intersection of Ellicott and Main streets ("Local Record," *Progressive Batavian*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 December 1869) Cochran died four years later in 1845 at the age of 83 (Batavia Cemetery records, archives, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.). Whether someone else continued the business is unknown.

In 1849, there were a number of other factories or industries, albeit often pretty small enterprises. They included a candle factory which occupied a building that had once been the principal hotel in the Village, one operated by William Keyes (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 15). There was also a cooper, who made wooden staved barrels, and three carriage makers (William Seaver 1, A

*Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 55-56). Presumably, the warehouse operations identified in the previous chapter, businesses that were a product of a railroad coming to Batavia, continued to function.

### 11: Banking/financial services

During the fifth decade, the Bank of Genesee, established in 1829, and the Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Genesee, organized in 1838, were joined by the Exchange Bank of Genesee which had been organized in Alexander in 1838, but moved to Batavia in July of 1850. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 81)

### 12: Education

New York State teachers colleges or normal schools, as they were called, did not yet exist. However, apparently private schools were offering institutes for teachers as early as 1845. Beers indicated that they were regarded as beneficial and teachers in the County eagerly availed themselves of the instruction such institutes provided (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 94).

As reported back in the 1821-1830 chapter, on October 12, 1829, School District No. 2 was divided. All portions west of Center and Bank streets were set off as District No. 12. In the Fall of 1846, these two school districts were reunited under the title, "Consolidated School District No. 2." In December of that year, at a meeting of the inhabitants of the consolidated district, a committee was formed to work on the erection of a new school building. Then, in April of 1847, the Trustees were authorized to borrow \$5,500 to purchase a site and build a new building. A two-story building was subsequently erected on Liberty Street near the intersection with School Street. It was ready for use in the Fall of 1848. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 208-209)

Despite what appears to have been a successful public school system, private schools continued to have a considerable presence in Batavia. Beers (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 182-183) listed the following schools during the years 1841-1850:

Mrs. J. G. Ernst had a boarding school on East Main Street from 1841 to 1844.

C. N. Chandler operated a school in 1841.

Mrs. Rathbun operated a school in 1842.

D. E. Walker had a school from 1843 to 1844.

Young and Oliphant operated a school in 1844.

A female seminary was operated by Misses Beardsley and Smith in 1844.

All of these schools appear to have had a very brief tenure. Why that should have been so is not evident.

### 13: Religion

Readers will recall that the Episcopal congregation was plagued with building problems from the very beginning. Its first church building, started in 1816, as the result of insufficient funds stood unfinished until 1822. Then, that building soon proved to be defective and it had to be replaced by a second building in 1835. However, erection of the second building did not end building problems for the Episcopalians. In 1841, just six years after it was built, the entire top of the second building, the roof and ceiling included, had to be removed and replaced at great expense (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 33-34).

In May of 1841, the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church contracted for a church building on the east side of Jackson Street. Measuring 60 ft. deep, 40 ft. wide, and 22 ft. high, it stood on land donated by John Lowbar. It was completed in December of 1841. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 36)

The Episcopalians were not alone in having building problems. The Baptist church, erected on the west side of Jackson Street in 1836, also required thorough repairs after only a few years. It was necessary to temporarily close the building. The church was reopened in May of 1847. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 97) Both churches, the Episcopalian and the Baptist, were built by the same mason and carpenter, Thomas McCulley and Thomas J. Hoyt. The reader is left to speculate as to whether this fact is relevant to the subsequent building issues both congregations experienced.

Recall that the First Free-Will Baptist Church congregation had numerous problems during the 1830s. That continued to be the case in the 1840s. At no time did the congregation number 100 persons. About half lived in other communities. In the last three or four years, no pastors

were regularly in charge and the services were chiefly conducted by a daughter of Dyer Seymour who lived on the road between Batavia and Elba. According to Seaver, this was too much a display of women's rights for the congregation to endure and it dissolved in April of 1849. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 94-95)

As late as 1843, there were few Catholics settled around Batavia, not more than 12 or 14 in all. By the end of the decade, this number grew to around 75. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 226) In the late 1840s, the Rev. Bernard O'Reilly of Rochester was assigned by Bishop John Timon of the Buffalo Diocese to do missionary work in the Batavia area. The first public celebration of mass was performed early in 1848. Then, in the Spring of 1849, the Rev. Edward Dillon was assigned to reside in Batavia and St. Joseph's Church was organized. The congregation met in a former school building on Jackson Street that was sold to them in June of 1849. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 88)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The Batavia Lyceum was incorporated, April 17, 1843, "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a library, reading room, and rooms for debates and lectures on literary and scientific subjects; and such other means of promoting moral and intellectual improvement, with power for such purposes to take by purchase, devise, gift or otherwise, and to hold, transfer and convey real estate and personal property, to the amount of ten thousand dollars; and also further to take, retain and convey all such books, cabinets, library furniture and apparatus as may be necessary to obtain the objects and effect the purposes of said corporation." The incorporators named in the charter were Heman J. Redfield, Trumbull Cary, Lucius A. Smith, Isaac A. Verplanck, Joshua L. Brown, William G. Bryan, John F. Ernst, Joel Allen, Brannon Young, Seth Wakeman, Frederick Follett, John L. Dorrance and their associates. (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 294)

### 15: Cemeteries

From all indications, all new burials during the fifth decade were in the Batavia Cemetery on the current Harvester Avenue. However, burials that had occurred in the Potters Field area of the South Lyon Street Cemetery were apparently left in place.



### 16: Firefighting

In 1847, the Trustees reported that, pursuant to the vote at the preceding annual Village meeting, they had proceeded to the selection of a site and commenced the building of a suitable engine and hook and ladder house for which they needed to borrow two hundred dollars. (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 294). (The location of the engine house and hook and ladder house mentioned above may have been on Jackson Street.)

Having noted that the Village's fire engine was not satisfactory, also in 1847, the Trustees purchased another engine for a sum of \$700 dollars (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 294-295).

In August of 1850, the Village Trustees purchased, for \$250, a small engine known as the "Yankee." Evidently it was only a slight improvement over the Red Jacket purchased in 1832 and which it replaced. Seaver described its appearance as resembling a "perambulating wash tub." (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 121)

### 17: Healthcare

In 1849, there were seven doctors serving Batavians. Seaver identified them as John Cotes, L. B. Cotes, H. Ganson, C. E. Ford, J. F. Baker, C. D. Griswold, and J. Delamater. (William Seaver 1, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 55-56).

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

The author is unaware of any changes in the care of the handicapped, aged, poor and young occurred during the fifth decade.

### 19: Disasters

On February 17, 1850, Batavia again suffered a major fire. A great amount of property on Main Street was destroyed. It started in a hardware store, a two-story wooden building on the

northwest corner of Main Street and Park Place. There was a strong west wind and flames burned every building eastward all the way to Bank Street. There were many people available to fight the fire, but a lack of sufficient fire-fighting apparatus meant that not much more could be done than to save personal effects. The losses included the hardware store; a wood building serving as an office and residence; a two-story wood building occupied by a millinery and saloon; a two-story wood building occupied by a cabinet shop; a three-story hotel; a two-story building just purchased for occupancy by a bank; and a large two-story building occupied by two doctors. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 74-75)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

The author is unaware of any changes in the area of entertainment and recreation.

### 21: War/impact of war

The only war that directly involved Americans in this decade was the Mexican-American War. It involved a conflict between the United States and Mexican governments that lasted from the Spring of 1846 to the Fall of 1847. It followed in the wake of the 1845 U.S. annexation of Texas. The war ended in a victory for the United States. The treaty ending the war expanded U.S. territory in the Southwest and established the Rio Grande as the southern boundary of the United States. ("Mexican-American War," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 12 February 2014) The Mexican-American War appears to have had no significant impact on Batavia.

### 23: Families/persons of special note

In 1849, William Seaver listed the residents of Batavia who had come here prior to 1810 and were still living. In order, from the earliest immigrant, to the latest, they were:

James Brisbane  
Mrs. Elizabeth Brisbane Stevens (widow of James W. Stevens)  
David E. Evans  
Richard Smith  
Mrs. Margaret Brisbane Cary (wife of Trumbull Cary)  
Trumbull Cary  
Hinsman Holden  
Samuel C. Holden

Nathan Follett  
Mrs. Elizabeth Foote  
Mrs. Van Cleve  
Ebenezer Mix  
Aaron Van Cleve  
Simeon Kellogg

23: Private clubs, social organizations/service organizations/non-profit  
groups providing services

There appear to be no recorded changes in this area during the fifth decade.

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There is nothing new to report from this decade.

25: Urban Renewal

As a result of a major fire, the north side of Main Street from Park Place to Bank Street was rebuilt.



## The Sixth Decade

### Overview

In many respects, this was the calm before the storm in that it marked the decade that preceded the Civil War. The community continued to grow, there were improvements in the infrastructure, new sources of energy emerged, and the Richmonds, Dean and Mary, moved to Batavia. But, otherwise, it was a rather unremarkable decade.

For the first time, the Federal census distinguished between the Village and the Town. So, it was now possible to determine with certainty the exact number of residents in Batavia. According to the census, by 1860 the population had grown to 2,560 individuals ("Genesee Community Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014).

### 1: Infrastructure

As with previous decades, the streets were still not paved, unless one counts the plank road of the Buffalo and Batavia Plank Road Company beginning at the western edge of the Village (Stafford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 295). There were still no public sewers and there was no public water system. However, there were two major advances.

One of the advances in infrastructure involved the installation of streetlights in 1855 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 9). The lights were lit by gas and there were 20 in all (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 252). They required a lamplighter to make his rounds nightly to ignite the gas and, presumably a few hours later, to extinguish the flame. (The source of the gas will be described in the later section titled, "Energy sources.") Compared to the extensive and bright lighting of public areas common today, 20 "puny" gas lights may not seem like much, but compared to the absence of any illumination at all before 1855, it probably seemed very impressive at the time.

The second major advance in the Village's infrastructure involved sidewalks. Prior to the mid-1850s, "improved" sidewalks were made of wood. Wood, of course, had one big

drawback. It rotted after a few years. So, there began a drive to use stone slabs, a drive that appears to have been spearheaded by Maj. Henry Glowacki when he was serving as a Village Trustee (Larry Barnes, *A Polish Revolutionary in Batavia, His Wife and Descendants, and a House Divided* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2008] p. 3). The reader may recall from the chapter on the fourth decade that Glowacki had arrived in Batavia as a teenager who could speak no English, but rather quickly rose to prominence and served the community in many positions of importance of which Village Trustee was but one.

Apparently there was some resistance to using stone slabs since the campaign to improve the sidewalks was described as having been a "strenuous" one. However, in 1857 the first stones were laid ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1938), beginning with a stretch in front of the Eagle Tavern at the corner of Main and Court streets. It was reported that the placement of these stones was celebrated on Christmas Eve with dancing by gaslight ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 January 1948). It may be difficult to imagine how stone sidewalks could have generated enough excitement to warrant dancing in the street, but that's probably because it is difficult to place ourselves in the context of life in small-town America, ca. 1850.

## 2: Transportation

From the standpoint of transportation, the big news in Batavia remained the railroads. One continued to get around town mainly on foot or by horse-drawn conveyances. Travel to other nearby communities also remained largely a matter of using a carriage, wagon, or sleigh if not travelling on foot or by horseback. However, travel of any distance increasingly took advantage of the relative speed and comfort offered by trains. This was especially the case as more rail lines were built.

On January 1, 1853, the first train of cars on the Canandaigua and Niagara Falls Railroad arrived in Batavia from the east. Two weeks later, the line was opened to the public. The company had been formed in December of 1850 which suggests it may have taken nearly two years to obtain sufficient capital and to purchase the right-of-ways necessary for construction of the railroad. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 69)

In May of 1853, all the several railroad lines between Buffalo and Albany, including the Tonawanda Railroad, were consolidated into a single company: the New York Central Railroad (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 6). Dean Richmond played a major role in obtaining the necessary State approval

and became the second President of the railroad company ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973). Soon after formation of the New York Central Railroad, Dean Richmond moved to Batavia. There will be more about his family and home in later sections of this chapter.

In 1854, the Buffalo, Corning, and New York Railroad was completed to Batavia and the first train arrived from Corning on February 1 of that year. The line was opened to the public a week later. This railroad eventually passed into the hands of the Erie Railroad Co. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 69)

In 1858, the Canandaigua and Niagara Falls Railroad, referred to earlier, became a branch of the New York Central Railroad, necessitating a change in the width between the rails (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 69). This railroad eventually came to be known as the "Peanut line" (*A History of Rochester New York Railroads*, online, accessed 21 February 2014).

### 3: Housing

The most significant development of this decade was the purchase and expansion of a building that came to be the finest structure among the many imposing homes on East Main Street--the Richmond Mansion. It was located on the north side of East Main Street between Summit and Ross streets.

The reader may recall from the 1831-1840 chapter that Col. William Davis had built a fine home on East Main Street ca. 1839. Then, he experienced a reversal of fortune during the later years of the financial panic which had begun in 1837. Consequently, when Davis died in 1842, his wife went into bankruptcy and those who held a mortgage against the home foreclosed on the property. The house was eventually purchased in 1846 by Judge Edgar Dibble who lived there until 1854.

In 1854, Dean and Mary Richmond, who had been living in Attica, moved to Batavia and purchased the former Davis property ("Deeds," Libre 89: 20, Genesee County Clerk's Office, Batavia, N.Y.) from Edgar Dibble and his wife. (For whatever reason, the deed transferred the property just to Mary, not to both Dean and Mary.) In the next 20 to 30 years, the home was remodeled and enlarged, initially by Dean and Mary, but after Dean's death in 1866, by Mary alone. From this point forward, the former Davis home was always known as "the Richmond Mansion." ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973)

Features of the mansion included a wide front verandah with stately columns two stories high. The roof was ornamented by a balustrade extending around the structure. Spacious rooms, including a ballroom, were located in wings that extended either side of the center of the mansion. A wide hall ran down the center. The design of the basement permitted horse-drawn wagons to be driven inside for unloading supplies including coal for the three furnaces that eventually heated the mansion. ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973)

Regal splendor prevailed throughout the mansion. Carved rosewood and highly polished mahogany were the dominant woods. The rooms were decorated with plaster moldings and ceiling center medallions from which many chandeliers were suspended. The ballroom featured French plate mirrors and yellow velvet carpeting. All of the fittings of the bathroom connected to the master bedroom were of solid silver. ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973)

Reportedly, the Richmonds were wonderful hosts and entertained lavishly. Such occasions included an annual ball. Many prominent men on both business and pleasure jaunts were said to frequent the mansion. ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973)

The Richmond Mansion eventually became the property of the Batavia School District and was torn down in 1970. More information about the mansion will be presented in a later chapter.

The Richmond Mansion was not the only imposing structure to make an appearance in the sixth decade. Another was the home of George Brisbane completed about 1855 (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 9). It still stands, located on the north side of West Main Street, between Jefferson and Porter avenues and just west of the post office.

George Brisbane was the younger son of James and Mary Brisbane. Recall that James was the first merchant in Batavia, its first postmaster, and an entrepreneur of the first order. When James died in 1851, ten years after the death of Mary, George and his brother, Albert, inherited a significant fortune. George used part of his inheritance to erect a mansion situated on land that had belonged to the Brisbane family going back to 1802. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] pp. 8-15)



George Brisbane's mansion, topped by a cupola and a slate roof, was the first structure to be built in Batavia from pressed brick. The latter required hiring masons from Buffalo because there was none in Batavia who could lay them properly. At the time, when standing in the cupola, one could look out over the roof tops of most of the houses in the Village. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] pp. 18-20)

Reportedly, there were 30 or more rooms in the mansion. An octagonal rotunda in the center of the building admitted daylight from the cupola. On the east side of a central hallway was a room extending the length of the building and measuring 16 x 45 ft. Three sets of double doors opened into this room. On the west side of the hallway were two large rooms. To the rear of these rooms, in a wing off the main building, were a dining room, kitchen, and servants' quarters. In the rear of the first floor was a winding staircase with a landing half way up. On the second floor were seven large rooms. A walnut railing surrounded the octagonal opening that extended down to the first floor. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009, pp. 18-20)

The Brisbane Mansion eventually became City property. Information about that event will be presented in a later chapter.

### 4: Energy sources

From all appearances, wood was still being widely used for heating and cooking and candles for illumination, in the sixth decade. As noted in the last chapter, coal as a heat source may also have begun to appear in Batavia along with lamps fueled with the oil of sperm whales. Then, two developments occurred in the 1850s that significantly changed how illumination was achieved: the development, first, of gas for lights, followed shortly by the invention of kerosene for lamps.

Gas lights arrived in Batavia with the organization of the Batavia Gas Light Co. in 1855. In addition to the 20 gas street lights mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, eventually 150 consumers were served by the company. The latter used gas lights to illuminate their homes or businesses. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 252)

Storage of the gas sold by the Batavia Gas Light Co. was in gas holders located south of Ellicott Street and east of Evans Street. While at first there was just one, eventually there were two gas holders, round buildings made of brick. The first structure, built in 1855, was eventually demolished. A larger one, built many years later, still stands after being remodeled

for a doctor's office. The first gas holder had a capacity of 13,500 cu. ft. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 252). The second one could hold 35,000 cu. ft. of gas (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 97). Early brick gas holders such as these were generally built around a deep pit foundation which was kept full of water, so presumably the Batavia gas holders were constructed in the same manner. A steel tank, open at the bottom, would rise and fall according to how much gas was being stored at the time. The water formed a seal at the bottom of the tank to keep the gas from escaping. ("Gas Holder," *MGP Glossary, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*, online, accessed 21 February 2014)

The gas sold by the Batavia Gas Light Co. was not natural gas, but instead manufactured gas made from either crude oil or coal. While one source claims that crude oil was used ("Batavia Walking Tour," *Genesee County History Department*, online, accessed 21 February 2014), annual reports by the company suggest otherwise ("Annual Report of the Batavia Gas Light Co.," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 January 1863; "Annual Report of the Batavia Gas Light Co.," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 January 1865). The disbursements on the balance sheets of these reports included large sums for coal, but nothing for crude oil.

Use of kerosene for lighting was first successfully achieved in the mid-1840s by distilling coal. However, kerosene was initially too expensive until research showed that it also could be refined from petroleum. That set off a global search for oil and, in the view of some, ushered in the era of petroleum. By 1860, close to 30 refineries were producing kerosene in the U.S. At 30 cents a gallon, kerosene became an inexpensive commodity. Before long, kerosene lamps were used almost everywhere people gathered. (Cline, "The History of Kerosene," *History Magazine*, August/September 2007, p. 26)

It is reasonable to assume that kerosene lamps became common place in Batavia by the end of the sixth decade, just as they were elsewhere. That seems especially so considering that many of the refineries producing kerosene included such relatively nearby locations as Northwestern Pennsylvania and Southwestern Ontario.

## 5: Communication

There does not seem to have been anything new in the area of communication during this decade. The use of telegraphs, first available in the previous decade, would have remained the sole means of instantaneous communication at a distance.

## 6: County and village boundaries

By the amended charter adopted in April, 1853, the bounds of the village were fixed as follows: Beginning in the east line of lot number forty-six (as laid down on the map or survey of the Village of Batavia into Village lots made by the Holland Land Company by Joseph Ellicott, surveyor) at a point half a mile northwardly from Genesee Street; thence westwardly parallel to said Genesee Street and half a mile distant therefrom to a point two chains and fifty links westwardly of the east line of lot number sixteen; thence still westwardly parallel to Batavia Street and half a mile distant therefrom to the west line of lot number eight; thence southwardly on the west line of lot number eight to Batavia Street, thence continuing southerly in the same direction to the south bank of the Tonawanda Creek; thence up said Creek on the south bank thereof to the west line of lot number fifty-seven; thence southerly upon the said west line of lot number fifty-seven to the plank road of the Buffalo and Batavia Plank Road Company; thence easterly along said plank road to the west line of lot number fifty-five; thence southerly on the west line of said lot number fifty-five to the south line of the second or straight line of railway of the Buffalo and Rochester Railroad Company; thence easterly on the southerly line of said railway to the western bank of the Tonawanda Creek; thence up said Creek on the westerly and southerly bank thereof to a point twenty rods due south from the street or highway now known as Chestnut Street; thence eastwardly to the northerly bank of the Tonawanda Creek, at the point where the east line of lot number twenty-nine intersects the same; thence eastwardly in a direct line to the point where the east line of lot number forty-seven intersects Big Tree Street; and thence northwardly on the east line of lots number forty-seven and forty-six to the place of beginning. (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston, Boston History Company, 1899] pp.295-296) See the Village of Batavia map with lot numbers as surveyed by Joseph Ellicott.

## 7: Government/governing structure

Recall that in May of 1850, the Town of Batavia had leased the old Court House from the County. The terms of the agreement required the Town to rehabilitate the structure, but when workmen were hired to perform the work, they soon abandoned the task, claiming that the structure was unfit for repair.

In 1851, the Town of Batavia gave the Court House plus \$1,000 to four men: Levi Otis, Benjamin Pringle, Rufus Robertson, and William Mallory. In accepting the building, these four agreed to replace the roof, install new windows and doors, raise the building from its foundation to fit up the basement for the Village fire department, convert the first floor into

offices, convert the second and third stories into one large room, erect stairways in each of the two semi-octagons, plus allow the Town certain free use. This arrangement seemed to have been inappropriately treated as a sale of the property with Otis et. al. assuming ownership. Somehow, the fact that the building had been leased, not sold to the Town of Batavia, and therefore not property that the Town could legitimately sell, was not realized until nearly 65 years later. (Discovery of that fact will be covered in a later chapter.) In the next 47 years "ownership" of the old Court House changed hands an incredible 11 times. (Larry Barnes, *Hey Mister! Want to buy a Courthouse?* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2014] p. 2)

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

As reported in the previous chapter, a new jail was erected in 1850. However, it was not formally occupied until the beginning of the current decade, February 15, 1851. As noted before, living quarters for the Sheriff and his family were a part of the design; and William Seaver observed that the quarters were suitable for a large family. Recall that the previous jail was noted for jail breaks. Seaver also observed that this new facility, by contrast, was so well built that "if a fellow [could] dig out of it without waking [then] Sheriff Parrish, he ought to have a medal." (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 47-48).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

The author has found no records from this decade that indicate any significant changes in the retail establishments or other commercial enterprises in this decade. Nonetheless, it is likely that businesses changed hands and older businesses were replaced by new ones of the same nature.

### 10: Factories/industries

It appears that the most significant new factory or industry of this decade was the erection of the gas works by the Batavia Gas Light Co. already described in an earlier section of this chapter.

### 11: Banking/financial services

The Bank of Genesee continued its operations in Batavia during the sixth decade. However, the Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Genesee moved to Buffalo in 1852 where, presumably, its

name was changed. Furthermore, the Exchange Bank of Genesee, which had moved from Alexander to Batavia in 1850, discontinued business and closed down in 1858. On the other hand, a new bank appeared in Batavia in May of 1860 when the Farmers Bank of Attica moved to the Village and occupied the structure previously used by the Exchange Bank of Genesee. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp.81-82)

### 12: Education

After Joseph Ellicott died, his mansion on West Main Street became the home of his nephew, David Ellicott Evans. Evans lived there until his own death in May of 1850. Soon after, the building was acquired by Ruth Beardsley Bryan who operated a seminary for young women from 1852 until 1879. The seminary was essentially a "finishing school" where young women were sent by well-to-do families for training in "gentility" as the primary objective. The students boarded at the facility and were taught such things as music, French, German, embroidery, and penciling and painting in water colors. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 October 1951.)

In 1853, a New York State law was passed which provided for union free schools, authorizing residents of school districts to elect Trustees, and permitting a levy of tax on property to pay for salaries and other expenses (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 393) That same year, the office of School Commissioner for Genesee County was created (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 46). Then, in November of 1853, by a vote of 102 to 34, residents of Batavia approved creation of Union Free School District No. 2 and elected a six-member Board of Education (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 209). A union free school district was a school district, generally formed from one or more common school districts, to operate a high school program, something which common school districts could not do ("Union Free School District, definition," *Spackenkill Union Free School*, online, accessed 24 February 2014).

About 1855 or shortly after, a school known as the Batavia Collegiate Institute was situated at the former site of the Presbyterian Church, the corner of Main Street and Jefferson Avenue. The institute apparently lasted until 1865 when its building was destroyed by fire. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 108).

### 13: Religion

By 1855, the Presbyterian Church at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Main Street was very much out of repair and a decision was made to build a new structure. The new building, located at the corner of West Main and Liberty streets, was opened in February of 1856. However, election night in November of that same year, a severe wind blew off the steeple (and apparently at least part of the wooden tower as well). The bell fell to the ground, but fortunately was not damaged. In the summer of 1859, a stone tower was erected, made of the same stone as the body of the church, but this time without a steeple. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p.108) The building still stands in 2015.

In 1858, a group organized a Methodist church and purchased a lot on the corner of Ellicott and Evans streets as a site for a building. However, for unknown reasons, the project was soon abandoned and the society ceased to exist. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 95)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

As nearly as can be determined, the Batavia Lyceum, incorporated in the previous decade, continued to function as a library.

### 15: Cemeteries

In 1852, a large addition was made to the Batavia Cemetery by E. H. Fish and, still later, by Mrs. E. P. Morse and Mrs. Mary Richmond (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 87).

According to Seaver, in 1853 a lot between the New York Central Railroad and Ellicott Street was purchased by Bishop John Timon of Buffalo for a Catholic Cemetery. It was consecrated on September 4, 1853. The first body interred was that of James Scanlan who had died in 1852 and was initially buried in "the Protestant Cemetery," presumably meaning the Batavia Cemetery. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 87) This cemetery now, if not then, is identified as St. Joseph's Cemetery.

According to Ruth McEvoy, about 1858 the Rev. Francis O'Farrall purchased a small area along Cemetery Street (currently Harvester Avenue) for Catholic burials (Ruth M. McEvoy,

*History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 106). Although the record is not clear, this was apparently an addition to the area purchased by Bishop Timon in 1853.

### 16: Firefighting

In 1851, the Village Trustees “caused to be built, pursuant to the vote of the electors of the Village,” two large reservoirs, a well, and a pump, all enclosed with a railing, so that each reservoir could be filled and kept supplied with water for the fire department. That same year, they also exchanged the old Red Jacket engine for a new one costing \$200 above the trade-in. (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 295)

The engine which had been procured by trading in the Red Jacket engine was found not to be of sufficient power and, in 1852, the trustees sold it for \$200 and bought a new engine for \$756. The same year, they purchased a new hose cart and 200 feet of new hose. Also in 1852, they sold the engine house on Jackson Street and leased the basement of the old Court House for the use of the fire department. (Safford E. North, *Our County and It's People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 295) Recall from the earlier section in this chapter titled, “Government, governing structure,” that this was the point at which the old Court House was being raised above its original foundation.

### 17: Healthcare

The author is unaware of any significant changes in healthcare during the sixth decade.

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

The author is unaware of any significant changes in care of the handicapped, aged, poor, or young occurred during the sixth decade.

### 19: Disasters

For once, it appears Batavia managed to avoid any disastrous fires. Furthermore, there were no other recorded disasters during the sixth decade.

## 20: Entertainment and recreation

As in previous decades, presumably there was at least one local band, social gatherings at individuals' homes, visiting theatrical groups, and entertainment in local taverns. The annual balls which began to occur in the Richmond Mansion may have been a new diversion.

## 21: War/impact of war

In the sixth decade, there were no wars that had any apparent impact on Batavians. However, this was about to dramatically change as a great civil war loomed immediately ahead.

## 22: Families/persons of special note

Beyond question, the family of note in this decade are the new arrivals in the village, Dean and Mary Richmond. Dean Richmond lost both his parents as a teenager while the family was living in the Syracuse area. He took over his father's business in the salt trade and turned it into a successful operation. During the ensuing years, Dean Richmond became a major player in Great Lakes shipping. When he developed an interest in railroads, he was the primary figure in gaining State approval for the creation of the New York Central Railroad, eventually becoming President of the Central. Dean Richmond was also successful in politics, becoming Chairman of the New York State Democratic Party for 10 or more years. At one point, he was given serious consideration as the Democratic candidate for the U.S. presidency. All of this success occurred despite being virtually illiterate, a little rough around the edges, and a man whose grammar was said to be atrocious. ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973)

Mary Richmond also lost her parents while still a child. But, in contrast to her husband, became a cultured and gracious person. However, like Dean, she was also very astute in business matters; and following her husband's death in 1866, she served on boards of several local firms and grew the family's fortune to ever greater levels. Prior to Dean's death, she also bore eight children over a period of just 17 years. ("Dean Richmond, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Capitalist Baron," *The Richmond Family News-Journal*, October 1973) There will be additional references to Mary Richmond in later chapters.



23: Private clubs, social organizations/service organizations/non-profit  
groups providing services

There may have been clubs, organizations, or groups that emerged during the years 1851 to 1860, but none appear to have been recorded.

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There is nothing new to report from this decade.

Urban Renewal

With the absence of any great fires, there was no significant replacement of older structures.



## The Seventh Decade

### Overview

As for the nation as a whole, the American Civil War dominated the lives of Batavians for the first half of the decade. The community contributed to the war effort in terms of both men and materials. More about this follows in the section titled, "War/effects of war."

Once again, a devastating fire swept through the downtown area. As an outcome, directly or indirectly, Batavia's first building code came into being, the beginning of a municipal water system emerged, and the appearance of the downtown area was significantly transformed. More about these developments are in the following sections titled, "Disasters," "Infrastructure," and "Government/governing structure."

Crime took a turn for the worse with multiple arsons over a four- or five-year period. When the cases were finally solved, the perpetrators were among the most unlikely group of residents. See the section titled, "Crime/crime control/law enforcement."

Finally, the population continued to grow. By 1870, according to the Federal census, 3,890 people lived in Batavia ("Genesee Community Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This was an increase of over 50% from a decade earlier.

### 1: Infrastructure

The most significant improvement in infrastructure was a set of hydrants for the purpose of providing water to fight fires in the downtown area. It served as the forerunner of a Village-wide municipal water system.

A proposal to provide hydrants was first advanced no later than 1868 ("Batavia Water Works," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 October 1868). Actual construction took place in 1869. Hydrants were located in four places: the corner of Main and State, the corner of Main and Jackson, the corner of Main and Center, and on Jackson near the railroad tracks. ("Batavia Water Works," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1869) A pumping station for supplying water appears to have been near the Creek south of the intersection of West Main

and Ellicott streets. A total of 1-1/4 miles of pipe were required for the installation (*The Western New Yorker*, Warsaw, N.Y., 23 December 1869).

The hydrants were not pressurized unless a fire had broken out. It then took 14 minutes to reach 70 lb. of steam pressure, although the system could operate with as little as 25 lb. At 70 lb. of pressure, streams of water could exceed the height of the tallest church steeple. It was claimed that there was "sufficient force to...quench the hottest fire." ("Batavia Water Work," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1869)

The 60 horsepower steam engine was manufactured in Lockport ("What We See and What We Hear," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 July 1869). The engine, plus the hydrants, pipes, engine house, and firemen's building cost about \$30,000 (*The Western New Yorker*, Warsaw, N.Y., 23 December 1869). According to William Seaver, the only fault of the system was that it required many men to get the engine running, to tend the fire, and to fan the flames ("Batavia Water Work," *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1869).

## 2: Transportation

In the decade 1861-1870, expansion of railroad facilities continued to occur. For example, in 1861, an iron railroad bridge was erected over the Tonawanda Creek just east of the current Walnut Street. In 1866, a repair shop was built at the corner of Ellicott and Liberty streets. At about the same time, a freight house was erected on Center Street. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 68)

## 3: Housing

With an increase of over 1,300 persons in the village during the seventh decade, there necessarily was extensive new housing. The most impressive new structure of this decade was the Law Mansion located near the southwestern corner of the current intersection of Walnut and South Main streets.

George Law, the owner, was a self-made millionaire who started out as a farm boy from Washington County northeast of Albany, New York. By the 1850s, he was a multi-millionaire and lived in a mansion on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in New York City. During the years from 1858 to 1864, Law acquired over 200 acres on the south side of the Village of Batavia and extending into the Town of Batavia. This land included a 7-acre plot on which the Law Mansion was eventually built. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of the Law Mansion* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2007] pp. 3-4.)

It is not at all clear what motivated George Law in the acquisition of land in the Batavia area. There is no indication that Law himself ever set foot in Genesee County. In 1863, Sarah V. Law, a daughter of George Law, married Major Laurence Williams, a descendent of Martha Washington by her first marriage. The next year, George began building his daughter and son-in-law the building that thereafter came to be called, "the Law Mansion." Following completion of the structure in 1865, the Williamses occupied the property. However, George Law retained title to the mansion and land. It was said that originally there were no other houses near it and great barns standing in the rear gave the place the appearance of a Virginia estate. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of the Law Mansion* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2007] pp. 4-5)

The Williamses lived in Batavia no more than 10 years. Eventually, after George Law's death in 1881, the mansion passed to a succession of other owners. Finally, in 1903, it was purchased by John Pickert who, a year later, divided the structure into three separate houses. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of the Law Mansion* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2007] pp. 5-7) Two of the resulting houses still exist, one at 5-7 South Main Street and the other at 3 South Main Street.

### 4: Energy sources

There appear to be no new developments in energy sources during the years 1861-1870.

### 5: Communication

There also appear to be no new developments in communications.

### 6: County and village boundaries

There were no changes in County or Village boundaries.

### 7: Government/governing structure

After another disastrous fire downtown in November of 1863, Village officials took steps to lessen the likelihood of further such conflagrations. In what appears to have been the first implementation of a building code in Batavia, wooden buildings were prohibited in the heart of the Village. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 77)

The old County Courthouse, now called Ellicott Hall, continued to change hands with the "buyers" and "sellers" involved apparently oblivious to the fact that the building actually belonged to Genesee County.

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

During the seventh decade, there were two outbreaks of arson. The first had started in December of 1860 and continued to April of 1861. During that time, a number of barns were torched on the west side of Batavia. In an effort to catch the arsonists, a \$300 reward was offered by the Village Trustees for the apprehension and conviction of the guilty parties. This led to two men and two boys being arrested and jailed. However, only one, John McGraw, was tried; and he was not convicted. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 75-76)

After he was found innocent of charges, John McGraw volunteered to serve in the Union forces where he saw action that led to his death. Later, circumstances allegedly came to light that, in the eyes of local residents, proved McGraw to have been the guilty party after all. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 75-76)

The second and worse outbreak of arson started in June of 1864 and continued until September of 1865. During that time, 22 fires broke out in Batavia, nearly all of which were traced to arson. At frequent intervals, hardly two weeks passed without a fire. The fires were not limited to any particular area of the Village or to any particular type of building. Large rewards were offered and various schemes tried in an effort to catch the arsonists. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 77-78)

Efforts to discover the guilty individuals finally met success in the late summer of 1865. It was discovered that there was a group of likely villains led by Philip J. Soulier and including Jacob Brill, Alfred Bender, William Dickelman, Henry Dickelman, Adam Feurstein and David Manning. All were young men, Village residents, and volunteer firemen. Several made confessions. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 77-78)

In November of 1865, 17 indictments against the "gang" were handed down by a grand jury. Following a trial, Soulier, Brill, and Bender were sentenced to Auburn Prison for six years, 11

months. Henry Dickelman was sentenced to two years in prison. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 77-78)

During the same time period as the second set of arsons, a Samuel Buchanan was arrested and convicted for allegedly burning a barn owned by Mrs. J. C. Smith. However, during the proceedings against Soulier's gang, one of the group confessed to the Smith barn fire. Subsequently, Buchanan was pardoned. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 77-78)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

The types of retail establishments previously identified in Batavia presumably continued to exist. However, in records of the businesses destroyed in the fire of 1863, two appeared that have not previously been noted by the author. One was a shoe dealer, as opposed to a shoe maker, suggesting that manufactured shoes were now available. The other was a liquor store, the first apparent mention of a retail establishment strictly devoted to carry out sales of alcoholic beverages. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 76-77)

### 10: Factories/industries

Breweries and malt houses continued to play an important role in Batavia's economy. As reported in the chapter on the fifth decade, in 1850 John Eagar purchased the former stone church built on the northeast corner of West Main and North Lyon streets by the Methodists in the 1820s and converted it into a brewery. This brewery burned in 1862. Following the fire, Eagar erected a new brewery on the south side of West Main Street opposite the former location. This three-story building, measuring 50 x 125 ft., was also used to house a wholesale liquor store. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 251)

Following the fire in the former brewery building, John Eagar re-roofed the stone structure and fitted it up as a malt house (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 251).

### 11: Banking/financial services

According to Ruth McEvoy, Batavia's newest bank, the First National Bank, was organized in 1864 just after Congress passed a national banking act. It appears to have been located on Main Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 66).

### 12: Education

In the previous chapter, it was noted that there was a Batavia Collegiate Institute, in 1855 or shortly after, situated on the northeast corner of Main and Jefferson streets. Beers, in an apparent reference to the same facility, indicated that an E. Wildman and a Miss McCully taught there in 1864 (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 183). The Batavia Collegiate Institute was destroyed by fire in October of 1865 (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 108).

Within two years, another private institution of learning was operating in Batavia, the Batavia Business University. Established by a W. W. Whitcomb in 1867, it was located at 92 East Main Street. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 239)

Around 1865, the "old Davis house" on Jackson Street, previously acquired and used as St. Joseph's Convent by the Sisters of Mercy, was rebuilt and enlarged. Then a young ladies seminary was housed there. It apparently functioned, in part, as a boarding school. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 89-90)

In February of 1866, Batavia was selected as the site for the New York State School for the Blind. Other communities had also sought the facility. As an inducement to choose Batavia, the community offered the State 50 acres of land valued at \$10,000. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 111-112) Dean Richmond played a key role in purchasing and donating the land ("Fate of Batavia's Richmond Mansion Hangs in Balance," *Buffalo Courier Express*, Buffalo, N.Y., 17 November 1969), hence the reason for the street in front of the school being named "Richmond Avenue."



The contract for the construction of the State School was granted to Henry T. Rogers of Rochester. Grading of the land commenced in May of 1866 and a cornerstone was laid in September. In July of 1868, the institution was formally transferred to the trustees, the same month that the first Superintendent of the State School, Dr. A. D. Lord, took charge. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 111-112)

From the street, the school appeared to be one large building, but it was actually four separate buildings joined by corridors around a central court. The buildings housed offices, parlors, classrooms, dormitories, kitchens, dining rooms, and a chapel. When the facility opened, the Superintendent had living quarters there. Most of the teaching staff and many of the housekeeping staff also lived in the school. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 96)

The first student arrived at the State School for the Blind on September 1, 1868 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 95). The school opened the next day, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, with 40 pupils. A total of 74 were enrolled in the first year (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp.111-112).

In 1868, the Sisters of Mercy established an academy in a stone building on Jackson Street. It was in the same structure that had previously served as St. Joseph's Church. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p.92). Incorporated as St. Joseph's Academy in April of that year, the school was governed by four Trustees: Stanislaus McGarr (Mother Superior), Rose Markham, Alexis Hennessy, and Teresa Moran (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Co., 1849] p. 90). The structure in question may have been the building standing at 19-21 Jackson Street at the time this book was written in 2015. (See *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948.)

### 13: Religion

Free Methodists had been meeting in the area since 1859. Then they formed an organized society in 1861. Twenty years later, they purchased the former Holland Land Office, which had been used for a number of other uses including that of a school, and converted it into a church. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 116) It is not known where they met between 1861 and 1881.

In August of 1863, a group met at the house of John V. Horn in the Town of Batavia to incorporate as "Trustees of the Evangelical Reformed Lutheran German Church." They built a small frame church on School Street and met there for two years. Services at that time were led by Louis Witt. After only two years, the congregation collapsed and the society became extinct. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp.92-93)

In an earlier chapter, it was noted that the Baptist church, which had been erected in 1836 on the west side of Jackson Street, was in need of serious repairs by the mid-40s. In 1864, the building again required significant work and was temporarily vacated. After completion of the second round of repairs in July of 1864, the church was once more reoccupied. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p.97)

In a previous chapter, it was noted that the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church had built a church in 1841 on the east side of Jackson Street. In 1866, this building was sold to William M. Terry who converted it to other purposes. Then the Methodists built a new brick building on East Main Street immediately east of the Bank of Genesee which, in turn, was on the northeast corner of Bank and West Main streets. This new building was dedicated in September of 1869. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 222-223)

St. Joseph's congregation, which had been established in 1849 and had been meeting in a stone building on Jackson Street, by 1864 found its existing facility inadequate. That year, a lot was purchased on the northeast corner of East Main and Summit streets. The cornerstone for a new building was laid in August of 1864. The building itself was dedicated in May of 1869. A year later, an organ was purchased. The lot had cost \$2,500, the building nearly \$30,000, and the organ another \$2,200. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 89) The stone building on Jackson Street may have been the structure standing at 19-21 Jackson at the time this book was being written in 2015. (See the references to St. Joseph's Academy in the "Education" section above.)

#### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

Although it is not certain, the Batavia Lyceum incorporated in the 1840s was probably still operating as the community's library in the 1860s. However, that was about to change in the 1870s.

### 15: Cemeteries

In the period 1867 to 1868, nearly \$1,500 was raised by J. G. Russell, B. Griswold, O. M. Joslyn, and J. R. Mitchell for improvements to the Batavia Cemetery (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p.87). Among other things, this money was used to repair fences and improve the walks and drives (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 187). The Richmond Mausoleum was built in 1869 at a cost of \$28,000. The mausoleum has been the place of interment for many members of the Richmond family. ("The Richmond Mausoleum," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 April 1886)

### 16: Firefighting

In July of 1862, the Village Trustees divided Batavia into four fire districts. When a fire occurred, a general alarm was first sounded, then the fire bell was rung a number of times corresponding to the district in which the fire was occurring. This sequence was repeated for 30 minutes. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 298-299)

A month after establishing the fire districts, the Trustees incorporated a single "Batavia Fire Department." Before then, there were multiple fire companies existing simultaneously. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 298-299)

### 17: Healthcare

In 1865, there were two practicing dentists: Nelson Stevens and H. H. Benjamin. Stevens was the first dentist in the County. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 258)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In April of 1868, the St. Thomas Orphan Asylum was incorporated. It was attached to the St. Joseph's Convent and School on East Main Street behind St. Joseph's Church. The asylum provided a home for quite a number of children. The first Trustees were Rev. Thomas Cunningham, Patrick Ward, Stanislaus McGarr (Mother Superior), Michael Daily, and John

Moynihan. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 90]

### 19: Disasters

In November of 1863, another massive fire struck downtown Batavia. It started in the middle of the night in a shoe store at 76 Main Street operated by an A. Joslyn. Before it ended, the fire destroyed six wooden buildings occupied by 12 or more individuals and businesses. The losses included:

1. A small 1-story building at 68 Main Street occupied by Samuel Palmer and used as a shoe store.
2. A 2-story frame building at 70 Main Street owned by Mrs. C. P. Parsons and occupied by Samuel Cooper, a harness maker.
3. A 2-story double frame building on the west corner of Russell Place, the estate of John Kenyon, and occupied by E.L. and G. D. Kenyon, grocers. It also housed a hotel operated by Washburn and Avery.
4. A 2-story frame building on the east corner of Russell Place, owned by Mrs. C. Kirkham and occupied by G. W. Hull, a shoe dealer, and G. and H. Steuber who sold cabinet ware.
5. A 2-story frame building at 76 Main Street, owned by John Friedley and occupied by Almerin Joslyn, a shoe dealer. This building also contained the Town of Batavia records, all of which were destroyed.
6. A long-fronted, 2-story frame building at 78-80-82 Main Street, owned by Jacob Baker and X. Besinger and occupied by J. I. Baker, shoe maker; Theodore Rosentian's liquor store; N.A. C. Wilder News Room; and the Altmen and Co. clothing store.

The heat from the fire was reported to have been so intense that buildings on the other side of Main Street were threatened. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 776-77)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Beers made a passing reference to a concert hall being located at the corner of Main and State streets during this decade. He stated that the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church reportedly worshiped there in the years 1866 to 1869 when it was between buildings of its own. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-*

1890 [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 222) Nothing further is known about this hall.

### 21: War/impact of war

Much has been written about the American Civil War, 1861-1865. Therefore, this section of this chapter will be limited to just some specific facts pertaining directly to Batavia.

Perhaps the best recalled of Batavia's civil war soldiers is Charles Rand. An official Congressional investigation established that he was the first in the Nation to volunteer when President Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers was received by telegraph, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1861, at the Eagle Hotel here in Batavia. Maj. Henry Glowacki read the message and then turned to the little crowd gathered about him to discuss the situation. When Glowacki asked who would be the first to volunteer, Rand stepped forward and his name was placed at the top of the list immediately telegraphed to Washington. (Dan Winegar, "Modest Memorial Sought," *The Daily News*, 20 September 1991) Charles Rand resided at 4 Liberty Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 July 1936).

On April 18<sup>th</sup> of 1861, a call was made for 500 men from the County. On April 29<sup>th</sup> of 1861, the first company was formed, commanded by A. T. Root. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 94-95)

Early in 1861, a committee was appointed in Batavia to solicit funds for the support of those families with men who enlisted. Similar committees of three were appointed elsewhere in the County. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 94-95)

Also in 1861, "patriotic ladies" of Batavia and other parts of the County organized an association for supplying soldiers in the field with comforts and luxuries that the government did not provide. That included such items as flannels, articles of clothing, and havelocks. (Havelocks were pieces of cloth for military caps that extended down the back of a soldier's neck to provide protection from sun and weather.) Items were also provided for the sick and wounded. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 95)

The surviving records of men who served in the Civil War do not distinguish between those from the Village versus those from the Town. Consequently, the numbers which follow below include both. However, the majority most likely were from the Village.

The number of men who served in the conflict was around 780. Of these, at least 51 died on the battle field. At least another 17 died in Confederate prisons. And at least another 61 died of disease or their wounds. (Civil War registration cards, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.) The number of dead could be greater, since the records for some of the soldiers are incomplete.

Among those who survived battles, at least 94 were discharged due to disabilities, presumably from wounds in most instances. However, according to the records, many of these men later reenlisted. (Civil War registration cards, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.) It is not possible to tell whether reenlistment was possible because these individuals had regained normal functioning or because the standards for enlistment had fallen later in the war.

Not all enlistees served honorably. At least 48 men deserted, some reportedly fleeing to Canada. At least one soldier was sentenced to death for cowardice. One was hung for raping an "aged woman." (Civil War registration cards, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.)

### 22: Families/persons of special note

In August of 1871, William Seaver, one of the most prominent residents of Batavia, died at the age of 82. Seaver immigrated from Albany to Batavia in 1817. For nearly 50 years he operated drug, book, and printing businesses. For many years, he was also editor and owner of the *Spirit of the Times* newspaper. In addition to these business activities, Seaver served as Postmaster, was the first Captain of the first fire company, was an early President of the Village, and served as Senior Warden of St. James Episcopal Church. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 195) As indicated earlier in this book, William Seaver wrote the first history of Batavia, one published in 1849.

23: Private clubs, social organizations/service organizations/non-profit  
groups providing services

The first of two groups of Odd Fellows, Batavia Lodge No. 197, organized in August of 1865. It survived for 100 years (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 138).

By the seventh decade, it appears that the community had existed sufficiently long that residents began to reflect on its history and those who founded Batavia. In August of 1869, a group meeting at Union Hall in Batavia organized as the Genesee County Pioneer Association. In order to become a member, one had to have resided in the County prior to 1820 or to have been a current resident for at least 30 years. The organization lasted until at least 1906, meeting once a year for speeches about the County's history and to acknowledge the passing of its members. (Genesee County Pioneer Association records, Richmond Memorial Library, Batavia, N.Y.)

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There is nothing new to report from this decade.

25: Urban renewal

As in several earlier instances, fires that burned out significant areas of downtown Batavia led to an unplanned "urban renewal." The fire of November 1863 was an example from the seventh decade. However, this time a newly instituted building code influenced the direction that rebuilding took. An amendment to the Village charter prohibited the erection of any more wooden buildings in the center of the Village. Consequently, within six months of the 1863 fire, "handsome and substantial" brick buildings appeared. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 77)





## The Eighth Decade

### Overview

Batavia's location on major railroad lines began to pay off in the eighth decade. The first manufacturing plant attracted by superior access to railroads, the Wiard Plow Company, moved to Batavia in 1876. More information about this company is in the following section titled, "Factories/industries."

The community continued to experience significant growth. According to the Federal census, by 1880 there were 4,845 residents ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This was an increase of nearly 1,000 persons over a period of 10 years.

NOTE: In this chapter, the two preceding ones, and the chapter that follows, alert readers may often notice citations for a source with a publication date that seemingly precedes the events for which the citations are given. That source is "William Seaver, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* (Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849)." The dates at issue are those for 1850 and later. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, there are two publications in the local history collection of the Richmond Memorial Library with the above author, title, publisher, and date. However, one is actually the work of David Seaver, son of William Seaver, who was updating his late father's work at the time of his own death in 1892. In order to distinguish between these two publications, the numerals "1" and "2" follow the author's stated name in the citations.

### 1: Infrastructure

In the eighth decade, the streets in Batavia were still unpaved. There were no municipal sewers. Street lighting was still by gas light. However, in this decade, an extensive system of water mains was built. By October of 1877, workmen had laid 20,000 feet of water mains that served most of the principal streets. Hydrants were placed "at all desirable locations." Apparently the primary mains ran down Main Street (and East and West Main), since "strap valves" were reportedly installed at most of the streets "diverging from Main." These valves were provided in order to shut off water flow in an emergency. According to the *Spirit of the Times*, Batavia thus had water for extinguishing fires and for general purposes surpassed by no

other village of its size in the State. ("Batavia Water Works," *Spirit of the Times*," Batavia, N.Y. 13 October 1877)

Water for the mains came from the Tonawanda Creek via a pumping station located south of the intersection of Ellicott and West Main streets. The pump (or pumps) was powered by steam. The steam was generated by either a wood- or coal-fired boiler, probably the latter. (It is known that new boilers installed a decade later were coal-fired, but it is not clear whether the earlier one was.)

### 2: Transportation

The railroads continued to be the preferred means for travel over any significant distance. In 1871, it cost 75 cents to ride from Batavia to Rochester (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 67). That doesn't sound like a whole lot unless one considers that the average laborer in the U.S. earned only 16 cents an hour at that time ("Typical Wages in 1860 Through 1890," *Outrun Change*, online, accessed 30 April 2014).

Local travel continued to be primarily on horseback or by horse-drawn wagons and carriages, if not walking. Reportedly, one day before Christmas in 1872, someone went to the trouble of counting the number of rigs tied up on Main Street between the Court House and Bank Street and discovered the total to be 200 ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 December 1927). Presumably most of these belonged to Christmas shoppers.

Bicycles were just beginning to appear. The first bicycle owned by a Batavian was purchased in 1880 ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1880). This must have been a "penny-farthing" type of bicycle with a large front wheel and small rear one. So-called "safety bicycles," with equally-sized wheels front and rear were not invented until the mid-1880s. ("History of the Bicycle," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 30 April 2014) Penny-farthing bicycles tended to be popular only with young men of means, given that they cost an average worker six month's pay ("A Quick History of Bicycles," *Pedaling History Bicycle Museum*, online, accessed 30 April 2014).

### 3: Housing

There were no mansions constructed during the years 1871-1880, but several homes were erected that were quite elegant. For example, in 1880, Rufus S. Howard had the house constructed that stands at 34 Ellicott Avenue. With its hipped roof, bracketed cornice, and

elongated segmentally arched windows, it displays characteristics of an Italianate style. In 1879, W. H. Homelius built the house at 39 Ellicott Avenue for John H. Ward, Sheriff of Genesee County. The building typifies "Victorian Gothic" design. In 1878, the house at 40 Ross Street was erected for David W. Tomlinson who, among other things, was President of the Batavia Gas Light Company. Of special note is the multi-gable roofline of the corner tower. Another elegant structure from this decade stands at 32 Ellicott Avenue. It was built in 1876 by W. H. Homelius for Howard Pease, a hardware dealer, and displays features of the Second Empire style. One more elegant home of this decade was erected in 1874. Standing on the northeast corner of State Street and Washington Avenue, it exhibits "Victorian Gothic" features. The building was owned by John H. Yates, a preacher, sales clerk, and editor of the *Progressive Batavian*. (Catherine Roth, *Architectural Heritage of Genesee County, N.Y.* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 1988] multiple pages; Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 65)

At the beginning of the eighth decade, one of the first three frame buildings erected in Batavia was still standing, but no longer at its original location. It was now the front part of a dwelling occupied by an Alonzo Leonard and situated on the north side of Ellicott Street. The original building had been located just east of the current post office and was moved to Ellicott Street when the first Presbyterian Church was built in 1822. It was first erected by Isaac Sutherland in 1802 as a carpenter's shop for himself and Samuel F. Geer, but was soon purchased by James Brisbane to use as a store. As of the early 1870s, the building was destined to soon be razed since the then current owner wanted to make room for a better structure. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 48).

As of this decade, a second frame building among the first three erected, was also still standing, and, like the first, had also been moved. That building was constructed in 1802 by Isaac Sutherland about where the current post office stands. It was first occupied by James W. Stevens, but subsequently served as a residence for James and Mary Brisbane. Probably sometime in the 1850s, it was moved across the Tonawanda Creek to a location on present-day South Main Street. David Seaver indicated that it had been well-built and, as of the 1870s, remained in good repair and could be expected to last many more years. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 48).

Finally, as of the eighth decade, the third frame building among the first three also remained in existence, but in two pieces at two new locations, one piece just west of the Land Office building and the other piece located somewhere on present-day Jefferson Avenue. Dating to ca. 1802, the original frame structure was built by William Munger and then enlarged by

William Keyes as an addition to a famous log tavern known as "the Keyes House." The Keyes House reportedly stood on the site of the current police station, i.e., the former Brisbane Mansion. (William Seaver, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 48-49)

### 4: Energy sources

There appear to have been no new developments in energy sources during the years 1871-1880.

### 5: Communications

*The Daily News* was founded on June 25, 1878 by Malcom D. Mix, Samuel P. Mix, and W. H. Bradish. Its offices were located on the third floor of the building at 68 Main Street. Although initially a morning paper, it became an evening publication a little over a year later in December of 1879.

### 6: County and village boundaries

There were no changes in Village boundaries.

### 7: Government/governing structure

There were no changes in government or governing structure.

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

There were no remarkable occurrences or developments in this area.

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

Retail establishments continued to be locally owned, relatively small, and located primarily in the downtown area of the community.

## 10: Factories/industries

Breweries and malt houses continued to figure prominently in Batavia's economy. In 1872, R. A. Maxwell and H. J. Ensign erected a malt house on Union Street near West Main Street. It was a concrete structure, three stories high, and measured 100 ft. in width and 140 ft. in length. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 251)

The arrival of railroads began to really benefit Batavia in the eighth decade. The notable example involved the Wiard Plow Company. Wiard Plow originated in East Avon, dating back to 1806. However, by 1876, the business had grown to the point where better facilities for transportation were needed. That made Batavia a prime prospect for a new location. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 242)

As an added inducement for Wiard Plow to relocate to Batavia, local citizens offered to donate a site for the factory. That site was located on Swan Street between the Erie and New York Central tracks. After accepting Batavia's offer, George Wiard and C. W. Hough erected a factory in 1876. Wiard served as the President and Hough as the Secretary and Treasurer of the company. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher] p. 242) The company remained one of Batavia's leading manufacturers until the 1950s (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 171).

## 11: Banking/financial services

In 1850, a bank previously in Alexander moved to Batavia and was reorganized as the Exchange Bank of Genesee. After becoming inactive, it was again reorganized, in 1876, this time as the Bank of Batavia. It was located in a new building erected at 69 Main Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 66-67)

In April of 1879, the Genesee County Permanent Loan and Building Association was organized. Commonly referred to as "The Loan," its purpose was "to make funds available to persons of small means who wished to build, buy, or remodel homes." Funds were also available to small businesses just getting started. Reportedly, *The Daily News* was one such operation funded by "The Loan." (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 67)

## 12: Education

Recall that a public school building had been erected in 1847 on Liberty Street near School Street. By 1871, this building had become so crowded that it was necessary to provide additional space for students. A second building, described as a dilapidated tenement house in the vicinity, was rented for the purpose. It soon housed between 60 and 70 students. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 209-210)

In April of 1872, at an adjourned meeting of School District residents, a site for a new building on Ross Street was chosen and \$50,000 appropriated for building it. Apparently because the vote had been taken after adjournment, it was appealed to the State Superintendent of Public Institutions. While a decision by the State Superintendent was still pending, the School Trustees went ahead and purchased the site on Ross Street anyway. When the State Superintendent reached a decision, he set aside the vote taken at the April meeting, but apparently, for reasons that are not apparent, his action only impacted the authorization for a building. In any event, funding for a new building was again the subject of a vote; and in August of 1872, by a decisive margin, voters authorized \$40,000 plus proceeds from the sale of the old building to build a new school on the Ross Street site. In October of 1873, another \$25,000 was authorized. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 209-210)

The new school building, at the general location of the current Middle School on Ross Street, was dedicated on September 1, 1874. Then, in October, voters approved another \$5,000 for furnishing the building, grading the grounds, etc. The community anticipated that this structure would meet Batavia's needs for the next 50 years, but within only five years, the new school was filled to capacity. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 210)

In 1879, Ruth Beardsley Bryan retired from her operation of the finishing school for young women housed since 1852 in the former Ellicott Mansion on West Main Street. Operation of the school was taken over by Marian and Mary Smead, former students of Mrs. Bryan. They continued the school for another five years until it was closed and moved to Toledo, Ohio in 1884. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 October 1951)

### 13: Religion

Prior to 1871, members of the German Evangelical Church met in a building (possibly a house) on Ellicott Street. Then, in 1871, a church building was erected on the corner of Center and School streets. Built of brick, it cost \$6,000. Services were conducted in German. (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] pp. 91-92)

In 1871, another German congregation was organized by a different group of German families. In 1872, they built a small church on the corner of Ellicott Street and Exchange Place and adopted as their name, "The German Evangelical St. Paul's Church." By the end of the century, they became "St. Paul's Lutheran Church." (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 117-118)

As noted in an earlier chapter, the First Baptist Church was organized in 1834. In 1835, the church adopted as its name, "The Baptist Society of Ellicott Village," and erected a building on the west side of Jackson Street about 1836. Then, in 1877, the congregation re-organized as "The First Baptist Church of Batavia."

As also noted in an earlier chapter, Free Methodists had met in the area as early as 1859, but did not form an organized society until 1861. Then, in 1880, they purchased the former Land Office building and met there for eight years. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 116-117)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The last library operating in Batavia had been the Batavia Lyceum which was established in the 1840s. From all indications, it appears to have become defunct by the eighth decade. Then, in 1872, the Batavia Library and Reading Room made its appearance. Incorporated as the Batavia Library Association by an act of the State Legislature on April 27, 1872, the library was located on the third floor of 51-53 Main Street. This location was just east of the Richmond Hotel which, in turn, was on the southeast corner of Main and Court streets. By the time it turned over its assets to the Richmond Library late in the 1880s, the library had over 4,000 books and \$3,500 in invested funds. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 304; "Leading Meat Market 65 Years Ago," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 April 1940; Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p.97)

## 15: Cemeteries

In the Spring of 1872, Edward P. Morse began grading and setting out trees and shrubbery for what was to become the Elmwood Cemetery. He had acquired the land a year earlier. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890], p. 187.

The Batavia Cemetery had been in existence for several decades. However, it wasn't until 1880 that the Batavia Cemetery Association came into existence. That year, a number of lot owners organized the Association under State law and proceeded to develop a plan for purchasing more land, selling burial plots, and levying and collecting assessments to cover the costs involved in the maintenance and care of the grounds. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., 1890] p. 187)

## 16: Firefighting

There were no significant developments in the area of firefighting.

## 17: Healthcare

At the local level, there do not appear to have been any significant developments in the area of healthcare.

## 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

There do not appear to have been any significant changes in this area.

## 19: Disasters

Batavia managed to get through the eighth decade without a major fire, flood, or other damage. David Seaver observed that despite the many disastrous fires that had occurred in earlier years, in 1871 the first six frame structures still stood, a notable achievement (William Seaver 2, *A Historic Sketch of the Village of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: William Seaver & Son, 1849] p. 49).



### 20: Entertainment and recreation

The Dellinger Opera House opened in February of 1874. It was located on the south side of Main Street between Jackson and Center streets. John Dellinger built the opera house and then operated it until his death in 1911 when his son, Edward J. Dellinger, took over. The stage was large enough to handle any road show that might stop in Batavia. The floor of the opera house was level with seats that could be removed to permit space for it to function as a dance hall. About half of the orchestra seats were for reserved seating; they were identifiable by strips of carpeting. Three boxes with seats were located either side of the stage and were reportedly especially popular with "courting" couples. A balcony with several entrances provided additional seating. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 61-62)

Many different forms of entertainment were presented in the Dellinger Opera House. Over the years, road companies stopped regularly and put on plays in which local actors often were able to join the cast. Ralph Waldo Emerson read his essays (before a crowd said to have been the smallest on record). The entertainers who drew large crowds included Buffalo Bill Cody. On another occasion, a troop of trained horses performed. A horse-shoe making contest once took place in the Opera House. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 61-62) Vaudeville performances were a popular entertainment (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 June 1909). Wrestling matches, first allowed, then banned, then allowed again, also drew crowds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 February 1884; "Sat Upon by the Trustees," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 May 1884; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1901).

### 21: War/impact of war

Perhaps due to the exhausting impact of the Civil War, the United States did not embark on military action during this decade beyond conflicts with the Native American populations in the West.

### 22: Families/persons of special note

In the eighth decade, Batavia remained a largely homogeneous community in terms of ethnicity and race. It was still mainly composed of English-speaking residents with origins traceable to Pennsylvania and New England. However, by the late 1870s, there were enough German immigrants to support two congregations of German-speaking people served by

pastors who preached in German. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 251)

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

A Pamona Grange formed in 1877. Apparently, it never had a regular hall of its own, but met in several different locations including on the County Fairgrounds and at the Dellinger Opera House. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 152) For most readers, a little background information may be in order at this point.

The Grange is a hierarchical organization ranging from local communities to the National Grange organization. At the local level are "community Granges," otherwise known as "subordinate Granges." In most states, multiple subordinate Granges are grouped together to form "Pamona Granges." ("The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 4 May 2014) The Pamona Grange in Batavia was apparently formed from community Granges that had been organized in 1874 in Bergen, Corfu, East Pembroke, and Batavia (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 152).

The National Grange, formally known as "The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry," was founded in 1867 as a fraternal organization that encouraged families to band together to promote the economic and political well-being of the community and agriculture. Significant causes over the years have included the temperance movement, direct election of Senators, women's suffrage, regulation of railroads, and Rural Free Delivery. As a non-partisan organization, The Grange has supported only policies, never political parties or candidates. ("The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 4 May 2014)

According to Ruth McEvoy, the Pamona Grange in Batavia lobbied for many different causes. Among its early concerns was the quality of school textbooks. Members were also particularly active in later efforts to persuade the State to build an overpass over the railroad tracks just east of Batavia. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 152-153) As of 2015, a Pamona Grange continues to exist in Genesee County, but it is not clear whether it can trace its origin directly to the Pamona Grange formed in 1877.

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There is nothing new to report from this decade. However, the upcoming decade from 1881 to 1890 will be a different story.

25: Urban renewal

With no major fires in this decade, there was no major rebuilding and, hence, no "urban renewal" in any sense.



## The Ninth Decade

### Overview

In the ninth decade, Batavia started becoming a significant manufacturing center as several new industries appeared. The stage for a revolution in personal transportation was set with the invention and ensuing popularity of the "safety bicycle." New forms of entertainment and recreation, and an increase in the availability of traditional entertainment, enriched the lives of Batavians with, e.g., the appearance of steamboats on the Creek and the construction of roller skating rinks. The greatest population growth to date occurred when the number of residents reached 7,221 in 1890 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), an increase of nearly 2,400 persons since 1880. With the growing population, an enlargement and upgrade of the public water system was necessary and construction of a public sewer system became a pressing issue. The lives of Batavians also began to be reshaped by two technological advances: the invention of the telephone and the invention of electric lights.

### 1: Infrastructure

As Batavia's population grew, some existing streets lengthened and new streets appeared. An example of the latter was Dellinger Avenue. Planning for Dellinger Avenue was announced in 1886 by John Dellinger and John Glade (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 September 1886). Construction of the new street first required demolition of the former Joseph Ellicott mansion on West Main Street which, from 1852 to 1884, had been used as a seminary for young women, but apparently then stood empty until it and the surrounding property were acquired by Dellinger and Glade in 1886. The plans called for four building lots facing West Main Street and 14 building lots on each side of the new street. When the mansion was demolished in 1887, some sections of it appear to have been moved elsewhere, most notably a large section to 13 Porter Avenue. Work on Dellinger Avenue proper promptly followed. (Larry Barnes, *An Overview of the Joseph Ellicott Mansion in Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] pp. 1-4).

Since 1855, streets in Batavia had been illuminated by gas lights. In 1885, the Village Trustees discussed lighting streets with electricity. After receiving offers from several companies, they gave a contract to the Batavia Gas Light Company. The company replaced the gas lights with electric "Jenny Lights" which, it was claimed, were advantageous in that they did not flicker. By August of 1886, there were 40 such lights in place, some on poles and some

hanging over the center of streets. These early street lights operated on direct current. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc. 1993] p. 10). They were of a carbon arc design that, unfortunately, had to be serviced every day. The individual providing this service, known as a "lamp trimmer," purportedly walked 17 miles while making his rounds. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 September 1928)

Water mains supplying water throughout the Village were built in the 1870s with most of the principal streets being served by 1877. The water was supplied by a pumping station located on the Creek south of the intersection of Ellicott and West Main streets. This appears to have been below the dam and near the Genesee Country Mills, a facility, at least originally, powered by water impounded by the dam. In August of 1884, the mill structure burned and soon afterwards the property was purchased by Village authorities for the purpose of building a new pumping station. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 186)

By September of 1884, the work of setting boilers for the new water works was about complete. A smokestack 80 ft. tall was erected. Work was also proceeding on a building, measuring 20 x 98 ft., to house the boilers. In the course of this construction, the Village Trustees decided to lay a feeder line from a point somewhere above the dam, rather than from the then current location below the dam, in order to insure a more wholesome water supply. ("Local Record," *Progressive Batavian*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 September 1884) The new water works were completed by January of 1886 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 1886), apparently a good thing since the roof on the old water works building burned the month before (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 December 1885).

Coal was used to fire the boilers of the water works, as was clearly indicated in the specifics of a law suit brought against the Village by George Brisbane in 1886. Brisbane complained that smoke and cinders emitted from the water works chimney fouled the water of his cistern in his home across West Main Street. (The suit appears to have later been dropped.) (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 12).

In April of 1887, an article in *The Daily News* reported on plans to further extend the Village water mains (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 April 1887). By 1888, there were 8-1/2 miles of water mains ranging in diameter from 4-in. to 12-in. (*Batavia Village Miscellaneous Directory, 1888*, Genesee County History Department, Batavia, N.Y.) In May of 1890, the Village Trustees voted to add another 3,900 ft. of new water pipe ("To Extend Water Mains," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1890).

The growing population combined with water service throughout the Village greatly aggravated the effects produced by the absence of a sewer system at the beginning of this decade. For example, sewage from the New York State School for the Blind reportedly emptied into a swamp behind the school (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 July 1884). In another example, Hiram Swezey repeatedly complained to Village authorities about an open ditch which carried effluent from homes north of East Main Street onto his property located approximately where East Town Plaza is now situated ("The Aldermen's Meeting," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 April, 1885). Residences also apparently discharged effluent into the so-called "Big Ditch" that ran from the northeast area of the Village into Tonawanda Creek a little east of present-day South Lyon Street. In 1890, Trumbull Cary brought a lawsuit for \$20,000 against the Village because of the discharge of sewage onto property owned by him ("To Extend Water Mains," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1890).

However, some sewer pipes were gradually laid during this decade, sometimes in what appears to have been private ventures. For example, in July of 1889, *The Daily News* reported that Joseph Schults was connecting his block on Jackson Street with a sewer line to "Jones & Son" across the street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 July 1889). In other instances, Village authorities assumed some responsibility. For example, *The Daily News* reported in 1889 of plans to put in a "big new sewer" on Ellicott Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 April 1889) and the next year, plans were made to lay a sewer pipe to the New York State School for the Blind (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 September 1890). However, none of this effluent was treated and the sewer pipes discharged raw sewage directly into the Tonawanda Creek (Ruth M. McEvoy, *The History of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 8).

## 2: Transportation

For most people, getting around locally meant either walking or using a horse-drawn conveyance. For the latter instances, local businessmen erected "farmers' sheds" in which horses and carriages could be parked when farmers or others had shopping or other business to do in the Village. The principal examples of such sheds appear to have been located on State Street. *The Daily News* of that era carried frequent references to new structures or improvements to existing ones. For instance, an April 1886 edition of the paper reported that Bradley Smith planned waiting rooms for ladies (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 April 1886). Four years later, the newspaper informed readers that Suman's sheds were to be enlarged and improved (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 April 1890). Later in 1890, *The Daily News* revealed that Earl Taggart was breaking ground for new sheds 150 ft. long with a waiting room at the south end for ladies (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 October 1890).

The farmers' sheds were part of a transportation era that would be coming to an end within the next 20 years. The arrival of bicycles marked the start of the transition. At first, bicycles were largely rather impractical amusements, but that changed around the mid-1880s when the "safety bicycle" was invented. This was a bicycle as we know it, having front and rear wheels of equal size ("History of the Bicycle," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 30 April 2014). The great advantage of this design was that it was much more stable than the older "Penny-farthing" design and could be ridden by nearly anyone of modest athletic ability. The use of a chain drive to power the rear wheel further increased the versatility of bicycles by allowing multiple gearings independent of a rider's leg length. As a consequence of these improvements, the popularity and use of bicycles exploded.

A bicycle club was organized in Batavia in June of 1883 (*Batavia Directory 1883-84* [Batavia, N.Y.: Herrick & Robinson, 1884] p. 94). It became possible to use a bicycle for serious transportation. As an example, in April of 1884, W. D. Smith reportedly rode his bicycle from Batavia to Geneva, a distance of 70 miles, to resume his studies at Hobart College (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24, April 1884). The *Daily News* of July 21, 1885 informed its readers that 100 riders were stopping in Batavia on a trip around the world (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 July 1885). Furthermore, it was not only men who found bicycles appealing. A bicycle specifically designed for women first appeared in Batavia in April of 1889 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 April 1889). Until the arrival of the automobile, bicycles were the big "in thing" in personal transportation.

Hackmen provided horse-drawn conveyances for members of the public needing transportation. On May 14, 1885, village trustees voted to require licenses of those who provided such a service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948).

### 3: Housing

As Batavia's population grew, so did new housing. Five of the most interesting examples were the brick homes constructed at 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13 James Street. They were erected in 1882 by Williams & Savage with bricks the company had left over from constructing the Johnston Harvester factory buildings on present-day Harvester Avenue. Sharing uniformity of height, configuration and set-back, the houses were (and still are) distinguished by their mansard roofs and decorative brickwork. (Catherine Roth, *Architectural Heritage of Genesee County, N.Y.* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 1988] p. 72)

Another prominent landmark built in this decade was the home at 130 West Main Street nearly across from the Holland Land Office Museum. Erected by owner George D. Weaver in



1889, the building displayed (and still exhibits) an abundance of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival style ornamentation. (Catherine Roth, *Architectural Heritage of Genesee County, N.Y.* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 1988] p. 93)

The Richmond estate underwent change in this decade. In 1888, Adelaide Richmond Kenny had her nearby home on East Main razed and made part of her mother's lawn (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 July 1888). The following year, the distinctive iron fence in front of the Richmond Mansion was erected by John Schaefer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 November 1889).

From the perspective of home construction, a unique event occurred in 1888 when Senator Edward Walker had an elevator installed in his home located at 20 Ross Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1888). Walker had been a member of the New York State Assembly in 1869 and 1870. He then served in the New York State Senate from 1886 to 1889. ("Edward C. Walker [New York]," *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 31 May 2014)

### 4: Energy sources

In the ninth decade, energy sources available to Batavians expanded to include electricity. As a consequence, the choices now included wood, coal, gas, and electricity. Water power, generated from the Tonawanda, no longer appeared to be in the mix.

When the Batavia Gas Light Company was organized in the mid-1850s, it built one gas holder with a capacity of 13,500 cu. ft. Later, a second gas holder with a capacity of 35,000 cu. ft. was added. Then, early in 1885, the works were revamped to produce gas from crude petroleum rather than from coal as had been done previously (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 298). Gas from crude petroleum was less expensive and also judged to be of better quality (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 252).

In 1886, the Batavia Gas Company re-organized as the Batavia Gas and Electric Light Company. That same year, the company installed a dynamo for producing electricity. By the end of the decade, its customers, both gas and electric, numbered over 400. Also by then, the company had extended its gas mains from two miles to seven. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 252)

The Batavia Gas and Electric Light Company was not the only supplier of electricity. In 1885, a company headed by L. G. and O. C. Steele set up a small electrical power plant in the King Malt House on Elm Street where it was used to meet the malt house needs. The Steeles then offered to sell surplus electricity to other business concerns and, reportedly, B. H. Hewitt's store, Dustin's Pharmacy, the Washburn House, and the Casino Roller Rink all accepted the offer. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 10) In 1889, the Consumers' Electric Light and Power Company was organized with works located off Evans Street near the Erie Railroad right-of-way. It furnished electricity for stores, residences, and factories. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 252) In the Fall of 1889, yet another power company organized, that one under the name of The Consolidated Gas and Electric Light Company. It took over the contract for Village street lights. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 10)

As electricity became available, increasing numbers of both new and existing buildings began to employ electric lights. Many of these pioneering installations were performed by Oren C. Steele who might be thought of as Batavia's first electrician (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 March 1944). An early installation in a home, perhaps the very first, was in a new house at 122 Bank Street built in 1885 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 October 1885). Starting in 1885, there were frequent announcements in *The Daily News* of local retailers who were installing lights in their stores (e.g., see *The Daily News* for 15 October 1885; 17 April 1886; and 23 August 1888).

Early in January of 1890, efforts were being made to form a stock company to provide gas from a source thought to be under the Fargo Farm east of Batavia. A "heavy roaring" sound had been detected beneath a spot where gas was present on the surface. Individuals in Batavia, LeRoy, Alexander, and Stafford expressed interest in underwriting the venture. A Pennsylvania well driller agreed to drill if \$1,000 in stock was secured. ("Batavia May Have Gas," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1890) Evidently nothing came of this effort.

While ice might ordinarily not be regarded as an energy source, it still deserves to be treated as such in that it performs useful work. Ice which had been harvested from the Tonawanda Creek was stored and used throughout the year to cool food requiring refrigeration. In the mid-1880s, ice wagons delivered ice to homes and businesses and ads for these businesses could be found in *The Daily News* (e.g., see *The Daily News* for 8 February 1886)

## 5: Communication

One of the most interesting communication devices in this decade was a “weather indicator” on the corner of Jackson and Main streets. Invented by Ralph Hirsh, someone said to be from out-of-town, the newspaper descriptions of the device only referred to its ability to communicate wind speed. Whether it did more than that is not clear although, at the very least, it would seem that a weather vane giving wind direction must have been included. Apparently, this “weather indicator” required ongoing service because twice within a 10-day period, there were newspaper references to repairs being made. In the second instance, *The Daily News* reported that the “wind cups” were going again, but they squeaked. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 December 1885; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 December 1885)

This decade marked a significant change in mail service. Previously, recipients needed to go to the post office to receive their mail. However, in the late 1880s, free mail delivery to homes and businesses began to be proposed. It would appear that the Postmaster did not think highly of this policy and he was quoted as asking, perhaps with a hint of sarcasm, “Do Brisbanes want free delivery?” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1888) Nonetheless, free delivery began in 1889 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 December 1888). In contrast to the once-a-day deliveries that are now the practice, four deliveries daily were made in the business district (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 February 1889).

Batavia lost one of its newspapers in this decade. In 1884, *The Republican Advocate* ceased publication. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 June 1884) This left only *The Daily News*, *The Progressive Batavian*, and *The Spirit of the Times* (*Batavia Director 1883-84* [Batavia, N.Y.: Herrick & Robinson, 1884] p. 86).

The biggest change in communication for Batavians in the 1880s was the arrival of telephones. A practical telephone appears to have first appeared the decade before with the work of Alexander Graham Bell leading to a successful “long distance” call of 10 miles in 1876 between two communities in Ontario, Canada (“Invention of the Telephone,” *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 2 June 2014). Installation of telephones in homes and businesses followed rather rapidly; and in Batavia alone there were 63 telephones by 1883 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1883). Newspaper reports of businesses having phones became common place. For example, in May of 1884, *The Daily News* informed readers that the Genesee House now had a telephone (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 May 1884) and a month later, readers learned that Louis Uebele had installed a telephone for taking orders at his bakery (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1884).

Telephone calls were placed through telephone operators at switchboards. Initially, a caller identified the desired recipient by name. Then, in 1885, the Bell Telephone company in Batavia announced that it was instituting a system of calling by number rather than by name. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 January 1885) The numbers were generally only a handful of digits. For example, when the Batavia Water Works obtained phone service, its telephone number was "35." ("1909 Telephone Directory," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 12 June 2014)

The arrival of telephones in Batavia revolutionized communication at a distance. Aside from the rather awkward use of telegraphs and, even then, often with a delay in the final communication of a message, Batavians could, for the first time, communicate nearly at the speed of light with others near or far. Not only was the communication virtually instantaneous, but it required no special skills of either the sender or the recipient.

### 6: County and village boundaries

There were no apparent changes in the external boundaries of the County or Village.

### 7: Government/governing structure

Since 1823, the Village of Batavia had been governed by a government consisting of five Trustees elected at large who chose, among themselves, an individual to serve as President. On April 22, 1884, New York Governor Grover Cleveland signed legislation that earlier had passed the Assembly and Senate and created an entirely new form of government. The legislation had been introduced to the New York State Assembly by Assemblyman L. R. Bailey, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, as "an act to consolidate and amend the several acts relating to the Village of Batavia, to alter the bounds and, to enlarge the powers of the corporation of said Village, and the several acts amendatory thereof." ("The Charter Signed," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1884)

Under the new charter, the external boundaries of the Village were not changed. However, the Village was divided into four wards. Ward 1 consisted of the area south and east of the center lines of Main and Jackson streets. Ward 2 consisted of the area north and east of the center lines of Main and State streets. Ward 3 consisted of the area north and west of the center lines of Main and State streets. And Ward 4 consisted of the area south and west of Main and Jackson streets. ("The Charter Signed," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1884)

The officers under the new charter were a President, eight Trustees, three Assessors, a Police Justice, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Collector, and a Police Constable. The President, who also

was designated as the Head of the police department, was elected at large for a 1-year term. Two Trustees were elected from each Ward for staggered 2-year terms. The elections were to be held on the second Tuesday of March. ("The Charter Signed," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1884) Note: From this point forward for several decades, the terms "Trustees" and "Aldermen" seemed to be used interchangeably in the newspapers and other publications of the era. Similarly, the terms "President" and "Mayor" were also used interchangeably.

Power was given to the Trustees to pull down, blow up and remove buildings for the purpose of arresting the progress of fires and for their extinguishment. In such a case when any building was insured, the owner thereof was entitled to recover from the Village damage to the same extent as he would have been entitled to recover against the insurers in case the building had burned. ("Our New Government," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 April 1884)

Under the new charter, the Trustees were also required to purchase one or more sprinklers to sprinkle streets for the purpose of keeping them free from dust. The expense was to be charged against the property located on such streets or portions of streets as were sprinkled. The frequency of such sprinkling was to be at the discretion of the Trustees. ("Our New Government," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 April 1884)

The location of the meetings of the Trustees seemed to vary from year to year. For example, prior to 1884, the Trustees purportedly met in the Uebele Building on Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 December 1893). Then, in 1884, they moved to Room 11 of the Post Office Building on Jackson Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 June 1884). However, in 1888, it was reported that they were again meeting in the Uebele Building (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 March 1888). This shifting about of meeting places was a product of there being no Village Hall. It appears that various offices and, perhaps, even record storage were scattered throughout the community. There would not be a Municipal Building until the next decade.

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

Readers of earlier portions of this book will recall that public hangings were once popular entertainment. However, this evidently became less the case over time. The last hanging in Batavia was in 1881 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1947). The execution took place within the stone walled yard of the jail on West Main Street. Charles Stocklay was hung on August 19<sup>th</sup> for the murder of his employer, John Weker, a farmer on Bank Street Road. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948)

Ordinary crime occurred in the Village as might be expected in any community of its size. However, a crime then that would probably create surprise today occurred in 1889. James Short, an ex-Trustee, was arrested for "alienating the affections of Lillie Morgan, wife of William Morgan, proprietor of the Cottage Restaurant (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 December 1889). Mr. Short's ultimate legal fate is unknown.

A relatively low level of criminal activity is suggested by the size of Batavia's police force. In 1885, there were only four officers (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 March 1885). In 1888, despite a growing community, the number of officers was reduced from four to three (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 March 1888). Perhaps the new charter, for the first time making the President of the Village the Head of the police department, led to the judgment that fewer regular officers were needed since the President was now assuming police officer responsibilities.

The speed limit in 1884 was 10 m.p.h. It applied to all horses, ridden or driven. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948)

## 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

In looking at the number of saloons, one could almost think that Batavia belonged to the Wild West. According to Ruth McEvoy, in the mid-1880s, Batavia had eight saloons on Main Street alone, five more on Jackson Street, three on Ellicott Street, and one each on Liberty and Swan streets for a total of 18 (Ruth M. McEvoy [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993]).

Chinese immigrants and laundries have tended to be associated with each other in American lore. Batavia lived up to that image with Chinese laundries as early as 1886. Such facilities, variously located on Center, School, and Main streets, continued to exist until 1950. (Ruth M. McEvoy [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 256)

A review of the businesses listed in the Batavia Directory of 1883-84 reveals a wide variety of establishments (*Batavia Directory 1883-84* [Batavia, N.Y.: Herrick & Robinson, 1884] pp. 81-90). An incomplete list includes the following:

Accountant	Insurance agent	Dealer in Agricultural tools
Architect	Baker	Blacksmith
Carpet cleaner	Cigar dealer	Clothing store
Coal dealer	Crockery dealer	Door, sash, and blind sales
Dress maker	Druggist	Dry goods store

## 1881-1890

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Florist	Flour and feed dealer	Furniture store
Gas stoves	Grocery	Gunsmith
Hairdresser	Hardware store	Harness maker
Hats and caps	Ice dealer	Ice cream store
Jeweler	Lawyer	Liquor store
Milk dealer	Millinery	Monuments dealer
Photographer	Piano tuner	Plumber
Produce dealer	Restaurant	Saw filer
Sewing machines	Soap maker	Stock company
Surveyor	Tailor	Teamster
Tinsmith	Undertaker	Wallpaper store
Whip dealer	Woolens store	

### 10: Factories/industries

Batavia's largest manufacturing works began in Brockport in 1850 as the Johnston Harvester Co. When the plant burned in 1882, the company moved to Batavia to take advantage of the railroad lines serving the community. It was located on Cemetery Street, a thoroughfare soon renamed "Harvester Avenue." (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History: The Massey-Harris Story," *The daily newsonline*, online, accessed 3 June 2014) By 1890, the works consisted of seven buildings on 17 acres. Steam engines of 300 horsepower powered the machinery. Between three- and four-hundred "skilled mechanics" were employed by the company. The products manufactured by the firm included four styles of mowers, two styles of reapers, and two styles of self-binders. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 240)

In 1883, the Batavia Preserving Co., which had started in Bushville four years earlier, moved to Batavia after being purchased by Sprague, Warner & Co. of Chicago. It was initially located in the old school building on the corner of School and Liberty streets. However, by 1888, the company needed more space and a new building was erected on Mill Street. The main building measured 50 x 209 ft. and had wings measuring 35 x 80 ft. and 40 x 60 ft. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] p. 308; Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 245)

There was a brickyard, known as the Royce Brickyard, located on the south side of Ellicott Street opposite the fairgrounds. (That would appear to place the brickyard near the current

eastern boundary of the City). In 1883, it was purchased by W. C. Woolsey from S. N. Royce. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 March 1883) In 1887, the brickyard was sold to John Baird (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 March 1887).

In 1885, the New York Lumber and Wood Working Co. acquired the factory buildings owned by the Batavia Sewing Machine Co. when the latter became "financially embarrassed." (At some point thereafter, the company became known as the Batavia and New York Wood Working Co.) Located on the eastern edge of the Village, the main building was brick, three stories high, and measured 60 x 300 ft. There was an attached engine-house. The company, employing around 150 workers, manufactured all kinds of decorative and cabinet work for houses, a vast variety of fancy furniture, wood turnings, moldings, carvings, etc. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 247-248)

In this decade, the Batavia Wheel Co. emerged, having evolved from an earlier firm. After a fire in 1886 at its old location on Exchange Place, it was re-established on Walnut Street adjoining the New York Central Railroad tracks. It's main building, three stories high, measured 40 x 150 ft. Its employees, numbering around 40 in number, turned out 50 to 75 sets of wheels per day. The company also manufactured various other hardware items. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 245-246)

In the Spring of 1889, the Syracuse Forging & Gun Co. moved from Syracuse to Batavia after a fire destroyed its Syracuse facilities. For its Batavia location, it chose the former school building on the corner of School and Liberty streets, the same building that had recently been used by the Batavia Preserving Co. The name was changed to The Baker Gun & Forging Co. Employing an average of 100 men, the firm produced a patented hammerless shotgun and a popular "fifth wheel" for carriages and other horse-drawn vehicles. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History: Batavia's Famous Gun Factory," *thedailynewsonline*, online, accessed 3 June 2014; Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 248-249) A fifth wheel was a part of the front axle and steering mechanism designed for horse-drawn vehicles.

In 1882 or 1883, Edwin N. Rowell and W. T. Palmer, originally both of Syracuse, opened a box factory, called Palmer and Rowell Co., on the third floor of 66 Main Street in Batavia. Then, they dissolved their partnership and Palmer moved to 41 Center Street where he opened the Palmer Box Factory. At this point, Rowell began operating his own company, in the space he and Palmer had shared at 66 Main Street, under the name, E. N. Rowell Co. Despite seemingly



being competitors, the two men reportedly remained friends. For a number of years, Rowell manufactured only medicine boxes. Cosmetic boxes, for which the company came to be especially known, were not added to the company's line of products until considerably later. As time went on during the 1880s, the space above 66 Main Street was completely filled with machinery and Rowell expanded his operations into buildings on either side until he was using all the third floor space in all of the buildings facing Main Street between State Street and Russell Place. As will be reported in the following chapter on the next decade, it soon became necessary for Rowell to find a new location. Evidently the success of the E. N. Rowell Co. had no adverse effect on the Palmer Box Factory since the latter remained in business and continued to operate until 1915. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 176)

### 11: Banking/financial services

There appear to have been no significant changes in this area during the period 1881 to 1890.

### 12: Education

In 1882, the Catholic Parish built a brick school on Summit Street (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 93. This appears to have been a successor to the St. Joseph's Academy previously located on Jackson Street.

*The Daily News* reported in early November of 1883 that an art school, Batavia Art School, was about to open on East Main Street. Operated by George B. Edwards, he claimed that class size would be limited and that instruction would be appropriate for anyone from a beginner to an advanced student. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 November 1883) It is not known how long Edwards' school continued to function.

In 1884, the Smead sisters, Marian and Mary, moved their finishing school for young women to Toledo, Ohio (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 February 1884). Their seminary had been located since 1852 in the former Joseph Ellicott mansion on West Main Street.

Just as the Smead sisters were moving their finishing school out of town, Miss Ellen K. Hooker was establishing the Park Place School in the former Alva Smith mansion on Park Place. Founded in September of 1884, it was designed to prepare "young ladies" for entrance into "the most advanced colleges for ladies in the country." Hooker conducted the school until 1887 when Miss Mary J. Stephens took it over. There were accommodations for 12 boarding students and 50 "day scholars." The rooms were described as large, airy, heated by a furnace,

and lighted by gas. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 183, 324)

In June of 1883, School District No. 4 (which came to include the West Main Street School) was united with Union School District No. 2. In January 1887, to this combination was added School District No. 15 (which came to include the Pearl Street School). All three districts were apparently subsumed under the name, "Union School District No. 2." By the end of the decade, the number of school children in this consolidated district (individuals over 5 and under 21) totaled 2,116. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] pp. 210-211)

In October of 1882, at the annual school meeting, \$10,000 was voted for a school to serve younger children south of the railroads. A site was purchased and a building erected on Pringle Avenue. The new school opened in September of 1884. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 210)

At a special school district meeting held in July of 1884, \$8,000 was voted for a school on Washington Avenue. It opened in September of 1885. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 210)

In 1885, an institution named, "Batavia Business University," was located on the corner of Main and Jackson streets. Its "business practice" course was about two months in length and designed to cover all possible transactions. By 1890, this "University" was said to have graduated over 800 students, among them many of the young businessmen in Batavia. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 239)

### 13: Religion

The Free Will Baptist Society incorporated in 1885. Two years later, it erected a church on the west side of Bank Street. The Society was a forerunner of the later Emmanuel Baptist Church. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 119-120)

The first official meeting of the Salvation Army was in 1890. However, the group disbanded briefly before reorganizing in 1907. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 127)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In the late 1880s, Mary F. Richmond, wife of the deceased Dean Richmond, Sr. had erected the Richmond Memorial Library building as a memorial to their son, Dean Richmond, Jr. The building, designed by James Cutler and facing Ross Street, was constructed on land that had been part of the Richmond Estate. In March of 1889, Mrs. Richmond deeded the building and land to the Batavia Union School District No. 2. About the same time, Trustees of the Batavia Library Association conveyed to the School District their library books, numbering over 3,000 volumes, and nearly \$4,000 in invested funds. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 211) Note that the figures stated here in regards to the transferred books and investment funds are at variance by those published by Safford E. North and reported in the previous chapter on page seven.

### 15: Cemeteries

The Elmwood Cemetery had been in existence since 1872. Then, 17 years later, in the Spring of 1889, the Elmwood Cemetery Association of Batavia was formed, largely through the efforts of Edward P. Morse (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 187). This association served to administer the operation of the Cemetery (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc.], p. 106).

In the mid-1860s, the Richmond Mausoleum was erected at a cost of \$28,000. However, the construction proved defective and it had to be rebuilt in 1886 at a cost of another \$12,000. For the rebuilding, granite stone was brought by rail from a company in Westerly, Rhode Island. Transporting the stone slabs from the rail car to the cemetery required special six-wheeled wagons with tires 2-ft. wide. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 April 1886; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 July 1886)

### 16: Firefighting

In January of 1886, *The Daily News* indicated that the Village Trustees were shopping for fire alarms (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1886). Evidently this led to the installation of fire alarm boxes since, in 1890, the Trustees' Fire and Water Committee was instructed to look up fire-alarm box keys which had been left at private residences and have signs painted showing where the keys could be found ("To Extend Water Mains," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1890).

### 17: Healthcare

In July of 1886, *The Daily News* indicated that Dr. Charles Rand, of 5 Liberty Street, was "talking" of building a hospital (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1886; *Batavia Directory 1883-84* [Batavia, N.Y.: Herrick & Robinson, 1884] p. 87). In September of 1886, Dr. Rand reportedly actually set up a hospital, presumably located at the 5 Liberty Street address (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 September 1886). However, a newspaper account from two years later suggests that Dr. Rand had by then converted the Liberty Street building into a boarding house and, in terms of medical facilities, maintained only an office for his practice. The office was reportedly in a new addition to the building. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 October 1888)

Approaching the mid-1880s, the *Batavia Directory* listed 15 physicians, all males (*Batavia Directory 1883-84* [Batavia, N.Y.: Herrick & Robinson, 1884] p. 87). However, in 1885, Dr. Elmina H. Benedict began practicing medicine in Batavia. Her specialties were female diseases. As of 1890, Dr. Benedict had practiced medicine for 25 years. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 259)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

There do not appear to have been any significant changes in this area. Beers noted, in 1890, that Herbert B. Booth, the then present overseer of the poor in Batavia, had been in office for several years (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 257)

## 19: Disasters

Over the years, numerous people have lost their lives in Tonawanda Creek, but the most serious incident occurred on Sunday, July 1, 1883. Four individuals, two male and two female, lost their lives when a steamboat capsized as it was proceeding downstream from Whiskey Point to its dock on Walnut Street.

For two decades or more, pleasure boating on Tonawanda Creek was a popular pastime. A common expedition involved boating from Batavia to Whiskey Point, a picnic and recreation area on the Creek a little south of the Village. The location was described in contemporary accounts as a shady grove with a small brook. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1883) Prior to writing this chapter, the exact location seemed lost in history. However, with the help of local property owner, Jim Nigro, the author has canoed to the apparent site. Well back from Creek Road, it is situated on the west side of the Creek about half a mile south of Batavia's water treatment plant.

Over the years, several steam-powered boats ferried passengers from Batavia to Whiskey Point and back. One of those, launched June 1, 1883, was "The Stranger." It was a homemade vessel 25 ft. long and 9 ft. wide. It consisted of a platform, with a railing, mounted atop two flat-bottomed boats with sides 18-in. high. The space between the two boats measured several feet. At the rear, in the space between the two boats, a paddle wheel propelled the craft. Passengers sat on movable stools. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1883)

The afternoon of July 1, 1883, The Stranger departed its dock on Walnut Street with around 20 passengers. Wilber Thorp was the engineer, firing the boiler and keeping up a head of steam, and Bert Steward was at the wheel. The trip upstream was uneventful. After discharging some passengers at Whiskey point and taking on others bound for Batavia for a total of 27 individuals, The Stranger began its trip downstream. It hadn't gone very far when a small boy was seen skinny dipping near the east bank. The child reportedly stood up and "indecently" exposed himself to the boatload of passengers, whereupon several women apparently moved their stools toward the west side of the craft to avoid the offending sight. This movement caused the vessel to tilt and begin taking on water. When an outcry went up, passengers apparently rushed toward the east side of the craft. As a consequence, The Stranger then rolled in that direction and capsized, sending everyone into the water. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1883)

Chaos ensued, with many passengers attempting to grab hold of others in a bid to stay above water. Many, when they made it ashore, collapsed in total exhaustion. No doubt, the

extensive clothing worn in that era contributed to the difficulty in trying to stay afloat. Altogether, four lives were lost: 40-yr.-old Clark Tenney, 17-yr.-old Bridget Fannery, 17-yr.-old Sarah Maloney, and 20-yr.-old Eugene Hawley. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1883)

The accident occurred to the rear of the residence of Professor A. S. Pratt. That location appears to be near the intake for the current water treatment plant. According to *The Daily News* and its account of the tragedy, the Creek at that point was about 100 ft. wide and up to 20 ft. deep. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1883)

Within a day, a coroner's jury was convened. After examining one of the victims and taking testimony from witnesses, the jury issued a statement regarding the cause of the accident. It was the jury's judgment that *The Stranger* capsized because it was both improperly constructed and overloaded. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1883) It is unknown whether this led to criminal or civil charges against Wilber Thorp, the owner/operator and apparent builder.

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

In the ninth decade, Batavians had many forms of entertainment and recreation from which to choose. Some were spectator activities. For example, in August of 1883, residents were entertained by a rope walker who walked a rope stretched across Main Street between the St. James Hotel, corner of Main and Court streets, and the Hooper House, 46 Main Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 August 1883)

For those who enjoyed wrestling matches, they could attend such an event at the Dellinger Opera House in early 1883 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 February 1883). However, later in the year, wrestling was banned at the Opera House by the Village Trustees (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 July 1883). Then, five years later, wrestling was back, this time with matches held at Uebele's Hall (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 November 1888).

In January of 1886, Batavians were treated to a 27-hour walking match at an indoor location on State Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 January 1886; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 January 1886) Walking matches were races in which the contestants walked rather than ran. The object was to see who could cover the greatest distance in a set period of time. Major walking matches were often six-day events with cots set up inside the track so contestants had a place to take brief naps. Reportedly, people didn't go just to watch the contestants, but were drawn to other aspects of the spectacle such as brass bands, vendors selling pickled eggs and roasted chestnuts, and the opportunity to see and be seen. Apparently, competitive walking was especially an attraction in the 1870s and 1880s and, according to one authority, was

America's favorite spectator sport at the time. ("In the 1870s and '80s, Being a Pedestrian Was Anything But," *NPR.org*, online, accessed 6 June 2014)

In 1883, *The Daily News* referred to a "concert hall" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 February 1883). This hall appears to have been on the northeast corner of Main and State streets. Among other amusements, travelling troupes of thespians were reported to have performed there. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948)

The first reported phonograph was one at the European Hotel (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 November 1890). Presumably guests and visitors sat around and listened as a group to one of the earliest examples of recorded music.

Road companies stopped in Batavia regularly throughout this decade. They gave performances in the Dellinger Opera House on Main Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 61-62)

As mentioned in the previous section, boating up the Tonawanda to Whiskey Point, e.g., for a picnic, was a popular pastime during this era. In June of 1883, newspaper reports indicated that there were two steamers on the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1883). Another steamer was reported in September (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 September 1883). The next year, there was yet another steamer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 June 1884).

For Batavians who might prefer their ride to go in circles, there were the merry-go-rounds. One example appeared in the Summer of 1890 on Jackson Street south of the New York Central Railroad tracks ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 August 1890).

For Batavians who sought physically active recreation in the Winter, there were numerous ice skating options. As an example, in 1883, there was an ice skating rink on Jackson Street across from the Post Office (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 October 1883). In 1885, the Casino Ice Skating Rink opened on State Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 November 1885). And, in 1889, an ice skating rink could be found on Swan Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 December 1889).

In 1890, bicyclists could ride their bicycles at a State Street rink leased for that purpose by Charles Weaver and R. C. Bull. Initially, the rink was also open to runners and skaters. However, it was soon limited to bicyclists alone. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1890; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 1890)

The popularity of roller skating grew swiftly. In 1883, roller skating took place at Ellicott Hall, the building that had served as the County's first Court House when it was built in 1802 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 November 1883). By August of 1884, the demand had grown so much that *The Daily News* announced that there would be four roller rinks for the Village "next season" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 August 1884).

For the more affluent, there was also horse-racing. In 1888, horsemen held private races at the County Fairgrounds during Saturday mornings (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 August 1888). The Fairgrounds at that time were on the north side of Ellicott Street near the present eastern boundary of Batavia.

In 1890, plans were underway to move the Fairgrounds. By February, six possible sites were under consideration (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 February 1890). The next month, Fairground organizers announced that the Redfield property on the north side of West Main Street had been chosen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 March 1890).

During the 1880s, the Dean Richmond Sporting Club reportedly held "shoots" using live pigeons rather than the clay pigeons more commonly associated with the sport (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1948).

### 21: War/impact of war

Aside from the ongoing conflicts with Native Americans, principally in the West, there was no military action during this decade. None of the fighting occurred in Western New York.

### 22: Families/persons of special note

Most historians would probably choose Edwin N. Rowell as among the most notable Batavians in the years 1881 to 1890. Rowell was married to the former Jennie Abigail Luce when the couple moved from Utica to Batavia early in the 1880s. Allegedly a motivation for the move on Edwin's part was to put distance between his wife and her boyfriend, Johnson Lynch. Time proved the move to be unsuccessful in regard to this objective, so Edwin chose an alternative plan. Pretending to have left town, he concealed himself near the New York Central train station. When Lynch appeared not long afterward, Edwin followed him to the Rowell home at 123 Bank Street. After surprising the adulterous couple in bed, Edwin fired several shots from a handgun, one of which killed Lynch. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charles, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p.125)



Rowell was acquitted of murder in a trial held on January 19, 1884. He later went on to be one of Batavia's most successful entrepreneurs. As noted earlier in this chapter, his company, the E. N. Rowell Co., manufactured pill and cosmetic boxes. It became the largest manufacturer of small boxes in the United States. Rowell's first wife wasn't pleased by the turn of events in 1884; and she and Edwin divorced. Edwin gained custody of their two daughters. In 1915, Edwin married May Emke, an employee of his firm. Following Edwin's eventual death, May became President of the Company and ran it for the next 42 years.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

This decade marked the establishment of several organizations of long-term prominence. For example, the Batavia Chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union organized in December of 1881. It originally worked to close saloons and to get the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution adopted. It later focused primarily on educating young people about the evils of alcohol and drugs. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 148)

The Upton Post No. 299, Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) was organized in October of 1882. The organization represented and honored veterans of the Civil War. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 146)

The Batavia Club was organized in July of 1882. Its first clubhouse was on Main Street near the Dellinger Opera House. Then, in April of 1886, it moved to the former Bank of Genesee building, at the corner of Bank and East Main streets, where it remained for the rest of its existence. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., 1890] p. 238; Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 159-160)

The local chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) was organized in the Spring of 1889. Initially, it was located on the upper floors of the building on the southeast corner of Main and Jackson streets. It was said to have a spacious gymnasium. The rooms were "fitted up" for recreation with various games and amusements. There were tables with "choice" serials, magazines, and newspapers. (Frederick W. Beers, *Gazetteer and Biographical Record of Genesee County, N.Y. 1788-1890* [Syracuse, N.Y.: J. W. Vose & Co., Publisher, 1890] p. 237)

## 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

In the 1880s, the first references to prostitution in Batavia began to appear in Batavia's newspapers. Such references were reports of "disorderly houses," the term then used for a house of prostitution. For example, in 1884, *The Daily News* carried a news report asserting that a Mrs. Effie Brown was operating a "disorderly house" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 18 March 1884). Twice in 1886, "disorderly houses" were raided (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 October 1886; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 November 1886). In 1890, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Morell of Walker Street were arrested for operating a "disorderly house" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 August 1890). One can only speculate what brought houses of prostitution to Batavia in this particular decade. Perhaps the industrialization of the community, the significant increase in population, and/or social changes brought about by the aftermath of the Civil War were contributing factors.

## 25: Urban renewal

With no major fires in this decade, there again was no major rebuilding and, hence, no "urban renewal" in any sense.

## The Tenth Decade

### Overview

As Batavia approached the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it solidified its development into an industrial community. Population growth continued, reaching a figure of 9,180 by 1900 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This represented an increase of 1,159 individuals since 1890. In general, the Village's infrastructure appeared to keep pace with the expanding population. However, there was one glaring exception. The need for a modern public sewer system and treatment plant continued to go unaddressed.

As its second century drew near, Safford North provided a thumbnail sketch of Batavia that read as follows: "Several railroads pass through [the Village]; there are eight churches; [the Village has a] high grade union free school system with a high school; [there are] four banks; [there are] several hotels; [there is] the New York State Institution for the Blind; [there are] a library and an opera house; [there are] several important manufacturing concerns, two breweries, a malt house, and three steam laundries; [there are] two newspapers, one daily and one weekly; [there is] a business college, [there are] a Masonic lodge, two Odd Fellow lodges, and other secret societies; [there is] the Holland Land Office Museum; and [there are] an excellent system of water works and a fire department. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899])

### 1: Infrastructure

A consideration that might not occur to modern readers is that with dirt streets and horse-drawn vehicles, there can be a need for someone assigned to the duty of "cross walk cleaner." In the 1890s, such a person was Henry Priester. *The Daily News* of May 1895 reported that the Village Trustees had provided Priester with a push cart having a garbage can suspended between the wheels and a frame with attachments for holding a hoe, broom, and sprinkling can. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1895). The next year, the newspaper indicated that he had been provided with a new broom and hoe (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1896). Unfortunately, there were occupational hazards connected to working in the streets. In 1899, Priester was knocked down by a passing horse while sweeping at Main and State streets. Fortunately, according to reports, he was uninjured. ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 November 1899)

Street names changed fairly often over the years. For example, in 1893, Church Street, no longer featuring a church, was renamed Jefferson Avenue after Village Trustees received a petition to that effect ( *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 October 1893). Considerable

discussion occurred at one particular meeting of the Trustees in 1890 when one of the Trustees expressed the belief that there should be an immediate wholesale renaming of streets. For instance, he thought that Liberty and South Liberty streets should both be called Liberty Street; Hutchins Street and Lafayette Avenue simply Hutchins Street; and Maple and Bentley streets should both become Maple Street. ("To Extend Water Mains," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1890)

We are used to having streets being illuminated during all the hours of darkness. However, that was not always the case. It wasn't until 1891 that Village Trustees decided to leave street lights turned on throughout the night (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1891).

Streets in Batavia wouldn't be paved with a hard surface such as brick or asphalt until after the upcoming turn of the century. However, in this decade some streets received a coating of crushed stone. For example, in 1898, 2-1/2 miles of such a surface were laid down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1956).

Existing bridges required ongoing maintenance. For example, in 1898, the River Street bridge received new stringers and flooring (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 September 1898). A new bridge across the Tonawanda Creek was erected in 1900. Although connecting Law and Chestnut streets, it came to be known simply as "the Law Street bridge." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 September 1900)

Improvements were also made to the public water system. In May of 1891, the trustees voted to replace wood pipes with ones made of iron (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 May 1891). In June of that year, *The Daily News* reported that a freight car load of iron mains had arrived (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1891).

Getting water of sufficient quality was not a simple matter. Recall in the previous chapter, a decision had been made to move the intake pipe for the water works further upstream to reduce the risk of drawing from polluted Creek water. In 1891, Alderman Swanson proposed building a dam in the old mill race at a point below where the water was now being drawn. He felt this would lead to cleaner water because it would increase the degree to which sediment would settle out before the water flowed to the pumps in the water works. ("After Cleaner Water," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1891)

The effort to provide public water was driven by a number of factors. One of them was that drinking water from private wells was an "ever-present danger" where houses were located closely together and impurities were bound to find their way into the wells ("Sewerage in Batavia," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 May 1890). Another risk with private wells was the presence of natural gas. When Alderman Moynihan had a well at 4 Bank Street drilled through 25 ft. of rock to a depth of 55 ft., he encountered gas mixed with the water. Holding a match to a water faucet produced a flame several inches in length. ("Alderman Moynihan's Well," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 February 1899) Some homeowners obtained water collected in basement cisterns fed by rain that fell on the roofs of their homes. But even here, there was

risk. *The Daily News* of August 14, 1899 reported that Dr. Damon H. Palmer had been found dead in his basement cistern, an apparent victim of drowning (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 August 1899).

In the last chapter, it was noted that sewage often drained into open ditches and/or out onto the surrounding land. Sewage from the State School for the Blind ran out into a swamp to the north. Sewage from homes in the northeastern part of the Village drained into a ditch and out onto land owned by Hiram Swezey in the vicinity of present-day Eastown Plaza. Other homes north of Main Street discharged sewage into the "Big Ditch" that ran from the northeast area of the Village into Tonawanda Creek a little east of present-day South Lyon Street. Sewage was also running onto property owned by Trumbull Cary who, as a consequence, had sued the Village for \$20,000 in damages.

The State, to its credit, took measures to deal with sewage discharge from the State School for the Blind. In 1892, it hired Henry Homelius to develop plans for a sewage disposal plant on the campus. The plans provided for a structure 40 x 90 ft. in size and one story high. The side walls were to be 10 ft. above the foundation. A small portion of the front end of the building, facing south, was to be used as a storage room and sitting room for employees. The center portion of the building, under which were to be two sewage vats, was to be constructed with walls of solid masonry and 7-1/2 ft. below the main floor. An open floor was to be laid over the vats. The floor over the rear portion of the building, under which were to be valves and a small wheel, were to be 2-1/2 ft. above the center floor. According to the design, sewage was to enter the building under the front end and, after passing through screens and mixers, to be conveyed to the vats where it was to be chemically treated. The outlet was to be at the north end of the building. "Sewage Disposal Works," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 September 1892)

In 1893, the State Health Department asked the Village to stop pollution of the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1893). It does not appear that any action resulted.

In 1895, the Batavia Board of Health condemned the "Big Ditch" and declared the section between Bank and Oak streets a nuisance with several cases of people becoming ill from the effluent. Village President Seacord and Health Officer LeSeur, while inspecting the ditch, found many places where private discharge pipes did not even extend clear to the ditch. As a temporary measure, the Sewer Commission was ordered to see that private pipes were fully extended. Meanwhile, Ellicott Avenue area residents demanded that the ditch be covered. ("Big Ditch a Nuisance," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 June 1895)

In May of 1900, Dr. Thomas A. Killip of the State Health Department visited Batavia and inspected the Village's water and sewer facilities. Killip also visited the homes where there had been cases of diphtheria. At the conclusion of his inspections, he declared that it was damnable that a village like Batavia should allow such an entirely inadequate and wholly defective sewerage system to exist and expressed a wonder that there had not been much

more sickness. Something must be done at once, he insisted. ("Sewerage in Batavia," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 May 1900).

Up to this time, another issue that had apparently been left pretty much to the individual property owner was the disposal of trash. The matter appears to have first been addressed in 1892 when someone referred to by the name of Expressman Trietly was chosen to haul away garbage twice each week. This action was taken in accordance with a resolution by the Board of Health. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 July 1892) The newspaper report noting this action did not indicate where the garbage was being taken, but judging from later accounts in following decades, the destination was likely somewhere on private land.

### 2: Transportation

The popularity of bicycles continued to soar during the 1890s. In 1894, two individuals, simply identified as "Russell and Palmer," were reported to have the first tandem bicycle seen in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1894). They may have been businessmen selling bicycles. In the same year, the appeal of bicycles to both males and females was indicated by an observation in *The Daily News* that there were several "lady cyclists" to be seen riding in bloomers ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 August 1894). Bloomers were a form of clothing much more conducive to bicycling than traditional women's apparel. By 1896, a local retailer, John Secord, was complaining that people were not buying carriages, but buying bicycles instead (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1896). As the next century rolled around, the League of American Wheelmen was promoting the idea of a "side path" (what we would call a "bike path") through Batavia from New York City to Chicago (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 April 1900).

The first automobile "to be seen" in Batavia was reportedly on May 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1899 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1899). It was a "hydro-carbon carriage" manufactured by the Winton Motor Carriage Company of Cleveland, Ohio. On an excursion from Cleveland to New York City via Rochester, it rolled across the Walnut Street bridge at 11:45 a.m. and turned east on West Main Street. Dozens of Batavians had been standing along Main Street since early morning, waiting for the vehicle's arrival. One wonders how many of them recognized that this latest invention would soon doom the popularity of bicycles. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Notable Batavia Firsts, 1899—1954," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 2014)

The next year, Ray Otis bought a gasoline-powered automobile in New York City and had it delivered to Batavia, presumably by rail. *The Daily News* reported its arrival in its edition of May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1900. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 April 1900; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 May 1900)

During those earliest days of the automobile, local residents sometimes made an attempt to build their own. For example, in September of 1900, it was reported that Robert L. Cooley had nearly completed a homemade automobile that ran nicely and had proved to be a success. It

had a gasoline engine and two gears forward, giving it a top speed of about 30 mph on smooth roads. There was also a reversing gear and a brake. Altogether, it weighed 700 pounds. A year later, Cooley and D. W. Tomlinson, Jr. built a steam-powered automobile. (Larry Barnes, *Bicycles Built by the Cooley Brothers* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2011] p. 4)

Railroads continued to play their dominant role in travel of any significant distance. Safford North described the local rail lines as follows. In 1899, the railroads passing through Batavia included the main line of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad and extended in general southwesterly and northeasterly through the central part of town. The Tonawanda branch of the same railroad extended east to west through the central part of town. The Canandaigua branch extended in a southeasterly direction from the Village. The Batavia and Attica branch extended in a southwesterly direction. The Erie Railroad entered town near the center of the southern boundary, ran parallel with the Attica branch of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad to Batavia and then turned and ran eastward. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]) Not mentioned by North was the Lehigh Valley Railroad which ran along the southern boundary of Batavia and came to the community in 1891 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 20).

During this era, New York Central depots were landscaped with flowers. Flowers for the depots from Buffalo to Syracuse were grown in New York Central greenhouses located here in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 March 1897).

### 3: Housing

The era for the construction of the more remarkable mansions, e.g., the Lay Mansion, the Richmond Mansion, the Cary Mansion, the Law Mansion, the Ellicott Mansion, the Alva Smith Mansion, and the Doty Mansion seems to have pretty much ended by this decade. However, really fine homes continued to be built in Batavia. Especially noteworthy among them were the structures designed and built by Henry Homelius. From 1891 through 1900, Homelius was responsible for 17 houses. (Jine Monachino, *Henry and Frank Homelius* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 2000] pp. 19-20)

Something that was enough of a novelty in this decade to warrant mention in the newspaper was the installation of hot and cold water systems in a house. For example, in 1893, *The Daily News* reported plumber Henry J. Volz had built such a system for a home on Ellicott Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 April 1893).

### 4: Energy sources

The Village Trustees became dissatisfied with the service of the Consolidated Gas and Electric Light Co. that had been providing electricity for the Village street lights. In 1893, a

committee headed by Village President Willis Sanford, after visiting other communities, became convinced that Batavia should own its own power plant. The Trustees agreed and a public vote in June of 1893 authorized the construction of a Village-owned facility. A power station was added to the front of the water works. Equipment was in place in July of 1894 and on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the lights were turned on. The Village-owned power plant provided lighting for Batavia's streets until 1918. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 6 and 10)

Ice from the creek continued to be the means for cooling food. Harvesting of ice was typically reported in the newspaper. For example, such a news item appeared in *The Daily News* in its January 5, 1893 edition. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1893) There was more than one ice company involved in the cutting and storage of ice. One such company was the Batavia Ice Co. located on the Tonawanda south of Law Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1900).

By this time, oil had become part of the fuel options available to Batavians. In 1896, ground was broken for storage tanks belonging to Standard Oil located near the rail lines in central Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 October 1896).

### 5: Communication

In an era preceding radio communication, weather forecasts were transmitted by other means. For example, in Batavia Woodward and Weaver (no first names were provided in the account) communicated weather forecasts by displaying flags stretched across Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 July 1891). How long this practice was continued beyond its initiation in 1891 is unknown.

Woodward and Weaver also arranged to display weather maps each morning at the post office (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 1891). The post office at this time was located on Jackson Street.

Toward the end of the decade, another rather novel means of communicating weather forecasts was achieved by blowing the whistle at the Harvester plant. The whistle could be heard up to 15 miles away; and farmers reportedly stopped their work at 11:00 am each day to listen for the forecast. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 May 1900; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 May 1900) A key for interpreting the whistle blasts was available at the office of *The Daily News* ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 November 1900).

Local businessmen and professionals continued to install telephones in their stores and offices. For example, in March of 1892, *The Daily News* reported that the pharmacy had a phone. Three years later in May of 1895, Dr. LeSeur went a step further by having long-distance service added to his phone (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 May 1895).



In the early years of telephone service in Batavia, there was more than one company competing for customers. In July of 1894, there was the DeVeau Telephone Exchange (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1894). In April of the next year, the Batavia Local Telephone Exchange, run by Herbert Smith, was in operation with 50 telephones on line and a promise of night service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 April 1895). In December of 1896, Bell Telephone was operating with 26 phones in local service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1896). In August of 1897, to meet its growing number of customers, Bell announced that it would have three "lady" operators (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 August 1897).

### 6: County and village boundaries

There appear to have been no changes in County or Village boundaries.

### 7: Government/governing structure

There were no changes in government or governing structure. However, in June of 1894, the Village Trustees began meeting in new Council Chambers located in the new Municipal Building that had been built on the front of the water works (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 6). And, in June of 1900, it was announced that voting would henceforth be done on voting machines (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1900).

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

In an era where political affiliation was important even in presumably non-political positions, *The Daily News* took pains to note that the Batavia police force, now numbering four members, again, was equally divided with two Democrats and two Republicans (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1891).

Over the years, misbehavior by juveniles periodically led to curfews being imposed in Batavia. One such example was in 1899. A whistle blew to signal an 8 pm curfew. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 February 1899)

Gambling was another issue that periodically led to efforts to curtail behavior. An example in this instance occurred in 1898 when Village President Sanford ordered slot machines to be removed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 December 1898)

Motorists today are familiar with speed enforcement by local police. However, before automobiles came into existence, riders on horses and horse-drawn conveyances were targeted. Later, when bicycles became popular, they, too, were subjected to enforcement of speed limits. The first arrest for bicycle speeding occurred in 1896 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 June 1896). The actual speed limit at that time is unknown, but was probably no more

than 8 mph since this was reportedly the speed limit six years later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 May 1902).

In the time period during which this chapter is being written, tattoos have become very popular. Not all may be to everyone's liking, but their legality has not been an issue. However, in the 1890s, the situation was different. For example, in 1891, a 17-year-old was judged to have an "offensive tattoo" described as a "bad" picture. This resulted in jail for the artist. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 August 1891)

Another behavior that in the current era would hardly be considered an issue is the matter of women dressing in male apparel. However, in 1891, "girls" were warned not to "parade in the street" in men's clothing (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 November 1891). Apparently the warning was not always heeded. As reported in an issue of *The Daily News* published the following year, one "young lady" was escorted home when she broke the law by wearing men's clothing. The incident occurred at the corner of Liberty and Main streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1892).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

It was noted in the last chapter that saloons were numerous in Batavia during the 1880s. Apparently, their great popularity continued into the 1890s. By 1893, there were 21 saloons in the Village (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1900).

Unlike today when it is necessary to go out to a store to obtain milk, this was a time period when milk was delivered directly to the home of the consumer. In 1899, for the first time some milkmen began delivering the milk in glass bottles. Apparently such bottles were an attraction for the light-fingered and the bottles themselves became subject to theft, according to a report in an August 1899 issue of *The Daily News*. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1899)

The great popularity of bicycles created a need for services for their riders. In 1900, two local businessmen, Russell and Palmer, met this need by installing a machine for inflating bicycle tires. The device began pumping air after a penny was inserted into a slot. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1900) A penny then would be roughly equivalent to 27 cents, today ("Inflation Calculator," *DaveManuel.com*, online, accessed 13 June 2014).

A rather novel enterprise was the operation of Turkish baths located on Park Place. The baths operated in 1893 under the ownership of a Mr. Jones (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 December 1893). Two-and-a-half years later, an individual identified as W. H. Wilcox of Union City, Pennsylvania leased the baths and began refitting them in an unspecified manner (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 May 1896). However, less than a year after that, the baths were reported closed and being bought on foreclosure by a John Schleuker (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 February 1897). This appears to have been the end of Turkish baths in Batavia.

There is no known description of the Turkish baths as they existed in Batavia, but it seems fairly safe to assume that they featured facilities generally characteristic of such places during the Victorian Era. According to one source, such baths were closely akin to saunas. They started with a "warm room" heated by a continuous flow of hot, dry air. Bathers then sometimes moved to a second room with even hotter air. After that, the bathers took a plunge into a pool of cold water. Next came a massage and then retiring to a "cooling room" for a period of relaxation. ("Turkish bath," *Wikipedia.org*, online, accessed 12 June 2014)

### 10: Factories/industries

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century approached, there were numerous factories and industries in Batavia. According to North (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]), they included:

- Johnston Harvester Co.
- Wiard Plow Co.
- Batavia and New York Wood Working Co.
- Baker Gun and Forging Co.
- Batavia Carriage Wheel Co.
- Batavia Preserving Co.
- A shoe factory.
- A paper box factory.
- Two roller mills.
- A cold storage warehouse.
- Two breweries and a malt house.
- Three steam laundries.
- And several other operations.

The shoe factory mentioned by North would have been the Minor Shoe Co. It was brought to Batavia from Interlaken, New York in 1896 by Peter W. Minor. The company initially located in half of a relatively new three-story brick building on the corner of Ellicott and West Main streets. (This building had been built earlier in the decade by the D. Armstrong Shoe Co. which had come to Batavia from Rochester, but then returned to Rochester in 1895 after expressing dissatisfaction with Batavia's labor force.) (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 176-178)

The paper box factory mentioned by North could have been that of W. T. Palmer, but more likely was that of E. N. Rowell. Recall from the last chapter that during the 1880s Rowell's company was running out of space in its original location on Main Street. When, in the current decade, half of the former Armstrong building mentioned above became available, the E. N. Rowell Co. moved there in 1896. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 177)

Two of the "several other operations" mentioned by North could have been the R. E. Chapin Manufacturing Works and the Bidwell Co. The Chapin firm started in Oakfield before moving to Batavia in 1896 where it located on Liberty Street. The company's products at that time included kerosene cans and containers for other liquids. The sprayers for which the company became especially well known did not appear until after 1900. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 172-173)

The Bidwell Co., owned by Charles H. Bidwell, began in Albion in 1883. Then it moved to Medina before moving to Batavia in 1899. The company manufactured harvesting and threshing machines in a three-story plant located on Swan Street between the Erie and New York Central tracks. The factory had its own power plant adjoining the main building. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 175-176)

### 11: Banking/financial services

According to North (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]), in 1899 Batavia had four banks.

### 12: Education

Three public schools were erected in 1891, all designed by Henry Homelius. One was located on West Main Street near present-day South Lyon Street. The other was on East Main Street near Spruce Street. The third was on Williams Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 June 1891; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 September 1941)

Beginning in 1892, Sarah Blount conducted the Blount Business School from which eventually about 600 local young people graduated into the business world before the school closed in 1927 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 237). Areas of instruction included bookkeeping, spelling, penmanship, and arithmetic. Classes were held in Schafers Commercial Building on Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 January 1893)

Beginning in 1891, the Batavia Sewing School operated from Alva Smith's former mansion on Park Place. It was organized for the purpose of teaching poor children how to sew and do other useful domestic work. As of 1897, the school was under the supervision of a Mrs. J. C. Baker. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 January 1897)

In 1899, a gymnasium was built at the State School for the Blind. It was said to have an appearance resembling a barn. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 January 1899)

### 13: Religion

North (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]) identified eight churches in Batavia at the end of the decade: Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Freewill Baptist, Catholic, Evangelical Association, and United Evangelical. Not mentioned by North were the Universalists who had organized in 1894 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 120). Perhaps they were omitted because they did not yet have their own building.

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The Holland Land Office building, erected in 1815, operated as a land office until the 1830s. Later, it served other functions including being a music school and a church. When, in 1894, the structure passed into the hands of someone who seemed likely to raze it, the Holland Purchase Historical Society was organized in an effort to save the building. Daniel W. Tomlinson temporarily purchased the Land Office building to protect it while money was raised from individuals who, by virtue of their subscriptions, became charter members of the Holland Purchase Historical Society. Once the purchase price of \$1,850 had been raised, ownership of the building was transferred to the Society. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p.162)

On January 12, 1894, Holland Purchase Historical Society members met at the Land Office building to incorporate. They elected Mary Richmond as their first President. The Society set as its goal "the discovery, procuring and preservation of whatever related to the Holland Purchase lands, and all lands that had been owned by Robert Morris in Western New York." The Land Office was formally dedicated as a museum on October 12, 1894. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1992] p. 162)

### 15: Cemeteries

There appear not to have been any significant developments relevant to the cemeteries.

### 16: Firefighting

There appear not to have been any significant developments relevant to firefighting.

### 17: Healthcare

In 1892, the Trustees secured a "contagion house" in the southwest corner of the Village. This was to isolate victims of cholera in hopes of limiting the spread of the infection. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 6 September 1892) It is not known either the exact location of this place or how many individuals were housed there.

In 1895, the Trustees authorized an emergency hospital to be located on River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 January 1895). There is no evidence that it was ever established.

In 1898, concern over the spread of small pox led to disinfecting mail received from LeRoy. This protective measure was a response to an outbreak of the disease in LeRoy. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 December 1898)

Then, in 1900, Cora Wilford, a trained nurse, opened a private hospital. It was in the Ballard House on the corner of Maple and Jackson streets. Reportedly, Wilford had four rooms ready for use. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 July 1900)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

There appear not to have been any significant developments in this area.

### 19: Disasters

Although not true disasters, there apparently were at least three really big snow storms in the tenth decade. One, in 1895, was described as a storm that "[would] be long remembered" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 & 11 February 1895). Another February storm the next year was severe enough to stop trains (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 & 21 February 1896). Then in December of 1898, a storm left 3-ft. of snow (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1898).

Recall a description in the last chapter of a steamboat accident that led to four people drowning in the Tonawanda. An accident occurred in 1892 that had the potential for a similar loss of life. Around 6 p.m. on July 19<sup>th</sup>, a steamboat owned by George Smith and John Henderson was returning from Whiskey Point to a dock near Chestnut Street. There were 18 people on board. Close to the dock, the steamboat collided with another small steamer and a steam pipe on Smith and Henderson's craft broke, enveloping the boat and passengers in steam. Many of the passengers jumped overboard. However, unlike the location where the accident a decade earlier occurred, the water in this instance was shallow enough that everyone was able to wade to shore. The single casualty occurred to 12-year-old Walter May who was scalded by the steam. ("Blow Up On Creek," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 July 1892)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

In the 1880s, 1890s, and for many years afterwards, boating on the Tonawanda was a popular form of recreation. As mentioned above, steamboats ran cruises up the Tonawanda Creek. At one point, exactly when is not clear, someone evidently took the time to record the other traffic on the Creek. According to his/her tally, there were 29 motor boats, 65 canoes,

plus several rowboats. The Creek was said to be a "bright place nights and Sundays." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1937)

In the previous chapter, mention was made of a merry-go-round on Jackson Street in 1890. In the tenth decade, there was one on Church Street (now Jefferson Avenue) operated by a Charles Whitaker (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1892).

Bicycle racing drew large crowds. In 1892, an event at the Fairgrounds drew 2,000 spectators (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 & 18 August 1892). Four years later, riders and spectators alike turned out for a road race from Batavia to LeRoy and back, a distance of 20 miles. The starting and ending point was the intersection of Bank and Center streets. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 December 1914)

The locations at which bands might be heard expanded in 1895 when a bandstand at Ellicott Square (corner of Ellicott and Liberty streets) was constructed. *The Daily News* of July 28, 1895 reported that 20 men were at work on the project. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1895)

An apparently new activity in the mid-1890s was bowling. As interest grew, bowling clubs formed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1896). Reportedly, the first bowling alley in Batavia was a place called "Arlington Alley" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 November 1897).

Another form of recreation that apparently hadn't existed before locally was golf. Then, in 1899, a golf course was set up behind the State School for the Blind (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1899). The next year, there was one at the Fairgrounds ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 May 1900).

The Dellinger Opera House was, for a while, a popular place for dances. The seats would be temporarily removed for that purpose. However, in 1900, a State fire inspector ordered a sloped floor installed along with permanent seats. Thus, the Village lost its best dance hall. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 62)

### 21: War/impact of war

The Spanish-American War was a conflict in 1898 between Spain and the United States, the result of American intervention in the Cuban War of Independence. American attacks on Spain's Pacific possessions led to involvement in the Philippine Revolution and ultimately to the Philippine-American War. The results produced American control over Cuba and authority over the Philippine Islands, Guam, and Puerto Rico. ("Spanish-American War," *Wikipedia.org*, online, accessed 13 June 2014)

Local men participated in this conflict. *The Daily News* of April 28, 1898 reported on the first four Batavians to leave for the Spanish American War (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 April

1898). Among Batavians who eventually served was William Coon, later Batavia's first appointed historian.

### 22: Families/persons of special note

Meriting recognition at this point are Henry and Frank Homelius, father and son architects/builders who had a major impact in the years between 1876 and 1941. Together or individually, they designed and supervised the construction of dozens of the finest homes and commercial buildings in Batavia.

Henry was born in Buffalo in 1850, the son of German immigrants. His family moved to Batavia when Henry was six years old. There is no evidence that he was graduated from high school or attended college, but he acquired extensive informal training through working with others and reading.

In 1876, Henry and his wife, Catherine, became the parents of Frank Homelius. As Frank grew into manhood, like his father he did not graduate from high school or college. But also like his father, he acquired extensive informal training. Eventually, Henry and Frank worked as partners until Henry's death in 1917.

After his father's death, Frank continued to design and build structures throughout Batavia. His first major project after his father's death was the 1918 conversion of the Brisbane mansion into a city hall.

Like his father, Frank was a staunch Democrat and was elected Mayor in 1939, only the second Democrat to serve in that office. When he died in 1941, his wife, Maud, was appointed to fill out the brief remaining days of his tenure. As such, she became Batavia's only female mayor.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

There were numerous organizations formed in the tenth decade. Among them were:

The Upton Post of the Women's Relief Corps (the W.R.C.) which received its charter in July of 1891.

The Holland Purchase Historical Society, founded in 1894, and which was discussed in the earlier section on libraries/archives/museums.

The Monday Literary Society established by the women of the United Methodist Church in March of 1894.



## 1891-1900

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Three bands of King's Daughters in June of 1895, formed by the Rev. Cyrus A. Johnson, Pastor of the First Baptist Church.

The Political Equality Club, established in 1895 by a group of women seeking the right to vote, but also concerned later with other community matters.

A second group of Odd Fellows formed Masonic Lodge No. 754 in 1896 when the first group became too large.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, made up of women who could trace their lineage to someone who fought in the Revolutionary War, was granted a charter in 1897.

The Conversation Class, a women's study club, was formed in 1897. All programs were presented orally and without notes.

The Knights of Columbus, Council 325, was organized in April of 1898.

The above information was taken from Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* (Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There were apparently no new developments in this area.

### 25: Urban renewal

The requirement that downtown buildings be of brick or other fireproof exterior, improved fire apparatus, and the construction of a public water system with fire hydrants was having its impact. There were no major conflagrations in the central part of the community, in contrast to earlier decades. Consequently, there was also no "urban renewal" in any sense.



# **HISTORY OF BATAVIA**

## **PART 2**

**1901-1910**

**1911-1920**

**1921-1930**

**1931-1940**

**1941-1950**

**1951-1960**

**1961-1970**

**1971-1980**

**1981-1990**

**1991-2000**

**2001-2010**

**2011-2015**

**Post-2015**



## The Eleventh Decade

### Overview

As Batavia began the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it experienced its greatest population growth to date. The number of Village residents reached 11,613 in 1910 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This was an increase of 2,433 individuals since 1900. The greatest contributing factor to this growth was the demand for labor generated by the industry which had developed in the last several years.

This was the decade in which Batavia's sewer problems came to a head. Recall from the last chapter that a representative of the State Health Department, in a visit to the Village in 1900, had said it was "damnable" that a community like Batavia should allow such an entirely inadequate and wholly defective sewerage system to exist. As the cost of successful law suits from various property owners began to mount, the Village Aldermen were finally forced to act. Information about the events involved is in the following section titled, "Infrastructure."

### 1: Infrastructure

As this decade began, Batavia had neither a public sewer system (in any real sense of the term) nor a sewage treatment facility. Sewage commonly drained into open ditches and/or the Tonawanda Creek. Sewage that didn't end up in the Creek instead flowed into fields or swamps. The situation was greatly exacerbated by both construction of a public water system, which allowed for indoor plumbing including toilets, and a major population growth amounting to nearly 3,600 additional residents in the years between 1890 and 1910.

Beginning in 1906, property owners who owned land onto which sewage was flowing brought law suits against the Village (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 November 1906). The first to do so were Trumbull Cary and Hiram Swezey. They were later joined by Hinman Holden, Dr. E. A. Morse, Mrs. Marietta Gleason, Mrs. Sarah J. Heintz, and a Mrs. Simpson. The suits ranged up to \$5,000, a considerable sum at the time. (*The Buffalo Courier*, Buffalo, N.Y., 27 June 1909)

In 1907, having found sewage in the Tonawanda Creek, the State informed the Village that a date had to be set for building a sewer system (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1907)

Two years later, forty-two residents along the Tonawanda, who were downstream from where the Big Ditch emptied into the Creek a little east of South Lyon Street, began to consider filing law suits. They argued that, under public health law, they had a right to recover damages and obtain an injunction. This action created the potential for fines totaling \$125,000. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1909)

The Village Aldermen initially dragged their heels in responding to the complaints. This was most notable in the case of Hiram Swezey's complaint about sewage being discharged onto his land on East Main Street. No response was forthcoming even after several years of efforts by Swezey to have something done about the situation until he eventually sued the Village and won his case. Even then, the Aldermen did not act right away, an inaction that resulted in mounting fines for contempt of court. ("Events of the Week at Batavia," *The Batavia Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 October 1907; "Events of the Week at Batavia," *The Batavia Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 January 1908)

As law suits proceeded, the fines had the potential for exceeding the cost of building a sewer system. That fact seems to have been the factor that finally prompted the Village to take some action. As a first step, the residents who were discharging sewage into the Swezey ditch were ordered to cease doing so (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 October 1908). This impacted the area of the Village that included Ross Street, East Avenue, and other streets east of Ross and North of East Main (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1908).

Then, in June of 1909, Village voters were presented with a proposal to build a \$375,000 sewer system. An observation of interest is that, in an era when women ordinarily did not have the right to cast ballots, women taxpayers in this instance were allowed to vote (*The Buffalo Courier*, Buffalo, N.Y., 27 June 1909). The proposal was approved by a vote of 739 in favor of funding a sewer system versus 338 who were opposed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 1909). Passage of the proposal resulted in a spontaneous parade by supporters who also lit a celebratory bonfire at the intersection of West Main Street and Harvester Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1909). That fall, the Thomas Sweeney Co. of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was granted a contract to construct a sewer system ("Word from Mr. Sweeney," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 1909). Work began the first of December (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 December 1909).

## 1901-1910

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One unanticipated side effect of sewer construction was its impact on private wells. For example, the depth of the ditches on West Main Street averaged 20 ft.; and this resulted in many wells in the area either drying up or having low water levels. One well on Dellinger Avenue, 14 ft. deep, that had furnished water for a "large community," was among those that went dry. After the sewer system was completed, it was anticipated that wells less than 14 or 15 ft. deep would be of little value. ("Sewer Trenches Robbing the Wells," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 January 1910) Later, the same problem showed up on Park Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 June 1910).

As work proceeded on the sewer system, the recently formed Sewer Commission filed a report indicating that a sum of \$6,262.35 had to be raised in the next Village budget (*The Sunday Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 March 1910). This was the beginning of an annual line item for the expense of a public sewer system.

In 1908, a Village dump was established on State Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 June 1908). This may have been the first time that trash and garbage were disposed of in a location other than on private property.

Prior to this decade, streets in Batavia were unpaved. Then, in May of 1905, *The Daily News* reported that the Aldermen were discussing paving Main and Jackson streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 May 1905). Later the same year, in November, Mayor Harvey Burkhart laid the first brick (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 November 1905).

With a growing population, new streets were opened. One example was Holland Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 May 1901). Another was Hull Park, named in memory of Village Clerk Carlos Hull (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 April 1906).

In 1901, a decision was made to erect an additional bridge across the Tonawanda Creek. The site chosen was between South Main Street and the present-day South Lyon Street, the location of today's Lyon Street bridge. Plans called for moving the existing Walnut Street bridge to this new site. Then a brand new structure was to be constructed between Walnut Street and West Main Street. The combined cost of these two projects was estimated to be \$16,600. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 November 1901).

The location of railroad tracks and depots in central Batavia posed problems with stopped trains blocking both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In 1905, the problem of blocked pedestrian traffic was addressed by the construction of a footbridge on Ellicott Street over the New York Central tracks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1905).

## 2: Transportation

In the last chapter, it was noted that the popularity of bicycles was soaring. That popularity carried over into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In May of 1902, *The Daily News* reported that local cyclists had organized to form a group known as Batavia Wheelmen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 May 1902). However, the intense popularity was peaking as automobiles began to appear in increasing numbers.

During the early years, someone went to the trouble of recording the number of automobiles passing through the community. One day in August of 1901, 30 vehicles were observed. The next day, there were another 15. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 August 1901)

Most of the early vehicles were gasoline-powered, but some were electric- or steam-powered. As noted in the last chapter, sometimes early automobiles were homebuilt. In 1901, a Herbert Smith built a 6-horsepower steam-powered vehicle (*The Daily News*, 6 August 1901). The next year, he built a 5-passenger, 8-horsepower automobile for a J. A. Dabney at a cost of \$1,000 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 August 1902). The first electric automobile owned by a Batavian appeared in 1903 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 August 1903). There were 40 automobiles of all sorts in 1908 ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1933). By 1910, the number had grown to 300 (*The Daily News*, 22 October 1910).

Batavia had speed limits before the appearance of automobiles. However, it seems that automobiles may have led to higher limits. While in 1902, the speed limit was 8 mph (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 May 1902), by 1906 it had been increased to 10 mph (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 May 1906). Of course, even that seems low compared to the current community-wide limit of 30 mph.

In 1910, New York State began mandatory vehicle registration (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 August 1910). The first Batavian to obtain an automobile license was Oren C. Steele. He was issued a plate numbered 9622. (*The Batavian*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1910)

The ability of automobiles to cover ground at speeds far exceeding horse-drawn wagons and carriages led to an interest in speed records. *The Daily News* in April of 1903 reported that an automobile had been driven from Buffalo to Batavia in just three hours (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 April 1903). Three years later, the newspaper reported that the same trip had been made in only 40 minutes with speeds up to 70 mph (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 December 1906). Those times were apparently established by gasoline-powered vehicles.



## 1901-1910

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Electric automobiles were considerably slower. In 1910, one of the latter took two hours and 45 minutes to make the trip from Buffalo to Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 May 1910).

Just as the appearance of the automobile was about to adversely impact the popularity of bicycles, it also was about to affect the popularity of travel on the Tonawanda Creek. Still, in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rides aboard steamboats remained popular and, in 1904, yet another steamer was built. This time, the vessel was a small side-wheel steamer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 August 1904).

A trolley line was built early in this decade. It was constructed by the Buffalo & Williamsville Electric Railway Company and was planned to be part of a line running from Williamsville and Depew through Batavia to Rochester. However, only the mile and a half from Clinton Street along East Main, Main, and West Main to near Lewiston Road was ever completed. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc, 1993] p. 21)

Work on the trolley line began the 24<sup>th</sup> of August in 1902 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 August 1902). The power station was located on Clinton Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 August 1903). A single track ran along East Main Street from Clinton to near Bank. Then a double track ran from there along Main Street before becoming a single track again along West Main Street. The purpose of the double track was to allow the trolley cars of the system to pass each other while running in opposite directions. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 21)

The trolleys began running with great fanfare in September of 1903. Most of the Village Aldermen reportedly showed up for a ride (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 21). Despite Batavia's population being less than 11,000 at that time, there were 16,500 riders in the first four days (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1903). Unfortunately, ridership at this level was not sustained and Batavia's trolley system eventually succumbed to the same force as adversely affected bicycles and steamers on the Creek—the arrival of the automobile.

### 3: Housing

As the Village's population grew, so did the need for additional housing. In response to this need, contractors built new structures throughout the Village. As an example, in 1910, *The Daily News* reported that Winfield Spink was building 21 houses on Holland Avenue (*The Daily News*, 18 April 1910).

The only row houses in the community were built in this decade. Located on Lewis Place, they were erected by Jared L. Uphill between 1908 and 1909. They were constructed of rusticated concrete block and brick. (Catherine Roth, *Architectural Heritage of Genesee County, N.Y.* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 1988] p.72)

Recall that George Law had erected a mansion in 1864 near the intersection of South Main and Walnut streets. In 1903, John Pickert purchased the mansion. He initially planned to tear it down, but in 1904 instead divided it into three separate buildings. The two-story east wing was moved slightly east and north, then rotated 90 degrees counter-clockwise. It was numbered 3 South Main Street. The two-story south wing was moved west and a bit south, placing it behind the remaining structure. It was numbered either 5-1/2 or 7-1/2 South Main Street. The main part of the Law Mansion, a 2-1/2 story building with a cupola, appears to have been moved closer to South Main Street where it was made into a four-family house. It became 5-7 South Main Street. The former south wing has disappeared, apparently destroyed in a fire, but the other structures remain. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of the Law Mansion* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2007], p. 7)

### 4: Energy Sources

The big energy news in this decade was the arrival of electric power from Niagara Falls and natural gas from Pavilion.

Prior to this time, the only gas that was available was that produced locally from coal or petroleum. Then, on October 12th of 1901, *The Daily News* reported that the Alden-Batavia Natural Gas Company of Binghamton had been incorporated the day before, with \$300,000 capital stock, to develop coal, oil and natural gas lines. The new corporation was formed solely for the purpose of bringing natural gas to Batavia and "disposing of it here." ("New Corporation," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1901)

It's not clear how soon natural gas delivery began, but it was obviously occurring by 1908. A newspaper account in December of that year reported that the Alden-Batavia Natural Gas Company was supplying customers in Batavia with gas from "new" wells at Pavilion through a "new" pipe line. The newspaper account also referred to the completion of a regulator house in the rear of the Free Methodist Church on Ellicott Street, the *third* regulator house in the Village. This, it indicated, would insure "better" pressure and "more efficient" service throughout the community. ("Pavilion Gas Here," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 December

1908) The wording of these statements implies that gas service had been provided by the company for some time prior to 1908.

In 1906, a Niagara Falls company sought a contract to serve the electrical needs of the area (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 February 1906). The company was successful and most area consumers began using Niagara Power. The trolley line, which had been generating its own power, was among the users who took advantage of this new source (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1909). However, the Village continued to light its streets with the municipal power plant.

In July of 1908, the Batavia Gas and Electric Company announced that it would be shutting down. Most of its patrons were switching, or had already switched, to natural gas and/or Niagara power for their energy supply (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1908). The next year, the Village sold its electric plant at auction (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 September 1909). Thus ended local sources of gas and electricity.

Ice harvested from the creek for cooling purposes continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in 1901, *The Daily News* reported that Suttell was harvesting ice for storage in his Jackson Street ice house (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 February 1901) and, in 1907, the paper reported that the Batavia Ice Company was harvesting ice 8-1/2 inches thick from the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 February 1907). However, as early as 1903, manufactured ice was being produced. In that year, George Phelps installed an ice-making machine in his Main Street market (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1903). In 1910, Walter Buxton began ice-making at his business on Ellicott Street ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1910).

### 5: Communication

As mentioned in the last chapter, during the early years of telephone service, several companies competed for customers. This continued as the 20<sup>th</sup> century began. In 1901, the Batavia Home Telephone Company was incorporated (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June 1901). The next year, Inter-Ocean Service also offered telephone service. These were in addition to the Bell Telephone service that had begun operation in the 1890s. Evidently, customers switched back and forth between companies. For example, when Bell Telephone doubled its rates in 1908, *The Daily News* reported that the local doctors switched to Batavia Home Telephone (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1908). Eventually, Bell Telephone absorbed or bought out all its rivals and became the New York Telephone Company, the

community's sole provider of phone service (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 31).

In the last several years, the post office had been located on Jackson Street. With the beginning of the new century, a new location was sought. In 1908, it was announced that Brisbane family property at the corner of West Main Street and Jefferson Avenue had been chosen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 1908). However, several years would pass before a building would be erected.

Readers may recall from the chapter on the years 1801-1810 that the first post office sign was painted in 1804. Then it disappeared. However, in 1910, *The Daily News* reported that it had been found (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1910). Then, surprisingly, it disappeared again, apparently not to be rediscovered until years later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 July 1957).

### 6: County and village boundaries

In 1903, a new charter was adopted that expanded the Village boundaries east of Cedar Street to the "New York Central overhead bridge" and south to the Lehigh Valley railroad (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1932).

### 7: Government/governing structure

Batavia's governing structure had been most recently changed in 1884. Then, in 1904, a revised charter went into effect on March 8<sup>th</sup>. It provided for a Mayor, 10 Aldermen, three Assessors, a Police Justice, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. The most notable change was an increase in the number of Wards from four to five and a corresponding increase in the number of Aldermen from eight to ten. (*Charter & Ordinances of the Village of Batavia, Genesee County, 1904*)

1904 had not yet passed into history before inadequacies of this new charter became evident as the Village Aldermen sought to start paving streets. Consequently, a committee, made up of the Aldermen plus Lewis McLean and Postmaster John Hamilton, was established for the purpose of developing amendments to address the problem. However, before the committee had gotten very far, "special" State legislation was "obtained" in 1905 that permitted the paving of Main and Jackson streets without any amendments to the charter. Thus, the committee, apparently no longer sensing an urgency in fulfilling its charge, did little further work ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, 10 June 1914)

At a dinner meeting of the Batavia Business Men's Association, on January 29, 1907, the matter of a new charter came up in general discussion apparently prompted by C. C. Bradley, acting Village Mayor. The discussion ended in a resolution urging the appointment of a Charter Revision Commission. Soon after, at a general meeting held in the Municipal Council Chambers, a Charter Revision Commission was created with representatives from the Village Aldermen, Business Men's Association, Board of Trade, and labor unions. ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, 10 June 1914)

The Charter Revision Commission prepared a bill for introduction in the State Legislature. It featured a city government that eliminated wards, eliminated political parties, and was run by a manager and five councilmen elected at large. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's Route to Becoming a City: A Surprisingly Difficult Path 11 Years in the Making*, self-published monograph, 2013) The bill was introduced early in the Winter of 1908-1909 by Assemblyman Fred B. Parker. It was defeated. The bill was again introduced the next year and again defeated. ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1914)

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

In late December of 1909, *The Daily News* reported that the police, who had been headquartered in Ellicott Hall (the original county courthouse), would need to move due to "space problems" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 December 1909). The move, made the following month, relocated the department in the Municipal Building at 3 West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 January 1910).

Since the 1850s, prisoners had been housed at a County jail located on the south side of West Main Street about where Oak Street Extension is now situated. In 1903, the County built a new jail at 14 West Main Street (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993]).

In this era, it was a common practice for police to provide overnight housing to tramps and transients. For example, in 1906, the Batavia police reported lodging over 1900 tramps (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 October 1907).

*The Daily News* in late November of 1910 reported that there were "no spitting" signs all over Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1910). It seems likely that a good bit of the spit was tobacco juice since chewing tobacco was popular at that time. In fact,

it was common in places where men gathered, such as the Elks Club, for spittoons to be much in evidence.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century got underway, a decades-old, Nation-wide campaign against alcoholic drinks continued on. It would ultimately culminate in the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution that, beginning in 1920, prohibited the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages. Prior to this total restriction on alcohol, in 1910 State (?) regulations were adopted that restricted liquor sales to drug stores and hotels (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 47). This led to a proliferation of "hotels" as saloons converted to hotels to avoid restrictions imposed by the new regulations (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 August 1910). At the end of the year, leaders of the Batavia area Anti-Saloon League concluded that saloon elimination had not improved matters locally (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 December 1910).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

As noted above, in this decade, there was a wholesale conversion of saloons to "hotels." In late September of 1910, according to newspaper reports, the Mayor inspected four of the former Batavia saloons (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 September 1910). Presumably the inspections were to determine the legitimacy of the new "hotels."

A new invention appeared in Batavia in 1905 when the Hanlon-Karper Company of Batavia, a wholesale and retail dealer, began selling electrically-powered delivery wagons. According to *The Daily News*, it was taking delivery of the entire production of the Shadyside Vehicle Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Hanlon-Karper employed salesmen who travelled throughout the Country. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 January 1905)

### 10: Factories/industries

The Mathes Shell & Novelty Company began in Buffalo. Operated by Kirk B. Mathes, it used shells in making novelty items such as napkin rings, pin cushions, and paper weights. It later expanded its offerings to include items such as ashtrays, products that were made without the employment of shells. The company moved to Batavia in 1901 and occupied a building on Jefferson Avenue. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 178-179).

The Batavia Rubber Company. began operation in 1902 on Robertson Street as the Sweet Rubber Tire Co. (Robertson Street was located roughly between present-day Mill and Maple

streets.) It eventually went into bankruptcy after a “problematic” takeover of the Simplex Rubber Company of America. Tires manufactured by the Batavia Rubber Company were sold under the trade name, “Keystone-Batavia.” (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 185)

### 11: Banking/financial services

There do not appear to have been any new developments in this area.

### 12: Education

In 1903, the school building on Washington Avenue was razed and replaced by a new one with twice as many classrooms. Designed by Henry Homelius and son, it was built by Edward Dellinger. Classes in the new building began in February of 1904. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 88).

In 1905, night school classes were offered by Batavia’s public school system for the very first time. According to newspaper accounts, they were a success. In early 1905, there were 48 students enrolled. Forty of them were males, the majority of whom were between 16 and 20 years of age. Most of these students were seeking to continue their educations after the necessity of going to work had caused them to drop out of regular school. The courses sought included arithmetic, writing, reading, bookkeeping, English, geography, spelling algebra, and mechanical and architectural drawing. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 January 1905)

In May of 1906, the School Board voted to double the size of the Pringle School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 May 1906). The work was completed less than six months later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 October 1906).

With a rapidly growing Catholic population, there was a demand for more parochial schools. The Rev. Peter Pitass started the Sacred Heart School in 1904. It first occupied a barn on South Jackson Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 93) In 1908, Father Ciabatonni opened St. Anthony’s School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 November 1908). According to Ruth M. McEvoy, the next year The Rev. Joseph Laguzzi bought property near Liberty Street and Central Avenue and put together two old houses to serve as St. Anthony’s School and as a parish house (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 94).

### 13: Religion

While the first official meeting of the Salvation Army was in 1892, it later disbanded. It reorganized in 1907. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 127)

The First Church of Christ Scientist incorporated in 1902. Five years later, it rebuilt a stone building at 217 East Main Street to serve as a church. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc.] p. 121).

Prior to 1904, all Catholics in the Village attended St. Joseph's Church. Then, in 1904, St. Mary's Parish was established. A temporary chapel in a house on Ellicott Street, just west of the current church, was the first church building. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 113-114).

Also in 1904, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish was created, in this case especially to serve Poles and Italians. At that time, there were about 50 Polish families in Batavia and a similar number of Italian families. A house on South Jackson Street was rebuilt to provide a sanctuary and a residence for the priest. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 114-115).

Then, in 1908, a fourth Catholic parish was founded, the St. Anthony of Padua Parish. A house on the corner of Liberty Street and Central Avenue was rebuilt to serve as a church building. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 115-116).

In 1908, members of St. James Episcopal Church voted to build a new church at 405 East Main Street to replace the one on Ellicott Street. The new building was designed by Robert North who had spent a year in England studying English architecture and became attracted to the English Gothic style. The congregation held its first regular service in the new church on September 12, 1909. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 108-109)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

There were no significant developments during this decade.



### 15: Cemeteries

When, in 1903, approaches were being excavated for a bridge across the Tonawanda Creek between South Lyon Street and South Main Street, several bodies were uncovered. These were judged to have been burials in the cemetery that once stood in this area, burials that had been overlooked when most of the other bodies were moved to the Batavia Cemetery on Harvester Avenue. The newly discovered remains were then reburied in the Batavia Cemetery. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 October 1903; 31 October 1903; 3 November 1903)

Bodies in the Potters Field area of the old cemetery on South Lyon Street, unlike most of the other bodies that had been moved in the 1820s, were intentionally left there until 1904. At that time, the Village Aldermen ordered them to also be moved to the Harvester Avenue cemetery. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1904) For more details on this matter, refer back to the "Cemeteries" section of the chapter on the third decade, 1821-1830.

In November of 1905, Charles Buchholtz and John Pratt purchased farm land on Clinton Street Road and laid out the first lots in what was to become Grandview Cemetery (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., In. 1993] p. 106).

Prior to the existence of cemeteries and, sometimes even after, burials occurred on private property. One such example occurred at some unknown date on present-day Ellicott Street. In 1909, bones and part of a headstone were discovered there while excavating a basement for the transformer house of Genesee Light & Power Company (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 December 1909) The location appears to have been a little east of Evans Street.

### 16: Firefighting

In 1902, the whistle at the Johnston Harvester plant served as a fire whistle (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1902). How long this continued to be the case is unknown.

In terms of fires, one of the most bizarre incidents occurred in 1905. Sometimes firemen lacked sufficient hose to reach a fire from the nearest fire hydrant. This was the case on June 28, 1905 when fire broke out at a house located at 123 Oak Street. The most that could be done was to save furniture from the burning structure. One piece was a piano. According to the newspaper report, at the height of the fire, someone sat down at the rescued piano and began playing "In the Good Old Summer Time." As if that wasn't strange enough, the crowd which had gathered then added its contribution by singing the words to the chorus at the end of each stanza! The homeowners were reportedly present, but the newspaper account failed

to indicate how they responded to this levity. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1905) One suspects they were not amused.

### 17: Healthcare

Early in the century, outbreaks of smallpox continued to be a health menace. In 1902, during one such outbreak, *The Daily News* reported that Village officials were planning the construction of a smallpox hospital on River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1902; 4 December 1902; 19 December 1902). No record has been found regarding whether such construction actually occurred.

Batavia's first public hospital, Batavia Hospital, located on North Street where the United Memorial Medical Center is now situated, opened for business on July 16, 1902. It was the result of efforts by a group known as the "Woman's Hospital Association of Batavia." The latter had been incorporated in July of 1900. This hospital was the direct predecessor of both Genesee Memorial Hospital and, later, the United Memorial Medical Center. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2013] p. 2)

The Primrose Hospital, located at 5 Thomas Avenue, was opened in 1906 by Charles V. Gray, M.D., and his wife, Cora West Gray, a nurse. The name of the hospital was derived from the name given to the property prior to its purchase by the Grays. Reportedly, Gray specialized in diseases of women, mild mental disorders, and drug addiction. The hospital ceased operation in 1918. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] pp. 3-4)

According to a newspaper account, in 1910 a John King was "fitting up" a house at 2 Central Avenue to serve as a private sanitarium (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1910). It is unknown how long this institution survived.

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In 1909, \$6,407.32 in public funds was expended on care for the poor (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 December 1909). This sum appears to include expenditures on both Town and Village residents.

### 19: Disasters

Over the years, the Tonawanda Creek repeatedly overflowed its banks. For example, in July of 1902 a series of thunderstorms caused the Creek to rise to the point that boats wound up in streets on the south side (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 July 1902).

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Boating on the Creek continued to be a major attraction throughout the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1902, *The Daily News* reported that a Mr. Andrews was buying "Pratt's Place" on South Street to rent boats and sell soft drinks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1902). (South Street later became South Jackson Street.) The location in question appears to have been just upstream from the current water-treatment plant.

In 1907 there were newspaper accounts of "young people" hiring Andrews' launch for trips to Whiskey Point (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 September 1907; 21 September 1907).

In July of 1908, what was billed as the "First Annual Regatta" was held on the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 July 1908). Whether there ever was a second annual regatta or for how many years regattas continued to occur is unknown.

In 1909, it was reported that a Mr. Smith and a Mr. Watson were building a boathouse above the dam (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 May 1909).

On August 15, 1910, *The Daily News* reported that "hundreds" had enjoyed boating the day before (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1910).

As noted earlier, the Dellinger Opera House served as a venue for a wide variety of entertainment. In November of 1901, residents of Batavia could view wrestling matches at the opera house (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1901).

As elsewhere, by this time, baseball was a popular sport. In June of 1903, plans were announced for a baseball grandstand on Jackson Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1903).

In May of 1904, a hurdy gurdy, referred to as a "hand organ" by the press, could be heard on local streets, reportedly the first such occurrence in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1904). Hurdy gurdies are stringed instruments that produce sound by a crank-turned,

rosined wheel rubbing against the strings. The wheel functions much like a violin bow, and single notes played on the instrument sound similar to those of a violin. Melodies are played on a keyboard that presses small wedges, typically made of wood, against one or more of the strings to change their pitch. Hurdy gurdies have a sound board to make the vibration of the strings audible. ("Hurdy Gurdy," *Wikipedia.org*, online, accessed 17 July 2014)

Ice skating was popular and, over time, several locations were developed for the purpose. In 1904, a commercial rink was built on East Main Street on property owned by S. L. Houseknecht (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1904).

Roller skating also became very popular at this time. One of the first rinks, perhaps the first, was the Empire Roller Rink located in Ellicott Hall (formerly the County Courthouse erected in 1803). This rink opened for business in October of 1904. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 1904)

Bowling was also becoming popular. Usually, bowling alleys were first floor operations. However, that apparently was not always so. Consequently, the Village enacted a law in 1909 that prohibited second-floor bowling alleys (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 October 1909). One only needs to imagine the sound of dropped pins and flung balls to appreciate the motivation for this ordinance.

According to Ruth McEvoy, the earliest anyone remembered seeing motion pictures was in 1900 in a store on Jackson Street run by someone named Bridgeford. Somewhat later, Frank Russell, a local real estate dealer, showed movies in Ellicott Hall. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 62) However, actual movie houses didn't appear in Batavia until a few years later. In December of 1906, the Dreamland Theater opened in the Pan American Building on Court Street. According to newspaper accounts, there was standing room only. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 December 1906) "The Lyric," located at 49 Main Street, opened in the same general time period. It featured several dozen seats fastened to an inclined floor and facing a large screen (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 62).

### 21: War/impact of war

Fortunately for Batavians, there were no wars occurring at this time in which local men were fighting. However, this might be seen as having been the "quiet before the storm" since World War I was looming on the horizon.

### 22: Families/persons of note

The development of industry in Batavia led to changes in the ethnic make-up of the Village as the manufacturing plants attracted immigrants seeking jobs. Particularly notable was an influx of Italians and Poles. Ruth McEvoy pointed out that few Polish couples lived in Batavia before 1900. However, by 1904, there were enough to warrant a separate parish served by a Polish-speaking priest. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 250) As a reflection of this change in the ethnic make-up of the population, note that there was only one Catholic Church in 1901, but by 1910, there were four. Most of the new Batavians came to live on the south side, sometimes as a result of provisions in the deeds of property on the north side that restricted sales to individuals who were white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

This decade saw the beginning of many different groups and organizations. The Shakespeare Club began meeting in 1901. It read uncut versions of Shakespeare's plays. At first, it was thought not proper for unmarried women to hear some passages. However, by 1907, unmarried women were allowed to join. Membership was limited to Presbyterians. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc. 1993] p. 145)

The Holland Club was organized about 1902. It was a competitor to the Batavia Club. Membership was limited to men. The Holland Club had a club house, a former home, at 212 East Main Street and a shooting range on Law Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 160) A local chapter of the Order of Eastern Star, a group associated with the Masons, was also organized in 1902. It was designated as Eyla Chapter No. 276. The name was chosen to honor Eyla Chappel who did much of the preliminary paperwork involved in establishing the chapter. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 137). Also in 1903, a Humane Society formed. It was originally founded to prevent cruelty to children, but then expanded its scope to include the prevention of cruelty to animals as well. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 October 1902; 13 January 1903; 13 September 1904)

In October of 1904, the Wednesday Study Club began meeting. Composed solely of women, its programs covered widely varying subject matter. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 145)

The Elks Lodge organized in March of 1905 as BPO Elks No. 550. It initially met on Jackson Street before purchasing the former St. James Episcopal Church building on Ellicott Street in 1909. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 139).

In 1908, the Canoe Club was organized. It built a clubhouse on the bank of the Creek. Members held races and regattas. Also in 1908, automobile enthusiasts formed the Automobile Club of Batavia. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 160).

In 1909, a Civil Improvement League was formed. Its primary focus was on making the community more aesthetically attractive. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 April 1909; 14 April 1909; 23 April 1909) Also in 1909, The Genesee County Gentleman's Driving Club was formed. It held horse races on the oval at the Fairgrounds. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 160-161) In May of 1909, a series of meetings was held to discuss the possibility of forming a local Young Women's Christian Association. These meetings culminated in a decision to move ahead with the establishment of a YWCA and Frances Francis was chosen to lead the effort. ("Batavia Y.W.C.A. May Be Formed," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1909; "Idea of Y.W.C.A. to Help Girls," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 May 1909)

In January of 1910, the Batavia Lodge No. 196, Loyal Order of Moose was organized (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 139. Later the same year, a Parent-Teachers Association organized (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1910; 5 November 1910).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

Prostitution continued to be a concern in Batavia. In December of 1904, Mayor Burkhart stated that "red light" places "must go." He announced that, as of December 20<sup>th</sup>, places harboring disreputable persons had to see that such individuals were out of town within 48 hours. He gave notice that the police would make frequent and unannounced inspections to make sure the order was obeyed. ("Red Lights Must Go," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 December 1904) Evidently the warning was not fully successful. A year later, *The Daily News*

## 1901-1910

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reported that Mrs. Thomas Moore had just been convicted of recently running a disorderly house at the West End Hotel on West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1905).

### 25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.





## The Twelfth Decade

### Overview

The twelfth decade was one of several significant developments and events. After 82 years as a Village, Batavia became a City. Batavia came to have its first City Hall. The police department for the first time had its own building. Also for the first time, there were full-time paid firemen. The community finally had a sewer system and sewage treatment plant. The municipal water system was upgraded and a water filtration plant added. And, as was the case with other cities across the Country, Batavia felt the impact of World War I.

Batavia's population continued to grow rapidly. The number of residents reached 13,541 in 1920 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This was an increase of 1,928 individuals since 1910.

In the view of the author, this decade may be regarded as Batavia's "golden age." Main Street still had most of its mansions. A large number of the major manufacturing concerns that defined Batavia were in place. The housing in the City was still mainly single-family homes. Retail activity was almost entirely in a centralized "downtown." A trolley ran the length of Main Street and the Tonawanda Creek was a major recreational attraction that drew crowds on summer weekends.

### 1: Infrastructure

As indicated in the last chapter, work on constructing sewers began in December of 1909. The layout resulted in all of the sewage being conveyed to a central station at the Municipal Building at 3 West Main Street. As of July in 1911, the work on the sewers was well along. Two-thirds of the system had been built and 360 properties had been connected into the system, about one-fourth of the final number. (*The Sunday Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 July 1911) As this project passed the halfway mark, work began on a treatment plant.

After sewage flowed to the central station, plans called for it to be pumped up to a treatment plant where Lambert Park is now located. The design chosen for the plant was one that had been developed in Germany by Dr. Carl Imhoff. The treated effluent was then to flow into the Tonawanda Creek. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.:

Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 8-9) In May of 1911, *The Daily News* reported that a contract had been signed for construction of the treatment plant (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25, 27 May 1911). Actual construction started in early June (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 June 1911) and by the end of December 1911, the plant was operational (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 1911).

While the treatment plant was ready to go in 1911, final work on the sewers wasn't completed until August of 1912 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 August 1912).

A number of problems arose in connection with the sewers and treatment plant. Putting the streets back in shape after the sewer work apparently was more expensive than expected (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 August 1912). On at least one occasion, high water on the Creek crippled the pumping station and caused considerable damage. There were big cave-ins on Vine Street and Jefferson Avenue and many other, lesser cave-ins, elsewhere. (*Buffalo Courier*, Buffalo, N.Y., 20 April 1913) Breaks occurred in the sewer lines (*Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, Rochester, N.Y., 24 February 1915). The sewer lines proved not to be adequate for storm run-off (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 August 1915). And, in cold weather, the chemicals used in the treatment plant did not work as well as in warm weather (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 8-9).

Then, a catastrophe occurred. On September 16, 1915, an explosion occurred in the sewage collection area of the Municipal Building. It wrecked the whole southwest corner of the building and severely injured John Coleman who was in charge of making daily checks of the sewer well. Coleman died the next day. An auxiliary engine was lowered into the sub-basement to resume pumping sewage to the treatment plant. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 7) No official explanation of the explosion was ever given, but a common belief is that Coleman somehow had inadvertently ignited sewer gas, perhaps by lighting a match. It would be over two years before rebuilding was completed.

Water for the municipal water system came directly out of the Creek from a location near the dam. It was unfiltered and sometimes ill-smelling. The pump for the water system was in the Municipal Building and powered by the same engine that powered the pump for the sewer system. So, when the sewer explosion damaged the Municipal Building, this provided an opportunity to address water and sewage issues simultaneously. In November of 1915, voters were asked to approve a \$15,000 bond issue to replace the old pumping apparatus, renovate some of the sewer lines, and build a water filtration plant. The bond issue passed. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 7)

The site chosen for the filtration plant was upstream between South Jackson Street and the Lehigh Railroad tracks. Siting the plant there also meant moving the water intake from near the dam to this more desirable upstream location. Unfortunately, the war in Europe inflated building costs to the point that the \$15,000 previously approved became insufficient. Consequently, voters were asked to approve an additional \$25,000. When they did so, work continued as planned. Upon completion of the plant, filtered water began to flow through the mains in January of 1918. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 7) Batavia finally had both a decent sewer system and a first-class water system.

Just how bad Batavia's water was before treatment began is illustrated by a decision that had been made years earlier by officials of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The railroad, for several years, had taken water for its locomotives from the Village's water mains. However, especially in the Spring, the water was so dirty and full of sediment that it was doing considerable damage to the locomotive boilers. So, in 1903, the company built a private filtering plant to treat the water. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 November 1903)

Two other observations about the municipal water system in this decade are worthy of note. By August of 1911 nearly 12,000 ft. of new water mains had been laid (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1911). Some of this was for replacement of the original mains which were constructed of wood reinforced with metal bands. Second, water meters were introduced and starting August 1<sup>st</sup> of 1918, property owners were required to have meters and, thus, pay for water based on the amount used (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 July 1918).

As Batavia continued to grow, congestion in the downtown area became an increasingly greater problem. Automobiles were so closely parked along the main streets that pedestrians were able to cross only at intersections. Thereby began a move to consider parking lots. For example, one was suggested for the "large" area south of the Odd Fellows Temple ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 June 1914). The area in question appears to have been behind the former St. James Episcopal Church on Ellicott Street. Eventually, Batavia would become covered with parking lots.

In this decade, there seemed to be greater concern with keeping Main Street clean, perhaps the result of the street now being paved. In this regard, farmers were told to put their horses in the farmers' sheds, generally located on State Street, and hitching posts that had been along Main Street were removed ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 July 1913).

After the earlier brick paving of Main and Jackson streets, other streets were also paved. For example, in 1913, Summit Street was paved with brick (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1913), in 1914, East and West Main streets were so paved (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 February 1915), and in 1916, School Street received a brick surface (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 August 1916). Not everyone was happy about the paving that was going on. A case in point were the residents of East Main Street who objected to a brick surface (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1913). Ultimately, such objections were overridden.

Dust produced by traffic on the unpaved streets was typically addressed by watering them with sprinkling wagons. In 1912, a short-lived experiment replaced water with oil (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1912). Less than two months later, Village authorities returned to the use of water (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1912). One suspects that the oil was tracked inside people's houses and soiled the floors, thus raising objections from homeowners.

With an increase in population, new streets were constructed or old streets lengthened. An example of the latter was East Avenue. In June of 1918, it was announced that the street would be extended to Clinton Avenue. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June, 1918) Prior to that time, it ran only between Ross and Spruce streets.

As noted in the previous chapter, Batavia had a municipally-owned "dumping ground" on State Street. It was located just outside the City line (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 May 1915). However, it appears that disposal of trash and garbage remained the responsibility of property owners, both in terms of where to dispose of it and transporting it to that location.

In 1919, Mayor Caney recommended a new system for dealing with waste. He proposed that the Health Board handle trash and garbage disposal and be given the authority to make necessary regulations and let contracts. Caney was particularly impressed with the manner in which Jamestown, New York dealt with garbage and suggested adoption of that city's system. In Jamestown, one firm was awarded a contract to collect garbage. The garbage was then taken to a five-acre piggery, owned by the firm, where 200 hogs ate the garbage. Periodically, the fattened hogs were shipped to slaughter houses. ("Mayor Caney Recommends New System," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 July 1919) It does not appear that Caney's recommendations were immediately adopted, but as the reader will discover in a later chapter, Batavia eventually employed the same arrangement.

### 2: Transportation

By 1915, the signs of the future dominance of the automobile were becoming obvious. For example, one day in June, someone took the trouble to record the number of conveyances traversing the community. During a single 30-minute period, 96 automobiles and 11 motorcycles passed by the observer, but only 17 horse-drawn wagons or carriages were recorded. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1915)

According to Ruth McEvoy, taxi drivers were listed in the City Directory for the first time in 1919. They were called an "auto taxi service" to distinguish them from hack drivers (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 207). "Hack drivers," in this context, appeared to refer to individuals who, using horse-drawn vehicles, conveyed transients between the railroad stations and hotels.

As mentioned two chapters back, Batavians saw their first automobile in 1899. Only 12 years later, in 1911, they saw their first airplane. On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1911, a pilot by the name of Harry Atwood passed over the Village around 4 pm on a flight that had originated in St. Louis and would terminate, after 11 days and 11 stops, in New York City. He had left earlier in the day from Buffalo and followed the New York Central Railroad lines. Alerted in advance to the pilot's eminent arrival, Engineer J. J. Walker blew the fire whistle at the Municipal Plant, a signal to go outside and peer upwards. Several thousand Batavians gathered on streets and roof tops to witness the aircraft as it flew overhead at an elevation of 300 to 500 ft. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Notable Batavia Firsts, 1899-1954," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 2014) Only a month later, an aviator by the name of Todd Shriver landed an airplane at the Fairgrounds on West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1911)

Recall that Batavia's trolley line began service in 1903. However, 10 years later, the Buffalo and Williamsville company that owned the line still had not resurfaced sections of the streets that had been disturbed by construction of the tracks. When the company was pressured to finish the work, it indicated that it might instead close down the line. This threat prompted several local men to eventually form a new company, The Batavia Traction Company; and in 1915 it took over operations. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 21-22) Although, reportedly, the new ownership did not lead to needed improvements in equipment and service, the trolleys continued to draw considerable use. For example, in 1916, 300,000 riders paid trolley fares (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 January 1917).

### 3: Housing

The most imposing house built in this decade was the Rowell mansion located at 71 Ellicott Avenue (the corner of Ellicott and Richmond avenues). In 1914, Edwin Rowell employed the architectural firm of Otto Block to design the home as a wedding gift to his second wife, May Emke. The mansion was completed ca. 1915. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S. C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 127).

In this decade, Henry and Frank Homelius built nine more homes (Jine Monachino, *Henry and Frank Homelius* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 2000] p 20). However, their work plus that of other contractors was insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population. *The Daily News* of May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1918 reported that there was a shortage of housing and families might need to double up (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1918). Presumably, the impact of World War I led to this shortage.

### 4: Energy Sources

Early elevators, such as one in the Hotel Richmond, were operated by a water-powered hydraulic system. Eventually, with encouragement from Village authorities who were concerned about excessive unmetered water consumption, the elevators were converted to the use of electric motors. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1912)

Smoke from the boilers at the Municipal Building was an issue. As a consequence, the Aldermen voted to build a 175 ft. chimney that was so tall it could be seen from West Batavia. Louis Wiard was Mayor at the time; and the chimney came to be known as "Wiard's Monument." (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p.18)

The Municipal Power Plant, which provided power for Batavia's street lights, was in poor shape by 1912. Village Aldermen met with a representative of the company providing Niagara power to the area and inquired about the possibility of switching the street lights to the latter source. Because the existing lights operated on DC current and the Niagara power system provided AC, the representative suggested, for the time being, switching over just the street lights in the Main and Jackson streets business district. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 January 1912) The Aldermen chose this option.

In 1918, the City Councilmen chose to get out of the electric generation business altogether. A 20-year contract was signed with the Niagara power company for the additional electricity

needed to meet the City's needs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June 1918) However, for the next 17 years, each day City workmen turned over the City's now defunct steam engines, even polishing the brass. The machinery wasn't scrapped until 1935. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Publishing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 10)

During World War I, many consumers of coal experienced shortages because so much coal was being restricted to plants supplying war material (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 10). In September of 1917, due to an absence of coal, the Municipal Power Plant was shut down, thus turning off street lights in Batavia except for those in the business district of Main and Jackson streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 September 1917). In early December of 1917, *The Daily News* reported that the shortage of coal was causing extensive suffering (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 December 1917) and in late December, the newspaper reported that "not an ounce" of coal was to be found in local coal yards (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 December 1917). By mid-January 1918, businesses and factories were closing to conserve fuel (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 January 1918).

This decade was also a witness to natural gas shortages. Articles about shortages appeared in *The Daily News* during 1917, 1918, and 1919. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 September 1917; 4 June 1918; and 3 April 1919) However, unlike the coal shortages, this problem did not seem tied directly to the effects of World War I. Rather, it apparently stemmed from decreasing output at the source.

Ice for cooling purposes continued to be harvested from the Creek. However, the size of the harvest varied considerably from year to year. For example, in 1911, W. W. Buxton cut ice that was 14 inches thick (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 January 1911). The year 1912 produced a record harvest (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 February 1912). But on the other hand, 1919 was a poor freezing year that led to a poor ice harvest (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1919) This situation made manufactured ice particularly attractive. In 1912, Evergreen Farm Dairy started manufacturing ice at 208 East Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 June 1912). In 1917, *The Daily News* reported that a place called Ebling's had a new refrigeration plant (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 April 1917).

Manufactured ice also allowed for better control over its quality. An advertisement from 1911 made this point when the ad copy stressed that the ice being sold was especially pure since it was made from "double distilled" water (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1911).

## 5: Communication

For many years, ticker tape machines that printed out information on strips of paper had been used by newspapers and others wanting immediate reports of distant events. The signals were transmitted over telegraph wires. ("Ticker Tape," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 25 July 2014) In October of 1915, *The Daily News* reported that its ticker service provider would be transmitting the World Series results as the games were being played (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1915)

The post office didn't have its own building prior to 1919. During most of this decade, it was located in a structure at 12-14 Jackson Street. The erection of today's free-standing post office building on West Main began in 1916. However, construction was strung out by problems stemming from World War I. The War resulted in escalating costs of both labor and material, leading the original contractor to abandon the job. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 19) It wasn't until April of 1919 that the building was finally finished (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 April 1919).

In 1918, the Home Telephone Company closed its office and its phone operations were taken over by the Bell Telephone Company (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 August 1918).

## 6: County, Village, City boundaries

An oversight at the time of the last charter adoption was corrected when a new charter was approved in 1914. The earlier charter, through inadvertent wording, failed to expand the Village boundaries to include an area south of the Lehigh Railroad right-of-way as had been intended. This expansion was included in the new charter. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1932)

## 7: Government/governing structure

In this decade, Batavia became a city. However, the path to that outcome was a lengthy and difficult one. As mentioned in the last chapter, a committee was appointed in 1904 for the purpose of developing amendments to the existing charter. The provisions of the existing charter made it difficult to proceed with paving of Batavia's streets. When the paving problem was resolved by State legislation adopted in 1905, the committee ceased to function.



The next event of importance on the path to becoming a city, as also mentioned in the last chapter, occurred in 1907 when a discussion at a dinner of the Batavia Business Men's Association led to a resolution urging the appointment of a Charter Revision Commission. This was quickly followed by a general meeting in the Municipal Council Chambers at which time a Commission was created with representatives from the Village Aldermen, Business Men's Association, Board of Trade, and labor unions.

The newly created Charter Revision Commission then prepared a bill for introduction to the State Legislature. The bill featured a city government that eliminated wards, eliminated political parties, and was run by a manager and five councilmen elected at large. When this bill was sent to Albany in the winter of 1908-09, it was defeated. It was introduced again the next year and again defeated.

That brought matters to the decade now under review. The membership of the Charter Revision Commission in this decade continued to include Edward Russell, Chair; Dr. Harvey J. Burkhart (former mayor); William F. Haitz; J. Edward Gubb; Oren C. Steele; Henry A. Clark; and D. W. Tomlinson. And, in this decade, the Commission continued each year sending essentially the same bill to Albany. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 February 1914)

In 1913, the Commission's bill finally passed both the Assembly and Senate, but only after it was heavily amended in a manner consistent with changes advocated by the current Batavia Aldermen. The amendments took away the non-partisan features and the councilmen-at-large provision. This created such a furor among members of the Charter Revision Commission that Governor William Sulzer vetoed the bill. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1914)

In January of 1914, the Board of Aldermen formed a Charter Revision *Committee* made up of its own membership. According to Mayor Wiard, the Board had become frustrated with the Charter Revision Commission and planned to offer its own proposal for a city charter. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 January 1914) On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1914, *The Daily News* published a synopsis of the city charter proposed by the Board. According to this synopsis, the main features included: 1) six wards, 2) an elected mayor and one elected councilman from each ward, 3) the mayor serving as chief executive with general supervision of all officers and departments, 4) a common council acting as the governing body with the power to enact ordinances, and 5) a right of the voters of the city to propose ordinances by petition which common council had to then pass or submit to a special vote. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1914)

The Board of Aldermen then scheduled a "straw vote" on its charter proposal, a vote to be held on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1914. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 February 1914) When the day of the vote arrived, the wording on the ballot presented to voters was, "Shall the charter as prepared by the Aldermen be sent to Albany? Yes or No." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 February 1914) The resulting vote was 488 "yes" and 451 "no." The Aldermen interpreted the vote as a preference by voters for their bill over that of the Charter Revision Commission. The Aldermen's bill was sent to Albany in competition with the one developed by the Charter Review Commission.

A hearing on the competing proposals, that of the Charter Revision Commission and that of the Aldermen, was held on March 10<sup>th</sup> before a joint committee from the Assembly and Senate. At the hearing, Edward Russell, Chair of the Charter Revision Commission, complained that the straw vote on the Aldermen's proposal had not been taken in "a proper or legal manner." He further complained that support for the Aldermen's bill over the Charter Revision Commission's proposal had been gained by "misrepresentation and deceit." However, these complaints did not dissuade the Assemblymen and Senators present. Only the Aldermen's bill went forward. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's Route to Becoming a City* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2013] pp. 5-6)

Amendments were made to the Aldermen's proposal. One removed an increase in Batavia's representation on the County Legislature. The other added a provision for a public referendum on the bill if it passed the State Legislature and was signed by the Governor. The amended Aldermen's bill was passed in the State Assembly on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1914 and in the Senate a few hours later. Governor Martin Glynn signed the bill on April 15<sup>th</sup>. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's Route to Becoming a City* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2013] pp. 7-8)

As scheduled, a referendum on the Aldermen's bill was held on June 9, 1914. The total votes cast, 1,007, was only a little more than half of the normal vote in the Village. However, the bill was approved by a vote of 795 to 212. ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1914). Thus, it was assured that Batavia would become a city on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915. All that remained was for an election of officers to serve in the new government.

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1914, the new officers were elected to office. They included Dr. Harvey J. Burkhart, as Mayor, and Councilmen Walter W. Buxton, Andrew M. Clough, J. Edward Gubb, Charles W. Hartley, Ernest F. Ware, and George Winters. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 January 1915) Ironically, the new Mayor and one of the Councilmen had served on the Charter Revision Commission and had supported a non-partisan government, one without wards, and

one having a city manager rather than a mayor. Now they had run for and been elected to positions in a government that was essentially the opposite of what they had wanted.

On New Year's Eve, 1914, a celebration of Batavia's impending status as a city took place outside Ellicott Hall (the original County Courthouse). A crowd estimated to number between four and five thousand people gathered. A ceremony was held marking the transfer of power to the new government. Then fireworks were set off, the Genesee Band played, church bells rang, factory whistles blew, and car horns blared. A little after midnight, the new Mayor and Councilmen met for a brief meeting of Batavia's first Common Council. Batavia was now off and running as New York's 54<sup>th</sup> city. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's Route to Becoming a City* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2013] pp. 10-13)

During this decade and sometimes before, the Village used space in Ellicott Hall (the original Court House), space which it rented from the Town. However, this arrangement wasn't legitimate. Why it wasn't becomes clear by reviewing the history of the building.

Ellicott Hall was built in 1803 and stood where County Building 1 stands today. The building served as the Court House for Genesee County until 1841 when the stone Court House at the intersection of Main and Ellicott streets was constructed. (Larry Barnes, *Hey Mister! Want to Buy a Court House?* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2014] p. 1)

By 1849, the original Court House was in poor shape and the County was contemplating razing the structure. At the same time, the Town of Batavia wanted a Town Hall and had considered buying a piece of land and erecting a building for that purpose. Then someone thought of the idea of acquiring the old Court House and fixing it up for Town purposes. When the County Board of Supervisors was approached with this idea, they accepted the proposition and a deal was made. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1849, the building was leased to the Town. Under the terms of the agreement, the building was to be repaired by the Town and remain under the care of a public officer chosen at the Town's annual meetings. This person was to have the exclusive power to grant permission for the building's use and occupancy. Upon failure to meet these and other conditions of the lease, the Court House was to revert back to the County. (Larry Barnes, *Hey Mister! Want to Buy a Court House?* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2014] pp. 1-2)

It wasn't very long before everyone seemed to forget that the old Court House had been leased to the Town, not sold to it. Only 18 months after signing onto the lease, the Town "gave" the building to a group of four men. They, in turn, "sold" the structure. Then, between 1851 and 1898, the building changed hands an incredible 11 more times with no one

apparently aware that it belonged to the County the whole time. (Larry Barnes, *Hey Mister! Want to Buy a Court House?* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2014] p. 2)

The most bizarre point in the story occurred in 1898 when the Town “bought” the building from its most recent “owner.” The building had again fallen into disrepair and again there was talk of razing the structure. However, some residents wanted Ellicott Hall to be preserved for its history. And so, when voters at the annual Spring elections in the Town of Batavia were presented a proposal to purchase the structure, the majority voted to do so. Subsequently, on May 10, 1898, *The Daily News* reported that the Town of Batavia had, the previous day, paid \$1,250 to lone Jameson for title to the property. The Town of Batavia, which didn’t own the old Court House when it gave it to Otis, Pringle, Robertson, and Mallory back in 1851 now “bought” the building from lone Jameson who didn’t really own it or have the right to sell it, either. The Town proceeded to spend a considerable sum of money renovating the structure. (Larry Barnes, *Hey Mister! Want to Buy a Court House?* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2014] pp. 2-3)

Over the following years, the Village paid rent to the Town for space in Ellicott Hall. Among other uses, the Village Aldermen moved their meetings from the Municipal Building to Ellicott Hall and were in fact meeting there when Batavia became a city on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1915 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 6). This farce came to an end later in 1915. A meeting was called for March 4<sup>th</sup> to work out new rental arrangements for additional space the City of Batavia wanted to rent from the Town of Batavia. Prior to the meeting, City Attorney Everest Judd did some research on the history of the building. Among other things, he discovered the fine print in the original agreement between the County and the Town. (See Safford E. North, *Our County and Its People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899] pp. 322-323) The headline in the next day’s *The Daily News* read, “Ellicott Hall Really Leased. Actual Title Rests In the County, Instead of the Town of Batavia.” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1915)

Who actually owned the old Court House became a moot point three years later. On the night of February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the building burned to the ground (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 5)—ground belonging to the County, we should note. The City now needed a city hall.

The City needed a location that could be developed quickly. That location turned out to be the Brisbane mansion at 10 West Main Street. Some history regarding the mansion is in order at this point.

The Brisbane mansion was built in 1855 by George Brisbane, second son of James and Mary Brisbane. When George and his wife, Sarah, had both died, the mansion came into the possession of their only child, James Brisbane. However, after 1911, it was no longer used as a residence. As the next few years went by, both the County and the City expressed interest in the Brisbane land, but neither wanted the mansion. Whether the land was acquired by the County or the City, the intention in both cases was to raze the building. Finally, in 1917, the City obtained an option on the property. Then, on December 1, 1917, the City was deeded the property. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2009] pp. 8-18)

At the time of the mansion's purchase, the City planned to raze the structure and use all of the land to create what became Austin Park. However, when Ellicott Hall (the original Court House) burned two months later, City leaders reconsidered. An examination of the mansion had proven it to be in excellent shape, contrary to expectations. Subsequently, Frank H. Homelius was engaged to draw up plans and specifications for converting the building into a City Hall. Contracts were awarded by Common Council on February 13, 1918 and work started almost immediately afterwards. By the end of September 1918, the new City Hall was ready for use. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2009] pp. 17-18)

The City now had its first City Hall. It was generally regarded as a fine building. A reporter for *The Daily News* wrote, "Visitors who go to the new City Hall will readily admit that the structure cannot be inferior to similar buildings of cities of greater population and higher rank and importance than Batavia. The dominant note that is sounded everywhere is permanency, solidity, massiveness." Unfortunately, over the years that were to follow, the building underwent many changes that greatly detracted from its original splendor. (Larry Barnes, *The Brisbanes of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2009] pp. 18-20)

The new City Hall allowed consolidation of offices scattered about the community into a single location. For example, the City Clerk's office, which had been in the Masonic Temple, was relocated to 10 West Main Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 September 1918) Other offices and departments followed suit.

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

As the population of Batavia grew, so did the police force. In 1911, the force was increased from five officers to eight (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 April 1911).

Much of the police activity was devoted to ordinary crime—robberies and burglaries. It appears there was sufficient activity of this sort to keep the police busy. That was demonstrated in a newspaper article of October of 1915 when *The Daily News* reported that “scores” of lads aged 8 to 12 were connected to multiple burglaries.

Traffic violations were another significant area of police activity by this decade. With more traffic and greater speeds, orderly traffic flow was apparently of increasing concern. In 1911, *The Daily News* announced that the police would start enforcing the law requiring motorists to keep right (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 September 1911).

In 1915, Richard Burkhart, son of the Mayor, was sworn in as a special officer to pursue speeders. He used his own car. *The Daily News* of August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1915 described an incident in which Burkhart reached speeds of 65 m.p.h. in pursuing a speeder on East Main Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 August 1915) A year later, officers were using motorcycles to catch speeders (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1916).

One interesting aspect of traffic law enforcement was a debate over whether fire trucks had to obey the speed limit. In 1917, the police arrested a fire truck operator for driving 37 m.p.h. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 17). However, this question didn’t come to the forefront until a Councilman, W. W. Buxton, complained about a fire truck racing through the streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 August 1920) and Village officials then decreed that fire trucks had to limit their speed to 25 m.p.h. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 August 1920) The State weighed in on the matter by indicating that it favored higher limits for fire trucks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 September 1920). Reportedly, other communities, upon learning of Batavia’s limits on fire trucks, responded with ridicule (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 September 1920). When and how the matter was finally resolved is unknown.

In this same era, newspaper accounts refer to the installation of “silent policemen” which apparently were iron posts at street intersections (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 1917). From the newspaper descriptions, it appears the posts were put in place to prevent vehicle operators from cutting corners.

One area of police activity, which is not a police responsibility today, was the lodging of tramps. The extent of this activity can be judged by looking at the statistics for a typical year in this decade: 1911. In that year alone over 1,700 tramps were lodged by Batavia police (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1912). Lodging was also provided for those transients who

apparently did not have the wherewithal to stay at a hotel, but unlike tramps were not homeless persons surviving mainly by scavenging or begging for handouts. For example, one night in December of 1913, *The Daily News* reported that the police had not only two tramps in the police station, but 18 lodgers (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 December 1913).

In this decade, arguably the most serious problem with which the police had to deal was underworld activity, notably that involving so-called "black hand" gangsters. Robbery, blackmail, arson, intimidation and murder were among the crimes committed by such individuals. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 October 1919) For the most part, both the victims and the perpetrators appeared to be Italian-Americans and the offenses tended to be mainly on the south side.

In 1911, the Center Street home of Charles Colaizzi was blown up (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 September 1911). In 1912, dynamite destroyed a home at 51 Hutchins Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 January 1912). In 1916, there was a bombing on Jackson Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1916). However, the most serious such incident occurred in 1919. On September 25<sup>th</sup> of that year, three persons were killed and five injured when a homemade bomb was lobbed into a home at 450 Ellicott Street. Killed were Salvatore "Sam" Battaglia, Josephine Battaglia, and Russell Battaglia. Injured were Frances Battaglia, Carmello Trimarchi, Anna Trimarchi, Joseph Trimarchi, and Frances Trimarchi. Carmello Trimarchi operated a restaurant and gambling hangout at 238 Ellicott Street. The bomb had been thrown into his bedroom. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Three Killed in Mysterious Bombing, 1919," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 May 2013)

In the days that followed, police picked up nine members of a local "black hand" gang. They concluded that the attack was plotted in a room over Carmello's restaurant and the bomb was manufactured in a barn behind 116 Hutchins Street. The motive was allegedly to intimidate Salvatore Battaglia who was refusing to pay extortion money to the gang. Despite the fact that the bomb had been thrown through Carmello Trimarchi's window, he was believed to be part of the conspiracy. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Three Killed in Mysterious Bombing, 1919," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 May 2013)

Finally, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1919, Charles Scinta and Ignazia Favetta pled guilty to second degree murder and were sentenced to 20 years in Auburn Prison. Carmello Trimarchi was convicted of third degree burglary for an attempted bank robbery in Oakfield and sentenced to seven years and six months in Auburn Prison. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Three Killed in Mysterious Bombing, 1919," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 May 2013)

## 1911-1920

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Prior to January 1, 1915, for many years running the Mayor had served as the Police Chief. However, when the new charter went into effect in 1915, the duties of the Chief fell on one of the regular police officers as designated by Common Council. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 January 1915)

Nearly two years before the national prohibition against alcohol went into effect, Batavians voted to make the community "dry" effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918. Four propositions were put before voters in April of 1918. They were: 1) Shall liquor be sold to be drunk on the premises?, 2) Shall liquor be sold in bottles and not consumed on the premises?, 3) Shall it be sold by pharmacists on a physician's prescription?, and 4) Shall liquor be sold by hotels only? The majority of votes cast on each of the propositions was "no." The outcome was attributed to the women's vote since a majority of the men who voted purportedly supported the propositions. ("Batavia Bone Dry by Voters' Decree," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 April 1918)

In March of 1920, five of Batavia's six patrolmen in effect went on strike by submitting their resignations in a protest over new schedules. Acting Mayor Prentice immediately worked out an arrangement with the State Police to have four State Troopers patrol the City until either the former patrolmen returned to work or replacements were found. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 March 1920) It appears that City Council did not accept the resignations and the patrolmen eventually went back to work.

In late 1920, police signal boxes by which help could be summoned were set up in six locations around Batavia. The boxes had telephones connected to police headquarters. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 1920)

According to newspaper reports, in the early part of this decade, the jail used by Batavia police was in the basement of Ellicott Hall (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 February 1911). It's not clear when this location became the lock-up used by the police, but it may have begun in 1903 when the County opened its jail at 14 West Main Street as a replacement for the jail on West Main Street opposite Oak Street. Prior to 1903, it appears that Village and County inmates may have been housed in the same facilities. Between 1903 and 1964, separate facilities were apparently employed.

In February of 1911, the State Commission of Prisons issued a report on the police facilities in Batavia. It was a scathing assessment. It pointed out that the jail was in the basement of an old, highly inflammable structure (the original Court House) with no police officers present to unlock the facility in the case of fire. Officers were in the Municipal Building at 3 West Main



Street) "several blocks" away. The jail consisted of two rooms—a lock-up room 21 x 26 feet and a lodging room 13 x 14 feet. In the lockup room were two cells of brick, each measuring 5-1/3 x 7 feet, and each with just two boards for sleeping rather than cots or beds. The cells had no lavatories. Unsanitary buckets served as toilets. Ventilation was essentially non-existent. There were no separate cells for women or children, despite the fact that both women and children were occasionally detained. The lodging room had wooden benches on which only eight persons could be accommodated despite the fact that sometimes as many as 35 tramps were placed in the room at the same time. The lodging room also had essentially no ventilation. Legal action against the Village was threatened. ("Aldermen Asked to Show Cause," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 February 1911)

In response to threats from the State, the Village Aldermen hired Henry and Frank Homelius to design a new police station to be located on School Street. The plans called for a structure two stories high and measuring 32 x 60 feet. On the first floor were six steel cells and at the rear of the second floor was a room for tramps. A court room was situated at the front of the second floor. A contractor by the name of Reed was employed to erect the building. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 April 1913) The new police headquarters opened in late October of 1913 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 October 1913).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

In 1917, plans were made to provide a public restroom for shoppers (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 July 1917). On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1918, such a facility became operational in a vacant store located at 94 Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1918). It appears to have offered not just toilets and wash basins, but a place to sit and relax, as well, so it was truly a "rest room."

By 1919, there was a new commercial enterprise that would not have existed in the last century. Parker and Ford, located at 2-4-6 Clark Place, operated a car wash for vehicle owners wanting to keep their cars looking bright and shiny. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 October 1919) Park Place was one of the downtown streets, north of Main Street, that disappeared in the urban renewal years of the 1970s.

### 10: Factories/industries

At least two new firms started operations in Batavia in this decade.

In October of 1918, Joseph Horowitz and Sons, a New York City shirt manufacturer, set up a plant. Initially, the company was located on the second and third floors of 10 Jackson Street. Then, in July of 1920, the company moved to a one-story building on Liberty Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 188)

In August of 1920, a Buffalo firm started a railroad car repair shop on Clinton Street. It was named, "The Batavia Car Works." The intention was to move railroad cars through the shop using Henry Ford's assembly line method. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 187)

### 11: Banking/financial services

There do not appear to have been any significant changes in the area of banking and financial services during the decade.

### 12: Education

According to Ruth McEvoy, in 1914 Genesee County offered college-level courses to local residents under an Emergency Education Act. However, the classes were poorly attended and did not continue for long. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p.91)

As of 1917, there were 2,400 children of school age in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 1917).

In early October of 1920, *The Daily News* carried an article announcing that a "continuation school" was opening on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Located on Bank Street, perhaps in the former Universalist Church, it was to be operated by the Batavia Board of Education for students who came under the provisions of the "part-time law." According to this law, all children had to attend full-time day school until they were 16, unless they had working papers. Working papers could be obtained by those children who were 14 or 15 and had completed a certain minimum amount of schooling. Students with working papers were required to attend a continuation school on a part-time basis. Persons or corporations employing 14- and 15-year-old children who were not in attendance at a continuation school were subject to fines, imprisonment, or both. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 October 1920)

In 1914, a kindergarten building was erected at the State School for the Blind (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1914). Two years later, a small hospital was built on the campus (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 March 1916).

### 13: Religion

In 1911, Orthodox Jews purchased a house at 232 Liberty Street to use as a synagogue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 October). The following year the synagogue opened as the Shomrei Emunah Temple (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 9 September 1912). The congregation survived until about 1960 when it merged with the congregation of Temple Beth El. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 121)

Reportedly there were 450 Spiritualists in Batavia in 1912 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 June 1912). Catholics were warned to avoid them (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 March 1913). Whether this warning had any effect is unknown.

The Salvation Army in Batavia was first organized in 1890, but then disbanded not too long afterwards. In 1907, the Salvation Army started up again, this time with long-term success. It had the first building of its own in 1913. Known as the Trumbull building, it was located at 30-32 Jackson Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 127)

Batavia had what was billed as its "first great tabernacle campaign" in 1916. In early November of 1915, the Rev. C. W. Walker, Chairman of a committee from the Batavia Ministers' Club, announced that evangelistic services would be held in Batavia the following February and continued over a four- to six-week period. Services were to be led by the Rev. Herbert C. Hart, President of the Interdenominational Association of Evangelists. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's "First Great Tabernacle Campaign"* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2010] p. 1)

In early February of 1916, a lease was obtained for erecting a tabernacle on the Brisbane property on Jefferson Avenue, at the current location of Austin Park. A few days later, the men of Batavia were urged to volunteer to help construct a temporary tabernacle. Over 1,000 volunteers were anticipated. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's "First Great Tabernacle Campaign"* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2010] p. 1)

The tabernacle itself was an imposing structure designed to seat 2,000 persons. It had a frontage of 90 ft. and a depth of 130 ft. The exterior was covered with tar paper. There were 14 entrances and many windows. Five furnaces and three stoves provided warmth. (Larry

Barnes, *Batavia's "First Great Tabernacle Campaign"* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2010] pp. 1-2)

A total of over 3,500 persons showed up for the three services on the first day of the campaign and attendance remained strong throughout the five-plus weeks of services. A major focus was securing conversions. According to tabulations kept by the organizers, the number of persons who "[went] forward" included 500 adults and well over 400 children. The five local churches who sponsored the campaign claimed to have gained over 800 new members. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's First Great Tabernacle Campaign*" [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2010] p. 2)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The Richmond Memorial Library received an addition on the north side of the building in 1912. It was built by John Pickert and partially funded by Adelaide Kenny Richmond, granddaughter of Mary Richmond, the woman who had funded the original structure. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 January 1912)

### 15: Cemeteries

There were no significant developments of record during this decade.

### 16: Firefighting

*The Daily News*, on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1916, reported that voters had approved what was called "a semi-paid fire department" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 February 1916). The following month, the fire department was set up with six men employed full-time, each receiving \$60 per month, 12 men on call at \$0.12 per hour, and a paid Fire Chief earning \$1,000 per year (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 17)

The volunteer fire companies that had been serving Batavia disbanded in 1916. However, several continued for years as social clubs and as late as 1980, widows of volunteer firemen were drawing pensions paid by fire company insurance funds. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 17)

When the semi-paid fire department was established, the men were placed in two fire halls. One fire quarters was on Court Street adjacent to Ellicott Hall (the old Court House). A second

was at 307-309 Ellicott Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 17)

Some motorized fire equipment first went into service in December of 1916. However, horses were still used as late as 1920. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 17)

### 17: Healthcare

In 1917, Rose Jerome left her house to the Sisters of Mercy in memory of her sister, Mary Jerome. She suggested that the house be used by the Sisters for either a hospital or a home for working girls. Sister Mary Dominic of the Sisters of Mercy believed a hospital was the better choice and so that became the use of the Jerome home. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2013] p. 3)

The Sisters of Mercy obtained a loan to remodel the Jerome house. At the same time, the adjoining house, owned by Rose Jerome's nephew, Frank J. DeCot, became available and plans were made to combine the two structures into a single facility. John Glade and son were hired to undertake the transformation. By the Fall of 1917, St. Jerome Hospital was ready to receive patients and on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1917, the Rev. Dennis J. Dougherty blessed and dedicated the new hospital. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2013] p. 3)

Dr. Charles Gray of the Primrose Hospital died either in 1916 or 1917, leaving the facility without a doctor. However, this problem was resolved in August of 1917 when Dr. William Johnson, chief surgeon at the Batavia Hospital, left there and began performing surgery at the Primrose facility. However, only a year later, in 1918, Johnson moved to the St. Jerome Hospital and became its Chief of Staff. Once more without a doctor, the Primrose Hospital soon closed its doors and permanently ceased operations. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2013] p. 4)

During this decade, Batavia experienced serious outbreaks of both diphtheria and the flu. A diphtheria outbreak in the fall of 1911 resulted in the deaths of several children. Schools and motion picture theaters were both closed in an effort to stop the spread of the illness. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 243)

A more severe health crisis occurred in the fall of 1918 with the outbreak of an influenza called "Spanish Flu." It began in September. Again, schools were closed. Houses were

quarantined by Health Officer John LeSeur. Travelers were allowed to pass through Batavia, but not to remain overnight. For the first time in memory, St. Joseph's Church cancelled services. By the end of October, there had been 18 deaths and 35-40 new cases were occurring every 24 hours. Among the deaths was the operator of Batavia Dry Cleaning. By early December, additional deaths included the pastor at St. Anthony's and two nurses at St. Jerome Hospital.

Abortions were illegal at this time. In 1914, Dr. Alice G. Sharon was convicted of aborting a fetus (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 March 1914) and sentenced to Auburn Prison for one year (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 March 1914).

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In 1914, nearly 90 leaders of local women's organizations met at the home of Alice G. Fisher and organized the Social Welfare Federation. Together, they represented over 2,800 women. The purpose of the Federation was to provide relief to those who, through no fault of their own, were in need of charity. The goal was to provide help until conditions and circumstances bettered their fortunes. ("More Relief Work Inaugurated," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1914)

At the same time as the women's organization was formed, men met at Ellicott Hall (the old Court House) to form the Batavia Relief Association. The newspaper report about the meeting noted that A. R. Whiton of Batavia, apparently one of the men gathered at the Hall, had donated a load of potatoes from his South Byron farm to be used for relief causes. ("New Relief Association Will Meet This Evening," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1914) It is not clear why the men and women in the community chose to establish separate relief organizations.

The Children's Home Association was incorporated in April of 1919. Its goal was to provide temporary refuge for children living in troubled homes or to give children without parents a safe and permanent place to live. The first home was located at 19 Bank St. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 163-164) In 1920, the Association purchased the former Farrell house at the corner of Elm and East Main streets and moved to this location (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 March 1920).

In 1913, *The Daily News* reported that the First Baptists were planning to open a settlement house at 411 Ellicott Street. A Helen Carley, who had been studying settlement work in Rochester and Buffalo, planned to reside in the house and serve as a settlement worker. (*The*

*Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1913) Sewing classes were offered. Young men from the Baptist Church taught "foreign men" how to read and write in English. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 September 1913) Five years later, the newspaper reported that the First Baptists and Emanuel Baptists together were planning to build a new settlement house, apparently as a replacement for the one at 411 Ellicott. Plans called for an auditorium for religious services, club rooms, and reading rooms, among other features. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 May 1918) According to Wikipedia, settlement houses were typically established in poor urban areas and provided services such as daycare, education, and healthcare to improve the lives of the poor. ("Settlement Movement," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 30 July 2014)

### 19: Disasters

In March of 1916, a major flood occurred. It was described at the time as Batavia's greatest flood within memory. According to *The Daily News*, hundreds were marooned in their homes. Boats floated on West Main and South Main streets. The Trolley line was under water at some points. The Municipal Power Plant had to be shut down. And water was in the basements of many businesses located on Main and Jackson streets. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 March 1916)

Two years later, on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1918, about 12:30 in the afternoon, a tornado swept through Batavia. It caused thousands of dollars in property damage in the western and northern part of the City, but no one was seriously hurt. Destruction along the tornado's path, running diagonally from the southwest to the northeast, was about two blocks wide. Portions of houses, roofs of buildings, garages and trees were destroyed, leaving some streets blocked by debris. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 May 1918).

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Boating on the Tonawanda Creek continued to be a popular activity. In May of 1912, an advertisement in *The Daily News* informed the reader that unsinkable steel boats and canoes could be rented at 35 Walnut Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 May 1912). A canoe club was incorporated in 1913 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, 29 January 1913). An advertisement in a July 1915 issue of *The Daily News* revealed that picnic parties to Meadow Park could take the Blue Bird passenger boat at any hour for a roundtrip charge of \$0.15. The Blue Bird departed from 35 Walnut Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 July 1915) On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915, *The Daily News* reported that there would be a canoe and motor boat parade on the Creek that night (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 August 1915).

The Meadow Park mentioned above was apparently on the Tonawanda Creek upstream from Batavia, but before Whiskey Point. It had a dance pavilion among other features (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 June 1911). Unlike Whiskey Point, it appears to have been accessible from both Creek Road and the Creek. Unfortunately, the park was also the scene of a drowning in 1914. A baseball game was being played when a ball went into the creek. Two brothers took a canoe and went after the ball. When the canoe overturned, the crowd at first laughed at the thrashing about, not realizing that one of the brothers couldn't swim and was drowning. Several hours passed before his body was located about 15 feet downstream from where the canoe overturned. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 June 1914)

Reportedly, there was another recreation area on the creek called, "Hampton Park." It was described as an amusement park south of Chestnut Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 October 1913) Nothing further is known about the facility.

Batavians had a choice of indoor entertainment for the Fourth of July in 1913 that was not available in the previous century. Batavia's Family Theater that year presented a vaudeville show plus four reels of moving pictures, all for an admission price of one dime. Meanwhile, the Dellinger Opera House presented the latest break-through by Thomas Edison, a motion picture with sound. Admission to these "talking pictures" was \$0.25, \$0.35, or \$.50, presumably varying according to seating location. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Four of July in Batavia, 100 Years Ago," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 2013)

George Austin, who operated the Austin and Prescott jewelry store, died in October of 1914. He left \$30,000 to the Village to be used to develop a public park. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 36) After the City purchased the Brisbane property behind the current post office, Austin's money was used to create a park—hence the name, "Austin Park." In December of 1919, a municipal ice skating rink was set up in this location (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 December 1919). The following year, 1920, plans for a grandstand were announced (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 May 1920).

## 21: War/impact of war

World War I began on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1914 and lasted until November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918. The United States did not enter the war as a combatant until April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917.



When the United States declared war on its enemies in 1917, war fever was high. In Batavia, a "monster" parade supporting our involvement took place and speeches were given by local patriots. Common Council went on record supporting the war effort. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 April 1917; 7 April 1917) The first 14 draftees left on August 31, 1917 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 August 1917).

Aside from local men marching off to war, there were numerous other ways in which World War I impacted Batavia. As mentioned in the section on "Energy," coal shortages developed. Scrap drives took place (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 September 1918). Gasoline was in short supply and driving was restricted (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 September 1918). Munitions were produced in a plant on Evans Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 February 1918). By the end of the war, 63 men from Genesee County were dead (Deaths listed on the War Memorial at the corner of Bank Street and Washington Avenue, viewed 22 August 2014). Marine Glenn Loomis was the first to die (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1918.) Later, an American Legion Post would be named in his honor.

When World War I ended on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, a great celebration began before dawn. According to *The Daily News*, Batavia gave over the entire day to demonstrations of joy. All business was suspended and the doors of factories, stores, and schools were closed. The celebrations got underway when a City fire truck made a "mad race through Main Street, bells clanging and siren screeching." Shortly afterwards, the bell at St. Joseph's Church began ringing out and then was joined by other church bells "hour after hour all day long." Similarly, whistles at local factories blew in celebration. Half a dozen small processions formed and began parading in City streets. The Italians and Poles each had a parade. Italians borrowed a handcar from one of the railroads, gaily decorated it, put it on the trolley tracks, and ran it up and down Main Street with a load of cheering celebrants on board. In the afternoon there was a great parade that began at the Court House and proceeded east, north, west, south, and east again before ending back at the Court House. Reportedly, there were 3,000 people in the procession while on-lookers downtown packed the 18-ft. wide sidewalks. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1918)

### 22: Families/persons of note

The first immigrant "outsiders" to make themselves felt in any significant way in Batavia had been the Irish. Many had been drawn to Western New York by the need for laborers when the Erie Canal was under construction and others were driven by famine in Ireland. As has been true with immigrant groups in general, there was not immediate acceptance. However, as Ruth McEvoy pointed out, by 1915 the Irish had become sufficiently integrated that the Fire Chief

was a McBride, the Chief of Police a McCulley, and the Postmaster a Ryan (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993, p. 251)

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

Numerous organizations first appeared in this decade:

The Polish Falcons, Nest No. 493, was organized in October of 1913. During most of its existence, its club house has been located on South Swan Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 161-162)

The first Boy Scout Council in Batavia was formed in January of 1914 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 143).

In 1917, on August 25<sup>th</sup>, the Genesee County Farm Bureau was organized (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 153). Also in 1917, the Batavia Chamber of Commerce was created as a successor to the Business Men's Association and Board of Trade (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc. 1993] pp. 154-155). In March of the same year, the local Red Cross chapter was organized in a meeting at the home of Mrs. Watts Richmond (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 March 1917). Finally, in 1917, historical societies in the area set up a federation (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 June 1917).

The first Girl Scout troop in Batavia was formed in 1918 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 144)

The Glenn S. Loomis Post of the American Legion was organized in January of 1919. As noted in the above section on war, Loomis was the first local man to be killed in World War I. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1992] p. 147) The Ware Class of the First Presbyterian Church was incorporated in 1919. Its efforts led to the formation of the Children's Home Association (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1919). The Rotary Club organized this year, as well (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 May 1919). Finally, the Garden & Bird Club began in June of 1919. Members planted flowers in many locations such as on the grounds of the Library, Batavia Hospital, and Holland Land Office Museum. They also successfully protested against bill boards on West Main Street at River Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *The History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 148)

## 1911-1920

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In 1920, the Court of St. Rita of the Catholic Daughters of America was organized (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 144).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There were no apparent changes in this area during this decade.

### 25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.



## The Thirteenth Decade

### Overview

This decade encompasses what has been called “The Roaring Twenties.” It falls between two great calamities: World War I and the Great Depression. It’s also when the United States attempted some infamous social engineering via a Constitutional Amendment that prohibited the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcohol and alcoholic beverages. The latter led to widespread law-breaking and the creation of a new breed of gangsters who capitalized on Prohibition.

The thirteenth decade in Batavia was, however, remarkably quiet. The only thing that really stood out was the record population growth and the building boom that accompanied it. By 1930, the population reached 17,375 (“Genesee County Information,” *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This was an increase of 3,834 residents since 1920. As of 1930, it was the biggest growth during any single decade in the history of Batavia. That record still stands in 2015.

### 1: Infrastructure

When the sewer lines were laid out, the hope was to do so in a manner that would allow gravity feed throughout the system. However, as *The Daily News* reported in 1922, that goal proved elusive. When new areas in the northeastern part of the City began to go on line, there was a problem. This area in general was lower than the rest of the City. Consequently, a lift had to be constructed to pump the sewage into the other sewers that ran by gravity to the central collection point near the Municipal Building. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 December 1922)

Infrastructure improvements are hardly ever final. Eventually, they nearly all require replacement. A good example are water mains. The original mains were made of wood wrapped by metal bands. In 1924, *The Daily News* reported that the old water mains of this nature on Mix Place had reached the end of their service life and were being replaced with iron pipes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 January 1924).

In this decade, street paving continued and, as in the decade before, not everyone was happy about it. In 1924, Ellicott Avenue residents north of Washington Avenue petitioned the

## 1921-1930

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Common Council to leave the surface unpaved. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 February 1924) The street was paved anyway.

For several years, dealing with garbage had been a recurring issue for City leaders. It would be destined to remain an issue for decades to come. In 1926, the Common Council enacted a law giving the Council complete control over garbage disposal (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., Batavia, N.Y., 8 July 1926). That same year, Frank Marciniak was awarded a contract to collect and remove garbage. Marciniak trucked the garbage to his farm on Pearl Street Road where he dumped it in a ravine. The garbage was collected twice a week. ("Garbage Collector to Remove Menace," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 September 1926)

Many Batavians were apparently indifferent when it came to disposing of junk. Twice in 1926, *The Daily News* carried articles about residents simply dumping junk in their backyards (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 July 1926; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 May 1926). Three years later, junked cars deposited in the Creek had become a serious problem. Several were reportedly dumped there in a single week. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 June 1929)

In 1926, City leaders announced that the City would remove snow from City sidewalks, but residents would be charged for the service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 December 1926). That was not the final word on the matter of sidewalk snow removal; in fact, clearing of sidewalks still continues to be an issue.

As the City's population was growing and a building boom was underway, *The Daily News* of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1927 reported that sewer lines were being extended to seven outlying streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 April 1927).

In 1927, the City's Department of Public Works found itself pumping twice as much effluent as fresh water (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 October 1927). Later research would reveal that this difference was mainly due to two factors: 1) infiltration of ground water into the sewer mains, and 2) water from residential sump pumps being discharged into the sanitary sewers.

Sometimes the progress in creating new streets was surprisingly slow. In the last chapter, it was mentioned that a plan to extend East Avenue to Clinton Street had been announced in 1918. However, it wasn't until 1924 that the necessary land was fully acquired (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1924). And it wasn't until 1929 that extension of the Avenue was actually completed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 August 1929).

## 2: Transportation

This is the decade that motorized vehicles pretty much took over. In 1922, a local merchant who sold carriages lamented the development. Batavia was now motorized, he said. The carriage business was gone. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 June 1922)

Early in this decade, taxi cabs had become sufficiently numerous to pose problems if not regulated. The City moved cab drivers to a stand on the west side of Court Street. Taxi cabs standing on Main Street waiting for a chance fare, the City asserted, were a nuisance. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 December 1921)

By 1927, there was sufficient automobile traffic that the Common Council decided to order automatic traffic signals for five intersections. They were purchased at a cost of \$2,500. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 May 1927)

The effect of automobiles on railroad passenger traffic was also in evidence by this decade. In 1927, the Erie Railroad announced that it was ending passenger service on October 1<sup>st</sup>. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 September 1927) From this point forward, the only railroad passenger service into and out of downtown Batavia was on the New York Central.

Railroads were also in the news this decade in two other ways of interest. In 1928, excavation work being done on property owned by W. W. Buxton unearthed old railroad track and a turntable in the Court Street area (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1928). Most likely, these were remnants of the railroad between Rochester and Batavia that first began service in 1837. Also in the news during this decade was a proposal to move the mainline of the railroads south of the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 July 1930). This proposal was largely driven by the growing problem of fatal collisions between trains and vehicles. However, it would be a quarter century before anything was done.

The trolley line, which had been taken over by local investors, deteriorated severely. By 1926, the trolley service was described as poor, the equipment broke down frequently, and apparently any pretense of operating on schedule had disappeared (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 December 1926). In June of 1927, the trolley line ceased operation (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1927).

According to Ruth McEvoy, bus service to Buffalo and Rochester began in 1921 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 23-24). However, bus service within the City began only after the trolley operation ended. In

December of 1927, the Common Council granted a permit to the Batavia Motor Coach Line for two 34-passenger busses to run City line to City line (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 December 1927). In mid-January 1928, local merchants agreed to subsidize the cost of the bus service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 January 1928) and operation began on January 17, 1928 (Ruth M. McEvoy [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc. 1993] pp. 22-23).

In this decade, land where Bogue Avenue is now located was used as a landing strip for airplanes. It was known as "Bogue's 40 acres." A night-landing by an aviator named Randy Enslow made *The Daily News* in October of 1925. Enslow reportedly used only moonlight and a small searchlight on his craft to find his way down. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 October 1925) Two years later, the newspaper announced that a 40-acre field belonging to Warren Hawley had been leased by Edward C. Walker, President of the Kozak Company, for use as an airport. The land was on the north side of Bank Street Road. It was to be named, "Kozak-Batavia Field." Purportedly, flights from there to either Buffalo or Rochester took only 15 to 20 minutes in a moderately-powered airplane. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1927).

### 3: Housing

Readers may recall from the last chapter that by 1918 there was a housing shortage in Batavia. There was a concern that families might need to double up. However, by 1921, a "house building boom" was on (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 October 1921). It was still going strong at mid-decade. For example, in 1924, 79 new houses and 163 garages were built (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 6 November 1924). And in 1926, 97 new residences were erected (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 1 December 1926).

### 4: Energy Sources

The surge in the number of automobiles led to a proliferation of gasoline stations to serve them. One such station was the Go-Gas station at the corner of West Main Street and Porter Avenue. When the station opened in 1921, it sold gas at \$0.275/gallon. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1921)

In 1925, *The Daily News* reported the expectation that ice harvest on the Creek was now a thing of the past. It was anticipated that ice in the future would only be that which is artificially frozen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 January 1925). However, this sounding of the death knell for Creek ice was apparently somewhat premature. A year later, the newspaper reported that Benjamin Suttell was putting ice in his ice house located at 460 South Jackson (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 January 1926).



In 1924, the Niagara Power Company built a supplemental transformer station on Franklin Street (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 11). This supplemented the power station already in operation on Ellicott Street.

Beginning in 1926, the City Hall at 10 West Main Street began to be heated by steam from the Municipal Building at 3 West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 1926). The steam lines ran under West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 July 1926). This arrangement was later abandoned.

In 1926, a gas line carrying manufactured gas was laid from the Buffalo area to Batavia. This gas was then mixed with the natural gas piped from Pavilion. The mixing took place at a mixing station located at Pearl Street and Brooklyn Avenue. This was expected to end long-running City-wide problems with both gas shortages and insufficient gas pressure. ("Pipe Line Carrying Manufactured Gas...", *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 September 1926)

### 5: Communication

In the early 1920s, radio broadcasting was in its infancy. KDKA, the country's first commercial radio station, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania had only gone on the air in 1920 ("KDKA," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed August 5, 2014). A radio station in Batavia was still two decades away. Nevertheless, broadcasts could be received in Batavia including one from Buffalo that was of special note for local residents. In June of 1922, the Smith Electric Shop, 116 Main Street, remained open after hours so individuals without radio receivers could hear a "wireless" concert by Batavians being broadcast over WGR (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1922).

Readers will recall from the chapter on the years 1891 to 1900 that the whistle of the Johnston Harvester Company had then been used to transmit weather information. At some point, that practice ended. However, in 1922, *The Daily News* reported that the Harvester whistle was again being used for this purpose. Each day, about 11 a.m., the U.S. Weather Bureau at Ithaca telegraphed a weather forecast to the Farm Bureau in Batavia. This forecast was then communicated by workmen at the Harvester plant following a 15-20 second warning whistle. One long blast meant fair weather, two long meant rain, and three long blasts meant localized rain. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 June 1922)

## 6: County and village boundaries

There were no changes in the County or City boundaries in this decade.

## 7: Government, governing structure

Several minor changes were made to the City charter in 1921. In 1923, a further revision occurred that gave the City the right to enact any laws that did not conflict with laws of the State. This enactment, called "Home Rule Law," was approved by local voters in November of 1923 and became effective January 1<sup>st</sup> 1924. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 3)

Prior to this decade, building permits were apparently required. However, there was no zoning. In 1925, a Zoning Commission was created (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1925) and, the next year, Batavia's first zoning ordinance went into effect (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 June 1926). For the first time, restrictions were imposed regarding where residential, commercial, and manufacturing structures could be built, effectively ending indiscriminate mixing of these uses.

In June of 1927, *The Daily News* reported that County Building 1 was finished (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 June 1927). Located at the northwest corner of Main and Court streets, it was constructed at the former location of Ellicott Hall which had burned down in 1918. A year later, the Surrogate Court Building, located between the stone Court House and County Building 1, was razed and the area landscaped (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 August 1927).

## 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

During this decade, enforcement of the Constitutional Prohibition Amendment kept City police busy. Throughout this time period, newspapers were replete with reports of arrests and convictions. Three examples, spread across the decade, provide a sample. In 1922, police found a still in a barn at 227 South Liberty Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 October 1922) and the landlord of the Ellicott Square Hotel was arrested (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 October 1922). In 1924, Harry Barsuk was arrested for having liquor at both his furniture store at 50 Jackson Street and his home at 40 Buell Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 August 1924). And in 1927, John Bojanowski of 421 Ellicott Street, a baker, was arrested for having whiskey in his truck (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 June 1927). Despite on-going

arrests such as these, local ministers complained about what they saw as a lack of enforcement of the law (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 February 1930).

In 1921, *The Daily News* carried an article about two local "candy bandits," age 10 or under, who were sent to jail for 24 hours (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1921). It may have been instances such as this that led to a new State law requiring juvenile courts where children would be treated separately from adults (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 May 1922). A Children's Court was set up locally in January of 1923 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 15).

In 1921, *The Daily News* reported that Black Hand gangsters were still posing a threat in the community (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 November 1921).

At a meeting held at the YWCA in 1921, a "permanent committee" was established with the goal of censoring movies it found unacceptable. The "committee" was made up of two or more women from each of 28 women's organizations plus an advisory board of three pastors and three businessmen. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 1921)

Individuals playing slot machines seems to have been another significant concern in this decade. In early 1929, it was reported that police had picked up 708 of the machines in recent months. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 1929)

In addition to dealing with violators of Prohibition, gangsters, and places promoting slot machines, the police had many other more ordinary crimes to handle. For example, in May of 1924, the newspaper of May 5<sup>th</sup> reported that burglars had recently entered 30 houses and garages (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1924). It would seem that individuals who look back fondly on earlier times "when no one had to lock their doors" may be recalling eras that never really existed.

### 9: Retail establishments/ other commercial enterprises

The public restroom, established in the last decade, was apparently very popular with shoppers and others using the downtown area. At one point, over 50,000 patrons were reported to have used it during a single 12-month period (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 August 1918). In 1921, a new restroom was set up that was described as better lit and easier to heat (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 January 1921). Then, four years later, yet another restroom in the bus terminal at Court and Ellicott streets was formally opened (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 July 1925).

In 1928, there were 16 restaurants in the City. All but two were on the north side of Main Street, the east side of State Street, or the west side of Jackson Street. There were also two lunch carts. ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 March 1928)

In 1928, the City's 25 merchants who operated groceries and fruit stores organized to set uniform closing times. They agreed to close at 6 pm except Saturdays and Wednesdays. On Wednesdays, they decided to close at 12:30 pm. No groceries or stores were to be open on Sunday. These times were chosen to match the operating hours of non-food merchants in the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 June 1928)

### 10: Factories/industries

*The Daily News* of July 1921 reported that an empty factory building on Evans Street was to be used for manufacturing Adria automobiles (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 July 1921). The cars were already being built in Cleveland. Louis Vremsak, President of the company, described the vehicle as having features not yet available in other cars then being built. Production in Batavia evidently got underway, but in November of 1922 Vremsak closed down the Batavia operation and abandoned unfinished vehicles in the factory. This appears to be the last time that anyone here tried to build automobiles commercially. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 185)

Also in 1921, the Doehler Die Casting Company of Brooklyn came to Batavia. The company, which had been founded in 1908, chose Batavia because of the City's proximity to Eastman Kodak. Kodak was a major customer. By 1922, the company occupied several large buildings on Robertson Street that had previously been used by the now defunct Batavia Rubber Company. Doehler grew over the years and became one of Batavia's most important industries. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 184-186).

The Kozak Company was started about 1928 by Edward C. Walker III. Walker had a degree in chemistry and the product his company sold, Kozak Cloth, was impregnated with a chemical that allowed it to be used for cleaning cars without using water. During most of its existence, the Kozak Company was located on South Lyon Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 179)

### 11: Banking/financial services

The Bank of Genesee became the Genesee Trust Company in 1928 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 66).

### 12: Education

With the major growth in Batavia's population, there was a corresponding growth in the City's public school system. It began with a new high school building on Ross Street that opened in May of 1924 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 May 1924). It replaced a building at the same location that had been expected to be sufficient for many decades longer, but had proven to be too small. The next year, a portable classroom had to be added to the Pringle School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 October 1925). Then new schools on Union Street, Jackson Street, and Brooklyn Avenue were all dedicated in 1929 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 88).

The new school on Union Street was named, "Robert Morris," by the request of local parents who wanted to honor Morris (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 88). The same year, the school on Williams Street was renamed, "Lincoln" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 January 1929)

In the area of parochial education, a new St. Anthony's School was built in 1930. It replaced a structure that had been in use since 1909. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p.94)

There was also activity in the private sector during this decade. In April of 1927, Sarah Blount sold her business school, established in 1892, to former instructors who, in turn, sold it to the Rochester Business Institute (RBI). Under RBI's direction, the school survived for nearly 30 more years. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., inc., 1993] p. 237)

### 13: Religion

Two new Protestant churches were organized in this decade. The Seventh Day Adventists organized in 1924. However, they did not have their own building for another 16 years. The Church of the Nazarene was organized about 1925. In 1926, the congregation built a basement church at 315 West Main Street. The name of the church later became, "Wesleyan Methodist

Church.” More recently, it has become, “First Wesleyan Church of Batavia.” (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 123)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

During this decade, there were no new developments of significance.

### 15: Cemeteries

As seemed to keep happening over the years, in 1925, workmen excavating on South Lyon Street again chanced upon human remains from when there was a cemetery at that location (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 January 1925).

### 16: Firefighting

In November of 1921, voters approved a proposal to increase the size of the fire department to 12 full-time men plus a Fire Chief (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 17)

By the 1920s, the Court Street fire station located next to County Building 1 was generally judged to be an eyesore (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 January 1928). However, it would be 20 years before it would be replaced.

### 17: Healthcare

In its initial 1917 configuration, St. Jerome Hospital consisted of two frame houses joined together. Then an adjoining four-story brick building, immediately to the south, was built and opened in 1922. This brought the number of beds to 50, 18 of which were in the original two houses. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2013] p. 6)

The Batavia Hospital remained as it had been after its first 10 years. There was the original frame building erected by John Pickert, an addition to that building, a contagion cottage, and a home for nursing students. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2013] p. 7)

## 1921-1930

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In 1923, a mental health clinic opened in the City Hall (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 January 1923).

In 1925, the former Primrose Hospital building was made into apartments (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 May 1925).

In this decade, the scourge of diphtheria was finally ended. Beginning in 1924, school children in Batavia received inoculations. By 1926, the success of the inoculation program was so great that not a single case of diphtheria had occurred among school children in nearly a year. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 March 1926)

Unfortunately, the dangers of cigarette smoking were not recognized. Efforts to reduce smoking were still decades into the future. The challenge that lay ahead can be appreciated by noting the level of smoking near the end of this decade. According to an article in *The Daily News*, in 1928 alone, Batavians smoked 13,832,462 cigarettes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 1929).

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

When Adelaide Richmond Thomas died, the Richmond mansion passed on to Watts Richmond, her brother (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 December 1925). However, he didn't want it and the mansion was purchased by C. C. Bradley (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 April 1926). He also did not have a personal use for it and the mansion next became the property of the Stroh family in the summer of 1927 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 August 1927). Within months, the Strohs sold the mansion to the Children's Home Association (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 December 1927). The Children's Home then moved to this location from 437 East Main Street where it had been operating since 1920. The mansion continued to serve as the Children's Home for the next four decades.

While conditions in Batavia were nothing like what was to follow during the Great Depression, not everyone was sharing in the prosperity of the Roaring Twenties. Care of the poor cost \$39,000 in 1924 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 December 1924). In 1928, the City was helping 30 families stay afloat (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 January 1928). By 1930, five percent of those living in the City were defined as "needy" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 November 1930). In December of 1930, Batavians went to the polls to vote on a proposed \$25,000 bond issue to fund jobs for the unemployed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 November 1930). The proposal was voted down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 December 1930).

The Ware Class of the First Presbyterian Church had been instrumental in the establishment of the Children's Home in 1919. In 1928, the same group urged creation of a home for the aged (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 February 1928). This time around, it was less successful.

### 19: Disasters

In December of 1921, the City was struck by a massive ice storm, causing heavy property damage and affecting both telephone and electrical service. It was judged to be the worst storm in memory. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 December 1921) Then, almost exactly eight years later, another ice storm accompanied by high winds again caused major damage. Local residents apparently judged it to be even worse than the 1921 storm. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 1929)

By 1921, much of the space in the farmers' horse sheds had been given over to automobiles. Four years later, on December 18, 1925, a fire broke out that destroyed 85 vehicles. Some were cars belonging to City residents who didn't have garage. Some were automobiles held by the police as evidence against bootleggers. A few belonged to a local car dealer. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 198)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Someone laid out an unauthorized golf course in what is today's Centennial Park south of the State School for the Blind. Subsequent damage from golfers became a problem, so in the Fall of 1922, the City announced that golf in the park was thereafter prohibited. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 September 1922)

Readers may recall a tragic boating accident on the creek in 1883 that was precipitated by a boy skinny dipping. Apparently 40 years later, boys skinny dipping in the Tonawanda remained a common practice. In 1925, Police Chief Daniel Elliott noted that there had been many complaints from numerous residents near the Creek about boys undressing in public before entering the water. A popular location was near either the Erie Railroad bridge or the New York Central bridge, the exact location differently identified depending on the newspaper account one reads. The Chief believed construction of a bathhouse would alleviate the problem. According to *The Daily News*, the Kiwanis Club subsequently responded to the Chief's suggestion and erected a simple shelter measuring 8 x 16 ft. *The Daily News* also reported that the Rev. Alfred Britain and the Rev. William C. Kirby were receiving contributions for the cost of clearing out the Creek in front of the bathhouse and constructing a small dock. Purportedly the



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spot was going to be named, "Elliott Beach," in honor of the Chief because he had instigated construction of the bathhouse. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 June 1925; 10 June 1925; 16 June 1925)

Ice skating remained popular in this decade. An area at Brooklyn and Pearl streets was flooded when weather turned cold (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 1924). A surface for ice skating was also created on Bank Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 January 1926).

Horse racing at the Fairgrounds drew crowds. However, no betting was permitted. Racing fans attempted to get around this restriction through placing what were termed, "donations." A "donations and returns" tent was erected for the purpose. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 September 1926) This led to an apparently successful challenge to the legality of this arrangement under the State's gambling laws (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 September 1926)

In 1926, hundreds of Batavians looked on as a Massachusetts man, termed "a human fly," climbed the front of the Commercial Building on Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 August 1926).

The Family Theater on Jackson Street installed sound for movies early in 1928 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 February 1928).

Boxing matches, commonly featuring local fighters, were very popular in this decade. For example, in February of 1925, *The Daily News* reported that between 1,000 and 1,100 spectators showed up one night at the Odd Fellows club house to see boxing matches (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 1925). And, one night in May of 1930, nearly 1,000 spectators attended boxing matches at St. Anthony's Community Center (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1930).

By the beginning of this decade, recreational boating on the Creek had dramatically fallen in popularity. One observer living at the time later stated, "I never saw a fad die out so quickly. There were hundreds of people on the Creek every Saturday and Sunday. [Then people bought automobiles and they]... took the place of boats. No one seemed to care about the Creek anymore and as a result, the boats were practically worthless. Some of them were allowed to drift down the stream. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 May 1937)

## 21: War/impact of war

World War I was over. World War II, which most did not foresee, was a decade or more into the future. It was a quiet time, in terms of warfare affecting Batavians.

## 22: Families, persons of note

One especially interesting individual of this decade was William Coon, Batavia's first appointed City Historian and also the longest serving. Coon was appointed Historian in 1919 and remained in office until his death in 1953. William Coon was also an attorney who was employed over the years in a variety of positions including Town of Batavia Justice of the Peace, District Attorney of Genesee County, City Attorney, and State Attorney for the Tonawanda Nation of Seneca Indians. Coon also was a professional musician and, at one point, a newspaper reporter. He was a private in the Army during the Spanish-American War. Additionally, he was a Village trustee, Honorary Chief of the Turtle Clan, trustee of the First Baptist Church, a football coach at Batavia High School, and a gymnastic instructor at the YMCA. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's City Historians* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published monograph, 2009] no pagination)

## 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

Relatively few new groups appeared in this decade. In 1921, The Business and Professional Women's Club, a group with no national affiliation, began meeting (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 144). That same year, the Community Chest (later the United Way) was organized (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 October 1921). The local Kiwanis Club received its charter in April of 1923. One of its objectives was the promotion of opportunities for outdoor recreation for people of all ages. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 154-155) In 1927, the Knights of Malta and the Dames of Malta were organized (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 138). In 1928, the Veness-Strollo Post No. 1602, Veterans of Foreign Wars, was organized (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 147). That same year, the Optimists Club was formed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 September 1928).

One other group made its presence felt in this decade, a group that most present-day Batavians are probably sorry ever set foot in our community. In November of 1922, a Ku Klux Klan branch was started in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 November 1922). A few days later, a meeting was held in Majestic Hall on Park Place and around 200 people attended. Activities continued including one night in May of 1923 when KKK booklets were thrown onto the porches of most homes. Several months later, a huge cross was burned in State Park (now Centennial Park). (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 166-168) In August of 1924, the Ku Klux Klan requested permission to hold a picnic on Labor Day in Exposition Park at the west end of the City. Common Council voted 4 to 2 to grant permission for the picnic and also for a parade from the Park to the business district and back. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 August 1924) Both events took place. In our area, the thrust of the KKK movement was directed toward Italian-Americans. Eventually, the Ku Klux Klan faded away, but even today one occasionally hears of someone discovering KKK hoods and robes hidden away in a family attic.

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

*The Daily News* in an article from May of 1922 stated that the Court House Park (where County Building 1 and the stone Court House are now located) was called "pick-up park." Allegedly, individuals hung out in a tree-shaded area looking for sexual partners and, thus, the name. The police indicated that they intended to put a stop to the behavior. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1922)

In 1923, John Muscarella, who operated the Iroquois Hotel in the Ellicott Square area, was indicted for keeping a disorderly house (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 April 1923). A month later, during court proceedings, a young woman testified that sexual orgies took place at the hotel (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 May 1923).

Edna Gruber, who became Batavia's best known Madam, purchased the Central Hotel on Jackson Street in 1926 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 August 1926). Batavia's treatment of Gruber was complicated by the fact that she operated a house of prostitution, on one hand, but did good works that benefited the community, on the other. More about Edna Gruber will follow in the next chapter.

### 25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.



## The Fourteenth Decade

### Overview

This decade was one of severe economic distress. The stock market crash on so-called "Black Friday," October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1929 is commonly identified as the beginning of what has come to be called, "the Great Depression." However, the real depth of this depression was not felt until the 1930s. Batavia suffered greatly during this decade, as did virtually all other communities across the country. No significant economic recovery occurred until after the beginning of World War II.

This decade also marks the first time that Batavia's population underwent a decline. The population in 1940 was 17,267 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), a decrease of 108 residents since 1930.

It was also in this decade that one of the saddest events relating to preservation of Batavia's historic treasures came to pass. The mansion built in 1817 by Trumbull Cary was acquired by a descendant, restored to its original condition, and given to the City for service as a tourist attraction. Shortly afterwards, the City returned the mansion, an action that set off a chain of events eventually leading to the structure's demolition. More about this story is in the following section labeled, "Housing."

### 1: Infrastructure

Indiscriminate disposal of garbage and trash continued to be a problem. The reader may recall from the last chapter that by the late 1920s, junked automobiles were being dumped in the Tonawanda, sometimes several in just a week's time. Two years later, in 1931, *The Daily News* reported that business places were dumping garbage in the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 August 1931). In 1932, the City requested that residents dispose of trash only in one of three dump sites set aside for that purpose: a dump on Tracy Avenue Extension, "Mot's Pit" on East Main Street next to Gonyo's service station, and a pit at the intersection of South Swan and South Jackson streets. However, no garbage or automobile bodies were permitted at these locations. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, 25 April 1932)

## 1931-1940

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Until the mid-thirties, Richmond Avenue made a "jog" to the north at the point where it intersected with Oak Street. In 1934, Common Council authorized the purchase of the Fanny Dubitsky property at 77 Oak Street in order to straighten Richmond Avenue. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 June 1934)

Until 1936, automobiles on Main Street were parked diagonally. Then, that year, parallel parking began. According to *The Daily News*, this change was judged to have improved the appearance of the street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 September 1936)

In 1938, the River Street bridge was widened and lengthened. One of the purposes of the work was to facilitate flood relief by improving flow downstream from the areas of Batavia which had been most prone to flooding. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 January 1938)

Main Street was widened in 1940. This required moving several things back 5-1/2 ft. including a hotel marquee, a clock mounted on a pedestal, and gas pumps. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 January 1940) However, in the eyes of many residents, the most significant impact of the project was the removal of the W.C.T.U. fountain at the southeast corner of Main and Jackson streets. This drinking fountain had been erected in 1904 by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union to provide refreshment for both humans and animals. The fountain had a metal base topped by a figure of Hebe, the cupbearer of the immortal gods on Olympus. It disappeared after its removal, perhaps a contribution to one of the scrap drives during World War II. (Larry D. Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 115)

In 1938, construction of a water tower, located behind the current County Courthouse on Ellicott Street, was authorized by Common Council (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 1938). Work on the tank began a month later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 August 1938). By July of 1939, *The Daily News* was able to report that the tank was being filled (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 July 1939). The construction of the water tank resulted in a "big saving" in the pumping of water (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 1940). This downtown water tank served as a landmark in Batavia for more than 60 years before it was torn down early in the current century.

By 1939, the sewage treatment plant was often overloaded, necessitating sending some of the raw sewage directly into the Creek. A consultant recommended a new plant. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 8. However, it would be a quarter century before the old plant would be taken out of service and replaced by a new one.

### 2: Transportation

In 1911, the first airplane passed over Batavia. Twenty years later, the first "auto-gyro" did so (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 May 1931). Auto-gyros were what we today call helicopters. Also in 1931, *The Daily News* reported that a blimp circled over the City and then landed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1931).

Traffic signals were first installed in Batavia in 1927. Ten years later, the first stop-and-go blinker lights were erected (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 January 1937).

Automobile licenses had been required by the State since 1910. In 1939, the City began requiring bicycle licenses (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 March 1939). According to Dan Winegar who wrote about the licensing requirement years later, the requirement grew out of a concern over bicycle thefts. Licenses cost \$0.25 annually. A Chandler Robinson received license no. 1. It was auctioned off for \$27.50 in an estate auction ca. 1990. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 August 1990)

### 3: Housing

Readers will recall that the first airplane landing strip in the area was a field known as "Bogue's 40 acres." It was where today's Bogue Avenue is located. By 1937, airplanes were using a landing strip north of Bank Street Road and the land making up Bogue's 40 acres was offered for building lots (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 August 1937).

This book's earlier chapter for the years 1811-1820 included a description of the mansion built by Trumbull Cary in 1817. One of Batavia's finest homes ever, it was built by Trumbull to please his wife, Margaret Brisbane Trumbull. For the next 147 years, the mansion remained an East Main Street landmark.

In 1922, the Cary Mansion was purchased from Cary family members by Harry E. Turner who remodeled the interior for service as a mortuary. However, over the next decade, George Cary, a grandson of Trumbull Cary and a noted Buffalo architect, came to conceive of the structure as better suited for being something on the order of Monticello or Mount Vernon. He thought it should be preserved as a colonial home for the education and enjoyment of the public.

Cary, after obtaining a commitment from Harry Turner to sell him the mansion, approached Common Council with an offer to restore the structure, providing the City would maintain it as a tourist attraction. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1934, Common Council accepted the offer. The title

passed to the City on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1935. As he had promised, George Cary restored the mansion at his expense. It was his intention to make it possible for a visitor to step into the restored home and find it just as he or she would have when Trumbull and Margaret Cary lived there. In the course of restoration, several pieces of early American handicraft were obtained on permanent loan from the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York. Furnishings and other objects that had originally been in the mansion were located and retrieved. A curator was hired. Finally, the mansion was scheduled to open to the public in the summer of 1936.

Then an unfortunate and unexpected turn of events took place. Although a special committee appointed to study the future of the mansion concluded otherwise, Common Council decided that it had made a mistake in accepting the mansion and the structure could not be maintained except at considerable and prohibitive expense to the City of Batavia. In essentially a complete about face, in October of 1936, the mansion was returned to George Cary despite his strenuous objections. At this point, perhaps out of anger over the City's actions, Cary abandoned his goal of seeing the mansion serve as a tourist attraction. The sad story of what subsequently happened to the mansion over the next three decades is described in later chapters.

### 4: Energy sources

In the winter of 1931-1932, as usual there was ice on the Tonawanda, but for the first time in 55 years, none was harvested (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1932).

It may have been the decade of the Great Depression, but people were still buying cars and gasoline to fuel them. In December of 1937, *The Daily News* noted that there had been a big increase in gas stations and pumps since 1929 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 December 1937)

Electric power, until the mid-thirties, had been 25-cycle current. One disadvantage of low frequency cycling was the flickering of electric lights that resulted. In February of 1936, plans were announced for Batavia and the rest of the County to change to 60-cycle current (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 February 1936). By May of 1937, the City's change-over to 60-cycle power was complete (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 May 1937). This made obsolete the equipment in the Municipal Power Plant that had been preserved since 1918 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1937). It was subsequently junked (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1940). Readers may recall from an earlier chapter that the engine and generator had been turned over daily to keep them operational.



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### 5: Communication

The first official airmail flight from Batavia flew out of a temporary airstrip on State Street Road in May of 1938. The flight was to Buffalo. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1938)

Radio broadcasts could be received by the early 1920s, but Batavia itself did not have a radio station until the early 1940s. In January of 1940, *The Daily News* reported that E. R. Gamble was President of the newly formed Batavia Broadcasting System (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 January 1940). In June, the Batavia Broadcasting System applied to the FCC for a license (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 24 June 1940). By December of 1940, work was underway for station facilities in rooms over 90 Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 December 1940). Plans called for broadcasts to begin two months later.

### 6: County and city boundaries

In 1932, the City's boundaries in the northwest part of the community were expanded to include the property on which the Veterans Administration Hospital was to be built. Care was taken by Common Council to keep the boundary inside the right-of-way for Park Road in order to avoid future responsibility for maintaining, widening, or paving the road. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 December 1932)

### 7: Government, governing structure

No significant changes occurred in this decade.

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

In the very early 1930s, enforcement of Prohibition remained a focus of Batavia law enforcement. For example, in 1931, Louis Cesarano was charged with running a "speak easy" at 412 Ellicott Street. Eventually, the charges were withdrawn after Cesarano promised to close his business and keep it closed. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1931)

Prohibition was soon to end, however. In May of 1933, voters in New York State went to the polls to indicate their support or lack of support for repeal of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. State-wide, the majority voted for repeal and in Batavia as well as Genesee County as a whole, the "wets" also prevailed. At that point, eight states had voted for repeal, leaving another 30 in order to change the Constitution. (*The Daily News*, Batavia N.Y., 24 May 1933) Support for repeal

eventually culminated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment which went into effect on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1933. After 13 years, Prohibition was no more. ("Repeal of Prohibition in the United States," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 17 August 2014)

Efforts to stop the production, sale, and distribution of alcohol may have ended, but a campaign against gambling continued throughout this decade. Slot machines seemed to be a prime target (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 October 1932). With simple seizure of slot machines apparently less than successful, at one point Common Council considered licensing such machines, charging a fee of \$500 each, as a measure for dealing with the problem (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 August 1932). It does not appear that this proposal was enacted.

Gambling parlors also attracted police attention in the form of raids. One well-known parlor was operated by Russell LoTempio at 303 Ellicott Street. LoTempio's illegal horse betting operation was subjected to one such raid in late October of 1936. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 October 1936)

Mobster activity in Western New York and involving Batavians often seemed to have some connection to Russell LoTempio. In June of 1936, Frank LoTempio, Russell's brother and a known bookmaker and gambler, was murdered in Buffalo as he left a wedding reception. Police later determined that LoTempio's death was in retribution for the refusal of Russell and Frank LoTempio to pay monetary tribute to Buffalo-area mobsters. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, Batavian Samuel Yates, a friend of the LoTempios, was murdered in Buffalo as he attended a funeral. A few months later, someone planted a bomb in Russell LoTempio's car. Russell survived, but one of his feet had to be amputated. Then in August of 1937, Frank LoTempio's brother-in-law, Alfred Panepinto, was killed in Russell LoTempio's billiard parlor. None of the murderers in any of the above killings was brought to justice. (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History—Gunmen Kill Batavia Man, 1936," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 2014)

The underworld was not the only source of crime, of course. In 1933, seven local men, termed "the Buell Street Gang," were indicted and later convicted on charges of burglarizing a dozen locations. Led by Reuben Patterson, the proprietor of Pat's Auto Parts Service, they stole wire, metal, and other items from industrial plants in Batavia and Stafford. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 December 1933; 16 January 1934)

Before more modern times, a common tactic in dealing with anyone deemed undesirable was to order them out of town. Apparently, such was the case with Communists. In January of 1932, the Police Chief personally escorted a Communist organizer to the New York Central train station and put her on a train to Rochester. The person in question, identified as "Miss Welch,"

purportedly was in town in connection with a strike then occurring at the Joseph Horowitz and Sons shirt factory. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 January 1932).

In 1935, Batavia Police made 1,286 arrests (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 January 1936). The next year, according to *The Daily News*, they launched a "crusade" against careless bicycling (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1937). Whether careless bicycle riders became arrest statistics is not clear.

Several actions were taken in this decade in an effort to better equip Batavia's police force. In 1931, the police were provided with a siren for "the police roadster," apparently the department's sole vehicle (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 October 1931). In 1938, the police were provided with a second patrol car, a Plymouth (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1938). Then, in 1939, Common Council authorized purchasing two-way radios for the police cars (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 February 1939).

One other observation should be noted. In 1937, as a result of State legislation, women became eligible for jury duty (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 June 1937).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

Home delivery of milk was a common practice in this decade as it had been earlier. It would remain so for many years following. Initially, delivery wagons were drawn by horses. However, in 1932, Fargo Dairy announced that it was retiring its "milk horses" and converting to electric trucks (*The Daily New*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 January 1932).

Also in 1932, the Knox and Dispenza Shoe Store installed x-ray machines to aid in fitting shoes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 September 1932). Customers and clerks could view an x-ray image that revealed both the shoe and the foot (bones included). Viewing took place via a screen on the machine as the customer stood with his/her feet inside. Such devices continued in use well into the 1940s and perhaps a little later before recognition of the hazards of the x-rays ended the practice.

In the 1930s, some local entrepreneurs, using wagons or carts, sold groceries directly to homemakers throughout the City. Such operations were separate from "brick and mortar" grocery stores and, in many instances, apparently were attempts to supplement income earned otherwise. Common Council sought to control, perhaps even end, this practice by imposing licensing requirements in combination with a high fee. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 November 1934) A reading of the newspaper accounts about this situation suggests that

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Common Council was responding to complaints from the proprietors of grocery stores who didn't want competition from peddlers.

### 10: Factories/industries

The Great Depression took its toll on businesses in general. In Batavia, the most significant loss was the Batavia and New York Wood Working Company. In the 1920s, the company had been one of the leading industries of its type in the Country. It produced much of the fine interior wood used in banks, hotels and offices then being built. The plant consisted of a large three-story brick main building, an engine house, a warehouse, sheds, and drying kilns. In the peak years of operation, the company employed 350 skilled workers. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993], p 174)

By 1930, the Batavia and New York Wood Working Company was feeling the effects of the Great Depression which began hitting the building industry both early on and hard. Operations slowed as a back-log of orders was filled. Then, in 1939, operations ceased altogether. Before long, the City acquired the property under foreclosure proceedings and that was the end of a major source of employment for Batavia's skilled workmen. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 174)

### 11: Banking/financial services

There appear not to have been any significant local developments in banking or financial services.

### 12: Education

There was considerable activity in this decade involving vocational or trade schools. In 1937, a trade school, reportedly associated in some manner with the Doehler Company, was in operation. Open only to those working in the metal trades, it had 74 registered students. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 February 1937) In August of 1938, *The Daily News* reported that a vocational school, located in the West School on West Main Street, was opening in September. Although limited to 50 students, it was available to both school-age youth and tradesmen seeking to improve their skills. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 August 1938) The following year, the newspaper announced that the facility henceforth would enroll only high school graduates (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1939). Then, in 1940, *The Daily News* reported that the school was offering a summer program to prepare workers for war industries.

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Funded by the Federal Government, the classes were expected to serve about 60 students. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1940).

Batavia had Catholic schools going back many decades. Then, in 1937, a Jewish school was opened above 59 Main Street. It was established to provide religious training for Jewish children. The subject matter included Jewish history, customs, and theology. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 1937) It is not known how long the school remained in operation.

Because of overcrowding in the High School on Ross Street, and the existence of vacant classrooms in south-side schools, a decision was made in 1939 to convert Jackson School to a junior high with grades 7, 8, and 9 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1939).

In 1932, Park Lewis Hall, a dormitory for females, was built at the State School for the Blind (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1932). Seven years later, in 1939, Hamilton Hall, a dormitory for males, was erected (*The Daily News* Batavia, N.Y., 25 October 1939).

### 13: Religion

The Christian and Missionary Alliance congregation first met in Batavia ca. 1931 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 125). The Batavia Gospel Tabernacle congregation also organized in 1931. About 1937, it purchased the Evangelical Church building on Center Street. The congregation later became The Assembly of God. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 123-124)

During this time, Catholics were assigned to a parish and required to attend a specific church determined by their place of residence. In 1932, the boundary lines between the St. Joseph's and St. Mary's parishes were shifted. This shift was undertaken to equalize the number of members within each parish. For some families, this meant that they had to attend a different church than the one to which they were accustomed. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1932)

The New Apostolic Church congregation was founded in 1934. They met in a converted house at 111 Washington Avenue. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 126)

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The Church of God in Christ congregation began ca. 1939. At some later point, it acquired the building at 31 Maple Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 124)

In 1939, a group of younger Jews organized a Conservative Society which became Temple Beth El. Several years later, the Beth El society purchased a house at 124 Bank Street and rebuilt it as a temple. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 121-122)

Jehovah's Witnesses first met in 1940. They later purchased a building on North Lyon Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc.] p. 125)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In 1940, a library branch for the south side was opened in the Jackson Street School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 February 1940).

### 15: Cemeteries

There appear to have been no significant developments among the cemeteries in this decade.

### 16: Firefighting

In 1919, during the administration of Mayor Ashton Caney, a horn had been installed to summon off-duty firemen. Because so many people thought it sounded like a cow mooing, it came to be called "Caney's cow." By 1940, off-duty firemen could readily be reached by telephone, so the horn was decommissioned. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 August 1940)

### 17: Healthcare

The Veterans Administration Hospital was built in 1932 and 1933. It was erected on a 52-acre plot that had been purchased by the City and County and then given to the Federal Government to serve as a building site. A parade celebrating the decision to build the hospital in Batavia rather than at an alternative location was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1932. In May of 1934, residents were afforded an opportunity to tour the facility prior to admission of the first patients. The Veterans Administration Hospital was dedicated on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1934 in a

ceremony held at the Fairgrounds on West Main Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 80)

A sanitarium, Acorn Sanitarium, also known as "Hilltop Sanitarium," operated at 218 State Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 October 1938).

Poliomyelitis was a scourge for many decades. In 1939, an outbreak of polio in the Batavia area resulted in the schools being closed starting on September 13<sup>th</sup>. They didn't reopen until a cold spell in October. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 243-244)

Penicillin was used in Batavia for the first time in 1940. It was given to an infant at St. Jerome Hospital and was credited with saving the child's life. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 April 1940)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

The unemployment that accompanied the Great Depression created desperate conditions. Initially, there were no Federal programs and Batavia, like other communities, was forced to deal with the situation with no outside help. Furthermore, *The Daily News* reported that few places in the State, Batavia among them, had adequate plans for dealing with the unemployment (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 August 1931).

As of July in 1931, the relief funds of the City Welfare Commission were exhausted. The welfare recipients included 70 able-bodied men. So, a decision was then made to put some of these men to work on a sewer extension project with the workers paid in vouchers redeemable for rent, fuel, provisions, clothing, and other necessities. Apparently the Department of Public Works had sufficient funds to make this possible. The *Daily News* reported that a list of other projects on which the unemployed could be put to work was under development. Part of the problem Batavia faced stemmed from State action mandating old age pensions for which the City had not budgeted. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 July 1931)

To be eligible for old age pensions, need had to be demonstrated, the individual had to have been a resident of New York for at least 10 years, had to have resided in the local area for at least one year, and had to be a citizen. Payments made by the City averaged \$17.88/month per person, the second lowest in New York among the State's cities. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 July 1931)

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In 1931, beans for the needy were planted in fields on both sides of East Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1931). The next year, vegetable gardens were planted, again on East Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1932).

*The Daily News* of October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1932 reported that welfare costs for the City were "staggering" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1932). By January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1933, welfare was costing the City \$440/day (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 January 1933). However, within a year, massive Federal programs under the Roosevelt Administration began to provide aid. One was the Civil Works Administration (CWA) that operated between November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1933 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1934. That was followed by the Work Progress Administration (WPA), renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939. The WPA operated between April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1935 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1943. ("CWA," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 14 August 2014; "WPA," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 14 August 2014)

In December of 1933, 15 Batavia projects were approved for CWA funding (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 1933). More followed under the WPA.

In addition to the CWA and WPA programs, the unemployed in Batavia were also helped by another, albeit smaller, Federal program, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). It operated between 1933 and 1942 and was established to help unemployed, unmarried men, 18 to 25 years of age, who came from families on relief. The participants in the CCC worked on the development of natural resources, most notably state and federal parks. ("CCC," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 17 August 2014) The first 34 Batavians left the City for a CCC camp in June of 1933 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 June 1933).

In 1934, the Twenty-five Neediest Children's Fund came into being. It was initially administered by the Parent Teachers Council, but later was handled by private citizens. The fund provided money for such things as medical care, clothing, shoes and boots in instances where families could not afford these things and had no other resources. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 164)

Also in February of 1934, the Salvation Army opened a hostel for vagrants in a building at 32 Jackson Street. It provided 40 cots loaned by the State Armory in Medina. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1934) The Federal Government paid about \$60/day for the service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 1935). However, the facility was closed in July of 1935 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 July 1935).



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In August of 1940, *The Daily News* reported that the City would be turning old age relief over to the County (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 August 1940). At the end of the year, the City's old age department was abolished and the County began assuming all responsibility for aid to the elderly (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 December 1940).

### 19: Disasters

In this decade, Batavia experienced the beginning of an environmental and aesthetic disaster. In 1933, Dutch Elm disease was discovered in the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 September 1933). This disease eventually stripped Batavia of all the Dutch Elm canopy that had graced its streets.

Weather extremes also marked this decade. On February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1934, an all-time low of minus 28 degrees was recorded in Batavia (Mark Graczyk, "Hidden History: Batavia's Coldest Day," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 2014). Later in the Spring of 1934, drought conditions were at a record level (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 May 1934). Two years later, temperatures over 100 degrees occurred for three straight days (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1936). Then, in March of 1940, a storm occurred that was judged to have been the worst in 50 years (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26, 27 March 1940)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Two City parks opened in this decade. Austin Park opened in 1931 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 June 1931) and Kibbe Park in 1935 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1935).

A boxing club flourished for many years starting in 1931. However, it was never a formally organized group and it never had a permanent address. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 165-166)

The Batavia Players started in the fall of 1931 under the direction of Ethel MacIntosh, a Latin teacher at Batavia High School. Performances were held at several community locations including a summer theater on Horseshoe Lake. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 149)

Batavians were sometimes entertained by The Apollo Club, a group of male singers who organized in 1932. They lasted five years. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 151)

Another vocal group was the Choral Guild. It performed, under the direction of Mac Brusted, for four years beginning in 1938. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 151)

The Batavia Concert Band, sponsored by the City, began playing for local audiences in 1938 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 150).

There was an on-going battle over whether certain recreation could occur on Sundays. In 1931, baseball was deemed legal, but the Police Chief ordered bowling alleys to close (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 January 1931; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1931). That same year, Common Council sought to ban Sunday dancing, a move thought directed specifically at the Mancuso Ballroom since it was the only place where Sunday dancing was occurring (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 September 1931). Any question about showing movies was resolved, however, when the State acted in 1935 to make it legal to show movies on Sundays (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 April 1935).

A long-standing and revered place of entertainment was lost in 1935 when the Dellinger Opera House on Main Street burned (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1935). It was a dramatic fire that failed to spread to surrounding buildings mainly as the result of fire walls and the competent efforts of fire fighters.

Dog races were held at the Fairgrounds in 1935 and 1936. This resulted in protests from both clergy and local residents.. Eventually, the District Attorney warned that he would take action if racing continued; and that permanently ended the matter. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 161)

In 1937, an ice skating rink on Vine Street was approved for WPA funding (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 January 1937).

The first soapbox derby was held in the summer of 1938. The racers coasted down Ellicott Avenue before a crowd estimated to number around 3,000. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1938)

Also in 1938, a baseball diamond was readied for professional baseball (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 July 1938). Using WPA funds, an area on Denio Street at Bank was cleared for the purpose. Bleachers were built at the southeastern corner. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 164) Batavia's first

professional baseball team was the Clippers (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 April 1939). The name was derived from one of the products of the Massey-Harris Company, the Massey-Harris clipper combine (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 164).

In April of 1940, *The Daily News* reported that the City would be getting a harness racing track (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 April 1940). In June, the newspaper indicated that the Genesee County Agricultural Society was leasing the Fairgrounds for a 30-day meet occurring at night. It also stated that there would be pari-mutuel betting under a license granted by the State Racing Commission. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 June 1940) Thus, in September of 1940, legalized betting came to Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1940).

### 21: War/impact of war

Although the United States was not yet involved, World War II was raging in Europe and the Japanese were on the march in the Pacific. In response, our Country organized a military draft. In September of 1940, a local draft board was chosen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 September 1940). And in November, draft notices were sent to 25 young men (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 November 1940). This was just the beginning of the most significant local involvement in warfare since the American Civil War of the previous century.

### 22: Families, persons of note

After the Civil War and before the "sexual revolution" of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, over the years Batavia had many houses of prostitution. Among the madams, Edna Gruber was the most famous. Her business appears to have been at its peak in the 1930s.

Edna Miller Gruber was born in Buffalo, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1892. She lived until October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1953 when she died in Batavia of apparent heart failure. In the course of her life, she was married twice, first to Joseph Gruber when she was 15 and then to David Reeves when she was 38. She had one daughter by the first marriage, Florence, who bore two children before dying in Ohio in an accidental fire. Edna's grandchildren eventually came to live with her at Edna's place of business.

In 1926, Gruber purchased the former Central Hotel at 101 Jackson Street and renamed it "the Palace Hotel." Just south of the New York Central Railroad tracks, it had five rooms downstairs, nine bedrooms on the second floor, and six unused rooms on the third floor. As the Madam, Edna Gruber took half of the price paid by the men who used the establishment's

services. The other 50% went to the prostitutes who then shared some of their take with their pimps.

Although the Palace Hotel was regularly raided, Edna was typically just fined and released. To some extent, that was thought to be because of what she might reveal about prominent Batavian men if she were arrested and brought to trial. Probably, it was also because Gruber was a generous person who did a lot of good things for the community. For example, at Christmas time, she would visit Davis Wheel Goods and spend hundreds of dollars on toys for children. For years, she paid a local priest to purchase First Communion dresses and suits for needy children in her neighborhood. Owners and sales clerks at Thomas & Dwyer's Shoe Store were instructed to fit children with shoes when the latter were seen walking to school barefoot. Edna Gruber sent needy people to McAlpine & Barton's clothing store for warm clothing purchased at her expense. She even bought uniforms for the police and firemen.

Edna Gruber's luck ran out in 1941 when Police Chief John J. Casey became determined to close down the Palace Hotel. He arrested her and Edna's case was brought before a jury of six men and six women who found her guilty of keeping an establishment harmful to public morals. Judge Cone fined her \$500, sentenced her to one year in the Monroe County Penitentiary, and ordered her not to return to Batavia.

After spending a year in the penitentiary, Gruber returned to Batavia despite Judge Cone's admonishment not to do so. Apparently she resumed business as usual at the Palace, but without further legal problems. When she died in 1953, the building went to her grandchildren who converted it into a conventional home for themselves and their spouses. One of the couples moved out after one year, but the other remained at 101 Jackson for the next 30 years.

All of the above information about Edna Gruber was taken from an online article accessed 18 August 2004 at [www.clarioncall.com](http://www.clarioncall.com). It had previously been published in the 1996 Winter edition of "Genesee Country" magazine.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

The Batavia Study Club met for over 40 years, starting in 1933. The club was initially a group of teachers who met at the home of Bess Churchill. Members took turns at giving presentations which were often reviews of books or plays. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 145)

## 1931-1940

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The Batavia Junior Citizens organized in August of 1934. The group's objective was personal and community development among residents aged 21 to 40. The organization later changed its name to Batavia Jaycees. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 157)

Aerie No. 2348 of Eagles organized in November of 1939 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 139).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

During this decade, as noted above, houses of prostitution continued to operate in Batavia and, periodically, the police raided them. For example, at 3 a.m. one night in 1935, Batavia police raided both Edna Gruber's business at 101 Jackson Street and Irene Ross' operation at 41-1/2 Liberty Street. Both women were fined \$100 and received suspended sentences of six months in prison. Between the two locations, the names of 27 patrons were collected. Three prostitutes were fined \$25 each and ordered to leave the City within 24 hours. Irene Ross was ordered to leave the City within one week, but Edna Gruber was permitted to remain a resident. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1935)

### 24: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.



## The Fifteenth Decade

### Overview

This was a decade largely shaped by war. The decade began with World War II and ended with the start of the Korean War. It was a time of rationing. It was a time of shortages. For those who had suffered through the Great Depression of the previous decade, new challenges took the place of economic trials and tribulations. For many, it became a time of mourning as fathers, husbands, and sons lost their lives in warfare.

However, this decade was not all bad. The economy grew again, in part as a result of the economic stimulation produced by World War II. The United States emerged from World War II as the undisputed superpower among nations. And the City of Batavia resumed its growth, reaching a population of 17,799 in 1950 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), an increase of 532 residents since 1940.

### 1: Infrastructure

Disposal of trash and garbage by means of a landfill was still well into the future. Instead, open sites, usually located within the City, remained the principal method for disposing of trash. For example, in 1941, *The Daily News* reported that a dump site on the Stroh property, located on the east side of River Street and under the supervision of the Department of Public Works, was now open to the public (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 February 1941). The author of this book can personally testify to the use of this location for a dump, having purchased the property 60 years later and being puzzled over the trash he found there among the undergrowth.

In September of 1948, a similar site on Oak Street was closed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1948). However, that was easily compensated for a month later when the City leased from the New York Central Railroad a large area on the east side of Cedar Street specifically for trash disposal (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 October 1948).

In February of 1949, Common Council approved an arrangement that allowed contractors "tin mining rights" at the Cedar Street dump. At the time, a "booming" market had made scrap dealers interested in salvaging metal. Under the arrangement, any approved contractor was

also to be responsible for supervising the daily operation of the dump. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 February 1949)

There are no parking meters in Batavia as this book is being written. However, in the past, they were a popular means of controlling and profiting from parking. The use of meters appears to have begun in 1941 when Common Council authorized the purchase of a number of them for use on Batavia's streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1941).

In 1947, City residents approved, by a vote of 3,734 to 931, the installation of equipment to soften the water. However, for a variety of reasons, the actual work was delayed for several years. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 October 1949) Finally, in the fall of 1950, the installation was completed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 April 1950). This had the effect of extending the life of plumbing fixtures, reducing the amount of soap needed in doing laundry, and improving the experience of bathing. Batavia was the first community in the State with automatic water softening and many officials from around the State came to observe its operation (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 8).

Sumner Street was extended from Osterhout Avenue to Otis Street in 1946 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1946). This resulted in moving at least one house to a new location (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's "Mobile Homes"* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 34).

In 1948, the State proposed a roadway "arterial" project that ultimately would bring many changes to Batavia's main streets. Among the proposed changes was construction of a bridge connecting Pearl and Oak streets. Also proposed was the widening of Main, Clinton, Pearl, and Oak streets. The project proposals anticipated the still unbuilt New York State Thruway, referring to it as the "Ontario Thruway." None of these proposed changes took place in the current decade, but all of them were undertaken in the 1950s. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1948)

## 2: Transportation

The Batavia area's first airstrip was Bogue's 40 acres off West Main Street. Later, an airstrip was built on Bank Street Road. Then, in 1944, the Burt Welch farm on State Street Road was chosen for an airport. By July 29<sup>th</sup> work was starting on the runways. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 July 1944) In late summer, the work evidently having been completed, over 3,000 people visited the new airport (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1944).



Beginning in October of 1945, the Batavia Motor Coach Line offered bus service to the Veterans Administration Hospital, including trips along Oak Street and Richmond Avenue. Then, the company bought two new buses in August of 1946, making it possible to serve a long loop along Main, Oak, North, Ross, Ellicott, and Buell streets. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 23)

According to a news item in *The Daily News* of May 21, 1946, some traffic lights were, for the first time, being operated all night (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1946). Apparently there was the sense that insufficient traffic occurred to ordinarily warrant traffic signals in the middle of the night.

Remaining trolley tracks, unused for 20 years, were paved over in 1947 as East Main, Main, and West Main streets were resurfaced from Clinton Street to River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1947).

Fatal crashes at Batavia's many railroad crossings were, for decades, an unfortunate fact of life. Another such occurrence took place on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1950 when four people were killed at the Swan Street crossing (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 February 1950). Because of these ongoing accidents, a campaign to move the railroad tracks to the periphery of the City had been underway for years. Nevertheless, the tracks continued to run through the central area of Batavia.

### 3: Housing

In 1941, just before the United States entered into World War II, Common Council lifted restrictions on multiple dwellings. Previously, there had been a limit of two families to a house. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 November 1941) It appears that this was a response to an influx of workers employed in defense-related manufacturing.

As direct U.S. involvement in World War II got underway, there soon was a shortage of construction material resulting in part from restrictions imposed by rationing. As a result, despite the more liberal policy adopted by Common Council in 1941, there was little or no new housing actually being developed in Batavia. In the face of a growing shortage of places to live, in September of 1944, the National Housing Agency lifted restrictions on Batavia property owners so they could more readily proceed with re-modeling of existing buildings for the purpose of providing additional apartments. Such work was to be free of the limitations heretofore imposed by wartime rationing. This action, long sought by the Batavia Chamber of Commerce, was described as the first step to providing needed housing for an estimated 30 to 50 families. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1944) A month later, *The Daily News*

reported that many property owners were getting permits to change their houses to multiple family dwellings (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 October 1944).

The return of servicemen at the end of World War II, their marriages, and the resulting “baby boom” resulted in a still greater need for housing. A survey conducted near the end of 1945 showed a need for an additional 250 to 300 houses in the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 November 1945).

*The Daily News*, in August of 1946, reported on plans for 40 new houses on Vine Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 August 1946). Two years later, the newspaper announced excavations on Grandview Terrace for 50 more homes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 October 1948). Not all of the new housing was of conventional design. For example, a prefabricated house was erected at 17 Union Street in 1946 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 1946). And in 1948, a Vincent Schlum received a permit to build the smallest house ever in Batavia—a one story, 10 x 16 ft. cinderblock structure, at 332 Bank Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 June 1948). The building that Schlum built is still standing as this book is being written. However, the windows have been covered, the exterior now has white siding, and the structure appears to be used for storage. There are concrete steps to a front door, a flag stone path to the rear, and a rear door to a basement area.

Right after World War II, the pressure for housing, especially for veterans, was so great that extraordinary responses were made. In January of 1946, Common Council approved a “trailer colony” for veterans and their families in the area of the current MacArthur Park. It was to consist of 25 trailers supplied by the Federal Government. The City was to provide a building with laundry and toilet facilities. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 January 1946) It’s not clear whether such an installation was ever built. From all indications, it was not.

In April of 1946, Common Council approved a second form of veterans housing in the MacArthur Park area. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1946). This housing was to consist of barracks brought from Niagara Falls. In this case, the housing definitely materialized. The first barracks arrived in early June. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 June 1946) The first family for this housing was chosen in October (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1946). In December, the second barracks arrived, ready for occupancy on the 19<sup>th</sup> (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 December 1946). In January of 1947, families were approved for a third set of barracks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 January 1947). The barracks remained in place until the next decade.

### 4: Energy sources

Batavians experienced energy shortages in 1946 and again in 1950. *The Daily News* reported a coal shortage in May of 1946. The mayor ordered certain actions by businesses to conserve electricity and appealed to the public for voluntary conservation in general. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1946) Then, a natural gas shortage occurred in December of the same year. The gas supply to the Doehler-Jarvis plant was totally cut off for a short period. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 December 1946) In February of 1950, there again was a coal shortage. In this instance, rationing of local supplies became necessary. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13, 24 February 1950) According to the sources cited above, both of the coal shortages were the result of strikes by coal miners with the one in 1946 exacerbated by a railroad walkout. The natural gas shortage supposedly was the result of excessive demand, but Common Council questioned that explanation and sought an investigation by the Public Service Commission. Whether such an investigation ever took place is not known.

### 5: Communication

Batavia's first and only commercial radio station, WBTA, began broadcasting on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1941. It was initially on the air just from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Broadcasting at 1490 megacycles then and now, it currently refers to itself as "one of America's two great radio stations."

Television was the newest form of communication. Batavia has never had a commercial television station, but several stations have broadcast from Buffalo and Rochester. The first station that Batavians could receive appears to have been WBEN-TV, Channel 4, Buffalo, N.Y. It went on the air ca. 1947. (*Buffalohistoryworks.com*, online, accessed 20 August 2014)

The first local television set was in the Cottage Restaurant on State Street. Installed in January of 1948, it reportedly cost \$2,500. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 1948) The first television set in a private home was acquired less than two months later by Elmer Adelman (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 March 1948). Both sets were black and white units. Color television was still many years into the future.

Long-distance telephone calls continued to require an operator to put the call through. In 1946, the Bell Telephone Company in Batavia employed 96 operators (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1946).

Readers may recall that the first Batavia Post Office sign was painted in 1804 by Mary Stevens. Over the years, it disappeared only to be discovered ca. 1910. Then it disappeared

again before reappearing ca. 1931. Apparently, the sign was lost a third time before surfacing in 1941 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 1941).

### 6: County, village, city boundaries

There were no changes in this decade.

### 7: Government, governing structure

There were no changes in this decade.

### 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

Efforts to discourage gambling remained a focus of the police department. In 1944, according to *The Daily News*, the police were starting to "clean up" punchboards, a lottery-like gambling device (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 June 1944). Local churches asked City leaders for a continued ban on slot machines (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 June 1946). Presumably they were pleased when, in March of 1948, *The Daily News* reported that the police had destroyed six tons of the machines (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1948).

As of late 1946, there were 20 officers on the police force (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 December 1946)

Apparently for a variety of reasons, there was a high turnover of police chiefs. After having eight chiefs in only 19 years, in 1948 a search was underway to find yet another one. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 January 1948)

In this decade, the practice of running individuals out of town if they were deemed undesirable seems to have continued. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1950, *The Daily News* reported that the police had escorted a "band of gypsies" from the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 3 August 1950).

For many decades, tramps had been lodged in the jail. In 1950, there was discussion about ending this practice. Some argued that the City was simply running a "free hotel." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 February 1950)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

Readers will recall from an earlier chapter a reference to City merchants establishing closing hours of 6 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and a closing hour of 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. In 1948, the Merchants Council decided to permit Friday night shopping (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 May 1948).

### 10: Factories/industries

The Graham Manufacturing Company, a manufacturer of heat exchangers and surface condensers, began operations in New York City ca. 1936. The company moved the manufacturing part of its business to Batavia in 1942. Initially situated just on Howard Avenue, it eventually expanded to Florence Avenue as well. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 190)

### 11: Banking/financial services

There appear not to have been any significant local developments in banking or financial services in this decade.

### 12: Education

The first step toward the creation of a regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) was taken in 1948. Representatives of several area schools voted to request the State Commissioner of Education to authorize the establishment of such a board in the County. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1948)

### 13: Religion

The Beth El Society, which had been organized in 1939, purchased a house at 124 Bank Street in 1945. The house was then rebuilt to serve as a temple. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 121 and *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 August 1945)

The Rev. Jasper A. Myers had been pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, but was asked to leave because of differences over doctrine. In 1946, Rev. Myers started the Grace Evangelical Church. In 1948, this new congregation acquired a building at 104 Bank Street that had been

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used by Adventists. In the same year, the name of the congregation was changed to "Grace Baptist Church." (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 125)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In 1941, the Holland Land Office Museum closed and the property was given to the Batavia Board of Education. The closing was largely the result of financial and heating problems. During World War II, the building was used by the local chapter of the American Red Cross. Then, in 1948, Genesee County assumed ownership and on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1950, the museum was reopened to the public with the County Historian serving as the Director. (Virginia M. Barons, "100,000 Settlers In Western N.Y. By 1821," *Tri-State Trader*, 20 January 1979, p. 29).

### 15: Cemeteries

There appear to have been no significant developments among the cemeteries in this decade.

### 16: Firefighting

In this decade, Batavia's two existing fire stations were replaced with two new facilities. Station 2, located at 307 Ellicott Street, was replaced with a new building at 443 Ellicott Street. It began service on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 17-18)

Also in 1948, Station 1 was moved from its Court Street location to the Municipal Building at 3 West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 April 1948). The Municipal Building had a 175 ft. tall smoke stack that had been erected early in the century under the administration of Mayor Louis Wiard. Since the water works were no longer a part of the building and since there was no longer a municipal power plant there, either, this stack no longer served a purpose. Consequently, the top 100 ft. was removed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 April 1948) and the remaining section was converted into a hose dryer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1948).

After the completion of the above relocations, as reported in *The Daily News* of November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1948, the old Court Street fire station was razed to the ground (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 1948).

At the end of this decade, the City Fire Department, along with volunteer fire companies across the County, entered into a mutual aid agreement (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 1949). Under this agreement, the fire companies provided coordinated assistance and shared coverage in instances of major fires.

### 17: Healthcare

In 1939, a polio outbreak had resulted in delayed opening of Batavia's schools. This occurred again in 1944 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 August 1944).

For over 30 years, Batavia had always had two hospitals serving the community. Periodically the need for more than one was brought into question. However, when the matter came up for discussion in 1943, the on-going obstacle to any possible consolidation was again revealed when St. Jerome stated, as it had in 1920, that a merged hospital in Batavia was acceptable only if it were run by the Sisters of Mercy (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1943; Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2013] p. 9). Thus, the two hospitals continued in competition with one another.

In 1944, the Board of the Batavia Hospital voted to replace the old main building with a new one. Construction started in 1949. Similarly, the Board of St. Jerome Hospital voted to replace the original two houses with a 6-story main building and to add a 4-story wing to balance the structure erected in 1922. Ground was broken in 1947. Batavia Hospital received a Federal grant of \$563,141 and St. Jerome Hospital received a nearly identical Federal grant of \$556,766. Construction in both cases continued into the next decade.

In 1946, Common Council abolished the City Doctor position. Since the City Welfare Department was being eliminated, there was no longer a need for a physician to care for welfare recipients. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1946)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In 1944, one of Batavia's oldest residents, Mrs. Josephine P. Rupprecht, died and left in her will provisions for an orphanage. The orphanage, to be erected on property at 14 and 16 Ellicott Street, was to be for girls under 16 years of age. The intention was to limit the number of residents to four or five and to create a home-like atmosphere in contrast to an institutional type setting. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 June 1944) For unknown reasons, the orphanage was never built.

Also in 1944, plans to develop a child care center were dropped. The center would have provided wartime working mothers with a place for their children while the mothers were at work. The Genesee County War Council recommended dropping the idea when it was determined that only nine children would actually be served. Most parents were obtaining satisfactory care for their children by other means. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1944)

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1946, the County took over all welfare cases previously the responsibility of the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 August 1946).

### 19: Disasters

Batavia has experienced flooding conditions on a number of occasions. However, the flood of 1942 is generally regarded as the worst by far. In March of that year, there was already a significant amount of snow on the ground when a big storm dropped heavy snow on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Then the temperatures began to rise on the 16<sup>th</sup> and rain started to fall. The result was flooding on the Tonawanda that spread throughout the south side. Flood waters also entered West Main Street, beginning at the Walnut Street bridge, and moved up side streets to the north. As residents were flooded out of their homes, the Red Cross found temporary lodging for 225 families. The YMCA and school buildings provided shelter for many. When the water subsided, as people returned to their homes, they found basements full of water and first floor interiors ruined. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 243) Fortunately, one of Batavia's chief industries, Doehler-Jarvis, escaped flood damage although only narrowly (*The Daily News*, 24 November 1944).

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Readers will recall from earlier chapters that boating on the Tonawanda was once a major form of recreation. However, by the 1940s, that was no longer the case and hadn't been for some time. In 1942, *The Daily News* reported that the City was removing old, unused boat houses along the creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1942).

Also in 1942, another reminder of times past was razed, this time the bandstand in Ellicott Square (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 May 1942).

In earlier times, the State Park south of the State School for the Blind, today called "Centennial Park," had carriage paths, among other features. In 1947, the State School closed



the paths "below Richmond Avenue." They were dug up and the ground seeded. However, paths in the eastern "wing" of the Park and around the "natural amphitheater," along with the bridle path, remained in place. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26, 27 July 1947)

The Batavia Symphony Orchestra, later the Genesee Symphony Orchestra, was organized in 1947 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1947; Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 151-152).

Also in 1947, the Genesee-Monroe Racing Association purchased the Fairgrounds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 February 1947). The Association then built a new grandstand, added a clubhouse and more stables, and renamed the track, "Batavia Downs," (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 161).

## 21: War, impact of war

In the last chapter, note was made of the first military draft in Batavia, an action which led to 25 young men receiving draft notices in November of 1940. By February of 1941, departing World War II draftees were regularly being given patriotic escorts to the train station in what became a standard practice in the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 February 1941). The next year, according to a report in *The Daily News*, Elizabeth Harper became the first woman from the City to go into the Army (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 July 1942). Before World War II was over, hundreds of local residents saw service in the armed forces.

Captured German and Italian soldiers were both interned in the Genesee County area. However, perhaps because of the large population of Batavians with Italian ancestry, the newspaper seemed to carry more information about Italian prisoners of war. In September of 1943, *The Daily News* reported that Italian soldiers were being housed at the County Fairgrounds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 September 1943). The next month, according to a newspaper account, the prisoners were put to work in the canning factory and were said to be happy to be working outside their stockade (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 October 1943). Then, in January, *The Daily News* reported that Italian prisoners of war had been sent to work at U.S. Gypsum (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1944). The only record of the German prisoners found in newspaper accounts was one from early 1946 stating that all such men had left the area, having worked on farms, and, for the most part, having been quartered at a prisoner of war camp in Attica (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1946).

Civilians were affected in many different ways in World War II. One example was periodic blackouts. During blackouts, residents were directed to turn off or shade lights in a manner

that would make it difficult for enemy aircraft to identify populated areas. The City's first blackout test was conducted on January 4<sup>th</sup> of 1942 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1942). The last blackout test was in mid-1944 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 June 1944).

Scrap drives were conducted during the war (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 July 1941). As mentioned in the last chapter, the W.C.T.U. fountain that had been at Main and Jackson streets may have disappeared in one such drive.

During World War II, many people cultivated what were termed "Victory Gardens," either in their own backyards or on land offered for that purpose by Common Council. Such gardens were intended to supplement the rationed supplies sold in grocery stores. There were Victory Garden shows at the Farm-Home Center in 1944 and 1945. They were sponsored by Melvin Merton, a 4-H Club leader. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] P. 349)

Rationing of both food and gasoline occurred. On May 1st of 1942, *The Daily News* reported that ration cards for gasoline had arrived and that rationing of fuel was about to start (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 May 1942). Shortly afterwards, sugar ration regulations were published (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 May 1942). Meat, butter, and cheese rationing began on March 29<sup>th</sup> of 1943. When some drivers appeared to be engaging in pure pleasure driving, the Ration Board warned that violators of the decree against such driving would lose some of their coupons (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1943). The positive side of gasoline rationing was a 50 to 75% reduction in traffic and a drop of one-third in the number of accidents (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 September 1942). Rationing generally ended in 1945 with, for example, rationing of gasoline ending in August (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1945) and rationing of meat and butter ending in November (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 November 1945).

During the war, rent controls were imposed in the County (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16, 18 September 1942). They weren't lifted until January of 1950 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 5 January 1950).

Civilian volunteers served as aircraft spotters who watched for enemy aircraft. The first spotters were organized in October of 1941 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1941). An observation post was set up at the baseball park on Denio Street near Bank (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 103). When the aircraft spotters ended their service in 1944, they had devoted a total of 25,734 hours to their duties (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 June 1944).

Local industry, as was true of industry across the country, turned much of its production to the war effort. For example, Doehler-Jarvis manufactured incendiary bombs, some of which were dropped on Tokyo (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 March 1945).

Near the end of World War II, the City received three shelters for hitch-hiking servicemen who were “thumbing” for rides (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 March 1945).

Germany surrendered on May 7th, 1945. Then, when word came on August 14, 1945 that Japan had also surrendered, a great spontaneous celebration broke out in Batavia. The streets filled with cheering residents, church bells rang, vehicle horns blew, and, in the words of one onlooker, it was like “New Year’s Eve times one-thousand.” An official celebration followed the next day when stores, manufacturing plants, banks, and City Hall closed down. Festivities began at 5:00 p.m. in MacArthur Park following a parade from City Hall. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1945) In many respects, the response was almost identical to that marking the end of World War I.

By the end of World War II, 170 men from Genesee County had lost their lives, nearly three times the figure from World War I (Deaths listed on the War Memorial at the corner of Bank Street and Washington Avenue, viewed 22 August 2014).

Peace for Americans lasted only briefly. In 1950, the United States was at war again, this time in Korea. The first group of men leaving for service in the Army departed Batavia in August of 1950. In contrast to World Wars I and II, no ceremony or parade marked their departure. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 September 1950) More information about this conflict, in which another 28 Genesee County residents lost their lives, will follow in the next chapter.

## 22: Families, persons of note

Throughout most of its history, Batavia has been a virtually all-White community. Ruth McEvoy pointed out that there were no Black families here before the 1940s with apparently just one exception. That exception was the family of Anderson Washington. A daughter, Catherine Washington Wallace, graduated from Batavia High School in 1930. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 254-255) Beginning in the 1940s, Batavia’s racial make-up began a gradual change.

23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit  
groups providing services

In 1945, Batavia had 26 Girl Scout troops with a total of 442 members (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 March 1945).

The Batavia Branch of the American Association of University Women received its charter in December of 1945 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 154).

The Batavia Lions Club was formed in the spring of 1946. Its chief service was to the blind and handicapped. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 158).

In July of 1948, the local Optimist Club was formed. Its chief aim was service to boys. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 159).

The Batavia Society of Artists organized in January of 1950 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 152). The St. Nicholas Club also started about 1950 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 162).

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

In previous decades, police concern about sexual conduct was focused on local prostitutes and houses of prostitution. In this decade, a new concern seemed to emerge—something called “sexual delinquency.” After an apparent assault in April of 1944, thirty young people were interrogated according to District Attorney Wallace J. Stakel. The individuals involved were males and females ranging in age from 13 to 28. Stakel said the “conditions...uncovered...remind one of stories appearing in national magazines about victory girls, cuddle bunnies and other young unfortunates.” Ten cases were sent to Children’s Court and five individuals were committed as wayward minors. Blame was placed on parents for failing to keep their young people off the streets at night and under close supervision. The “sexual delinquency” was said to be throughout the County and, contrary to rumors, not limited to any one particular school. The District Attorney called upon parents to act at once. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 April 1944)

The specific behaviors encompassed by the “sexual delinquency” in question were never spelled out in the newspaper accounts, but they presumably included sexual intercourse and/or other types of sexual activity between unmarried individuals, some of whom were minors. This interpretation is suggested by Stakel’s reference to being reminded of victory girls. According to the *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, a “victory girl” was generally a teenaged girl or young woman who exhibited her patriotism by offering companionship, and often sex, to servicemen during World War II (“Victory Girls,” *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, online, accessed 25 August 2014). In any event, Batavians evidently had a new worry, at least in the eyes of the District Attorney.

### 25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.



## The Sixteenth Decade

### Overview

This decade marks the beginning of changes that, over a period of 25 years, resulted in a major reshaping of the City's landscape. Two changes in the 1950s included the shifting of the main railroad lines to the southern boundary of the City and the construction of a new bridge across the Tonawanda at the southern end of Oak Street. In the process of making these alterations to the landscape, a large number of buildings were razed or moved to new locations.

This decade also saw a major change in the structure of the City's government. For the first time in its history, the community's government was administered by a non-partisan professional manager.

The end of this decade also became the high water mark in the growth of Batavia's population. In 1960, the Federal census reported 18,210 residents, a growth of 411 over the 10 years since the last census and a figure never again attained in the 55 years since ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed January 2014).

### 1: Infrastructure

The railroads that passed through and served Batavia had, for as long as they had existed, been very much a mixed blessing. The railroads opened the community to the outside world to an extent never before experienced. They also were a major factor, perhaps *the* major factor in bringing industry to Batavia. However, they also had a downside in that their passage through the central area of the Village and, later, that of the City led to innumerable accidents with ongoing injuries, loss of life, and property damage.

Efforts to minimize the risks included the stationing of guards at rail crossings, men who lowered gates when trains approached. Later, such as at the Lehigh crossing on South Jackson Street, automatic gates were employed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 August 1951). However, it was clear that the only really satisfactory solution to the problems posed by the tracks running through central Batavia was to move them to the perimeter of the City.

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Several decades went by between the time when realigning the tracks was first proposed and the work actually occurred. Although moving the tracks was discussed fairly early in the century, first the Great Depression of the 1930s and then World War II stymied the efforts. Finally, in 1951 work began, prompted in part by a horrendous accident that aroused the public as never before. It was a major undertaking that moved the mainline of the New York Central to a route around the southern rim of the City. A large number of buildings, including 31 dwellings, stood in the way of the new tracks. A significant number of the homes was moved to new locations such as one now standing at 4 Edwards Street and another currently located at 3 Lehigh Avenue. The old New York Central Depot, at Ellicott and Jackson streets, was torn down and replaced by a new structure on Lehigh Avenue. The last train to use the old roadbed, a freight, passed through the City on April 12, 1957. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] pp. 41-48) Eventually, the only tracks remaining in downtown Batavia were spurs that connected into the mainline southwest of Batavia.

The 1950s also saw significant alterations and additions to the streets and highways of Batavia and its immediate surroundings. Two of these changes involved bridges. When the New York Central railroad tracks were realigned, a bridge was constructed to carry South Jackson traffic over both the new NYC tracks and the existing Lehigh Railroad tracks. The southern connection to this new bridge intersected Creek Road. The structure was built by the State and then turned over to the City. Perhaps due to poor design, inferior materials, and/or inadequate maintenance, the life span of this bridge would turn out to be only 25 years. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1972)

A second new bridge was built across the Tonawanda Creek to serve as a southern extension of Oak Street. It would eventually replace the existing Walnut Street bridge. The construction of this bridge and the new street configurations for the southern approach to the City resulted in seven buildings being moved to new locations. Of these, the most dramatic relocation involved the large house now at 23 Roosevelt Avenue which originally was on South Main Street, opposite Franklin and had a garage in the rear that was accessed from Pearl Street. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] pp. 49-56) This bridge went into service at the end of 1953 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 October 1953). Unlike the South Jackson Street bridge, it has proven durable despite carrying most of the traffic entering the City from the south.

State-wide, the most significant highway construction of the era was the creation of the New York State Thruway (then known as the Thomas Dewey Thruway). Just as it had been Batavia's good fortune to have been on the mainline of the New York Central Railroad when it was constructed, Batavia was similarly fortunate to be on the new superhighway. The opening of



the Batavia exchange, at the northern edge of the City on Route 98, took place in August of 1954 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 August 1954).

Periodically over the years, discussion has occurred concerning a way to diminish truck traffic especially through downtown Batavia. In 1956, the Chamber of Commerce proposed a truck route using the New York Central roadbed that was then available due to realignment of the mainline. The proposal called for the route to tie in to Route 5 on East Main Street and Route 98 on Walnut Street. The railroad was reportedly willing to sell the property. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1956 and 31 October 1956). Nothing ever came of the proposal and downtown Batavia continues to see heavy truck traffic, some of it generated by trucks using the Batavia thruway exchange and travelling to or coming from Route 63 south.

New street construction continued to occur in residential areas of Batavia. One such example was Evergreen Drive in 1951 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1951). In 1954, the City bought land from James and Anna Reilly on the east side of North Spruce Street in order to extend North Street to the east of North Spruce (*The Daily*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1954).

From this time forward, the policy in regard to sidewalks and who was responsible for their construction and maintenance seemed to undergo periodic changes. In 1955, Common Council decreed that henceforth, sidewalks were to be installed and at the expense of the property owner. If a property owner failed to build walks, the City would do so and then bill the owner. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 October 1955) It would be only a decade before this policy would change.

By the mid-fifties, the existing sewage treatment plant, which was more than 30 years old, was declared outdated. In 1955, the Buffalo firm of Nussbaumer, Clarke, & Velzy was directed to prepare plans for a new facility. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 February 1955. However, many years would pass before a new sewage treatment plant would go into operation.

In 1947, voters had approved installing water softening equipment at the water filtration plant. Later, \$70,000 was borrowed for this purpose. The first soft water finally flowed into City mains in November of 1951. It reduced calcium and magnesium in the water by 50 to 60 percent. Batavia became the first city in New York State to soften its water and also the first to employ what was called a "cold lime process." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 October 1952) This process involved adding lime water to the untreated water ("Lime water," *Wikipedia.com*, online, accessed 3 December 2014).

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In this decade, the City dump was moved from its original location on the east side of Cedar Street, a move apparently prompted by the relocation of the mainline of the New York Central Railroad. The new location was slightly north of the former site and to the north of the new New York Central railroad bridge. Authorities noted that the dump was marked by a sign, presumably to help residents more easily identify the new location. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 January 1958)

Also in 1958, a privately operated landfill for disposing of garbage made its debut. The facility, owned by Salvatore Campobello, Jr., the city's garbage collector, was located on Wortendyke Road. Previously, Campobello took garbage to his farm on South Main Street Road where it was cooked and then fed to pigs. The landfill, approved by the Genesee County Health Department, became necessary when Campobello decided to no longer keep pigs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 March 1958)

### 2: Transportation

In the mid-fifties, Batavians, for the first time, were required to have safety inspections made of their motor vehicles. Under a new State law, once a year owners were required to take their vehicles to authorized repair shops. (*The Daily News*, 14 November 1956) Such inspections included the tires and brake, lighting, and steering systems.

In 1959, the Lehigh Railroad ended passenger service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 May 1959).

### 3: Housing

At the end of World War II, the terrific demand for housing as servicemen were discharged, married, and started families led to the erection of temporary housing in many communities. In Batavia, as indicated in the last chapter, such veterans housing was situated off State Street on part of the current MacArthur Park adjacent to the Stadium. Early in 1953, Governor Thomas Dewey signed legislation that ended the use of these facilities and the 22 remaining families were told to vacate by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Provisions were made to remove the buildings and restore the grounds. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 April 1953)

After World War II, "house trailers" began to grow in popularity. The increasing number of such homes, later termed "mobile homes" or "manufactured homes," led communities to enact ordinances specifically addressing their use. In 1954, Batavia drafted an ordinance that allowed "house trailers" only in industrial zones. The ordinance also specified a minimum lot size of

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2,000 sq. ft. and a requirement that sewer and water connections meet State health law. Existing non-conforming homes were "grandfathered" in. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 March 1954) This action effectively eliminated this type of home in the future development of Batavia's housing stock.

Construction of conventional housing during this decade reached near record levels. For example, in 1953, there were 90 new homes, second only to 1950 when 100 were built. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 December 1953) The Farwell Drive subdivision became one of the City's newest subdivisions (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 December 1953). Two years later, the Pickthorn Drive subdivision was up for approval (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 April 1955). In 1958, Harold Harrower and Sanford Fisher were in the process of erecting 16 homes south of East Avenue towards the eastern end of the street, an area referred to as "Clinton Gardens" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 September 1958). Then, in 1960, Harrower and Fisher indicated plans to build another 68 homes north of East Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1960). This expanded area of development was also referred to as "Clinton Gardens."

For those individuals who could not afford housing, the situation became more difficult in 1951 when the Salvation Army announced that it was no longer offering free lodging (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 October 1951). However, for transients who could pay for a place to stay, the options became more numerous when, in 1953, the Triangle Motel on East Main Street became Batavia's first motel (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 69). The Triangle Motel was on the north side of East Main Street and east of Clinton Street. Its triangular shape appears to have been a product of nearby railroad tracks that crossed East Main Street at less than a 90-degree angle.

### 4: Energy sources

By the 1950s, the American dream included owning at least one automobile, often two. With the growing number of vehicles came a growing demand for gasoline and places to purchase fuel. In 1952, *The Daily News* reported that there were 29 gasoline stations within City limits (*The Daily News*, 29 November 1952). That is more than four times the number of stations existing today. However, it should be noted that modern gasoline stations tend to have more pumps than was once the case, so it's not clear how the number of pumps existing today compares to the number in the 1950s.

### 5: Communication

During the first few years, television sets were only capable of black and white images. Color reception didn't appear until about 1950. The first color television set purchased by a Batavian was owned by Edward Walker who bought it from Miner's store in 1954 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 August 1954).

According to *The Daily News*, long distance dialing, called "thruway dialing," began in 1954. However, it does not appear to have been long distance dialing as we would understand it. As it was described in the newspaper, on all outgoing long distance telephone calls through a Batavia operator, the person calling would hear "beep beep." That signal meant that "the distant office was ready to receive an order" from the Batavia operator. Faster and better service was expected to result from the new system. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1954) From this description, it appears that this "new system" was better and faster in that it allowed the Batavia operator to directly dial the local call once she (or he) was connected to the distant location rather than waiting for a second operator to perform this action. The time when a caller could dial a long distance number her- or himself without going through any operator had not yet arrived.

In 1956, a family on Ross Street received the 10,000<sup>th</sup> telephone to be installed in Batavia. The couple, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Henry, became the recipients of an ivory handset with a suitable gold plaque to mark the occasion. Dignitaries, including the Mayor, were present. Henry was an engineer for Sylvania who had recently moved from Buffalo. The number of telephones in local service had increased from 5,000 to 10,000 in just 12 years. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 November 1956)

Also in 1956, outdoor telephone pay booths were erected. One was on the City Hall lawn. Others were placed in each of the downtown parking lots. New York Telephone installed the booths at no cost to the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 July 1956)

### 6: County, village, city boundaries

In 1952, the City annexed a few acres of the Grandview Terrace subdivision (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 June 1952). It also appears that ca. 1959 the City annexed the property on State Street where a new high school was about to be built. (See the later section titled, "Education".)

## 7: Government, governing structure

The most sweeping change in Batavia's governing structure occurred in 1958 with the adoption of a City Manager form of government. The events leading up to this action began in September of 1956 when a public referendum led to the creation of a Commission to draft a new City charter. In the course of the referendum vote, nine Commissioners were selected among 15 nominees. (Larry Barnes, *The 1957 adoption of the city manager form of government: a brief overview* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2008] p. 2)

When the Charter Commission presented its proposal to the public at a hearing in April of 1957, the proposed changes did not consist of the minor revisions expected by many people, but instead a whole new form of government. Among other changes, it proposed to replace the Mayor with an appointed City Manager, to have nine City Council members rather than six, with three elected at large, and to have a City Council President elected by the Council from among its at-large members. (Larry Barnes, *The 1957 adoption of the city manager form of government: a brief overview* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2008, pp. 2-3)

The proposed charter generated major debate with all nine of the Commissioners supporting it, but the Mayor, Superintendent of Water and Sewage, and Fifth Ward Councilman leading the opposition. When the charter went before the public in June of 1957, it passed by a vote of 1,935 to 1,545. However, there was a clear division between the north and south sides of the community. The charter passed by wide margins in Wards 1, 2 and 3, all north of Main Street, but lost by wide margins in Wards 4, 5, and 6, all south of Main Street. In Ward 5, it went down by a 4 to 1 margin. The new charter went into effect on January 1, 1958. (Larry Barnes, *The 1957 adoption of the city manager form of government: a brief overview* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2008] pp. 3-4)

It was also in the 1950s that the original Village Charter was rescued from the City dump. In the late 50s, the City Hall cupola was leaking. Old records and ledgers, among other things, were stored in the area getting wet. Evidently, somebody ordered that it all be taken to the dump on Cedar Street. When Georgia Foote, the City Historian at the time, discovered what was happening, she went to the dump and salvaged what she could including the original 1823 charter and other records from the 1820s. She took them home and they wound up in her attic where they were discovered after her death by a grandson, Glen Foote. Fortunately, this material was eventually turned over to City Historian Mary McCulley. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 1989) The charter and other records are now in the vault at City Hall.

In 1956, a proposed City sales tax was voted down by referendum. The nay vote exceeded the yea vote by a 3 to 1 margin. Following this defeat of a City sales tax, a County-wide sales tax was advocated. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 October 1956)

In 1956, an addition on the south side of what is now County Building #1 was completed at a cost of \$203,219.41 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 June 1957).

### 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

Literature that might corrupt young people was a significant concern among many people in the 1950s. In April of 1951, *The Daily News* reported that comic books were the target of a police drive along with other publications containing "suggestive" literature and pictures. The Chief ordered officers to make inspections of establishments selling such items, seize the merchandise, and report the names and addresses of the proprietors. He cited a City ordinance passed January 17, 1949 as providing authority for these actions. Persons convicted under the ordinance faced a \$50 fine and/or 30 days in jail. The publications of the sort in question were blamed for burglaries in Batavia committed by Rochester youth. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 April 1951)

After four months had passed, the Chief had reviewed over 100 comic books and other publications and found 36 to be objectionable. A list of the latter was given to dealers and they were informed that those who didn't remove the merchandise would be prosecuted. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 August 1951)

Five years later, the matter of objectionable literature was still an issue. In January of 1956, the Mayor asked police to pick up obscene magazines. It was reported that four were found. The Mayor claimed to be acting under a new State law intended to protect juvenile readers. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 January 1956)

Beginning in the 1940s, curfew regulations were enacted that were intended to keep individuals under the age of 16 off the streets and out of parks after 10 p.m. However, from all appearances, curfew regulations were enforced on a very irregular basis characterized by periodic "crackdowns." One such crackdown occurred in 1952. All persons under 16 were ordered off the streets and out of public places by 10 p.m. unless with parents, guardians, or authorized persons over 21. Violators were taken to the police station and parents called to come get their children. The penalties included a fine up to \$35 and/or 10 days in jail. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 April 1952 and 26 April 1952)

Another curfew crackdown was announced in March of 1956. The Police Chief indicated that no exception would be made for school events. Parents would have to drive to schools to pick up their children. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 March 1956) A year later in December of 1957, yet another crackdown occurred (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 December 1957).

One of the motivating factors behind curfews was vandalism occurring in City parks. For example, in 1954, the Mayor called for drastic action because the damage was so major (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 April 1954). Five years later, *The Daily News* was reporting that park vandalism was, again, extensive with broken lights, plugged drains, and boards removed from fences (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 May 1959).

Another motivating factor relating to curfews was complaints about "gangs" of young men congregating on Main Street. Among other things, they reportedly harassed passing women by making objectionable remarks. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 October 1954)

In 1958, Batavia appointed its first Youth Officer, C. Lewis Snell (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1958). Snell's responsibilities and those of his successors was to focus on crime by juveniles, working not only to pursue violators, but to prevent criminal behavior from occurring in the first place.

Speeding on City streets also drew considerable attention in this decade. In March of 1953, *The Daily News* reported that a three-man motorcycle squad was out enforcing speed limits (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 March 1953). In 1954, a special camera was being used to catch speeders. Leased from a Rochester company, the camera took two pictures in succession, allowing for mathematical calculation of a motorist's speed. After the film was developed, offenders were sent summons. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 August 1954, 3 August 1954, and 4 August 1954)

Perhaps the focus on enforcing speed limits was a product of changing limits. In 1953, the speed limit on arterial streets was 25 m.p.h. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 December 1953). In 1955, the City raised the speed limit on Main Street to 30 m.p.h. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 22 March 1955 and 23 March 1955). Then, a year later in 1956, the City set a 20 m.p.h. limit on all but State-maintained streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1956).

Pedestrians were also subjected to law enforcement via new regulations. In 1953, Batavia enacted a ban on "jay walking," i.e., crossing streets other than at intersections. Violators were subject to a \$25 fine and/or 25 days in jail. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 August 1953).

Just as the Salvation Army ceased providing free lodging in the early 1950s, free lodging also ended at the police station. Lodging had been provided so that transients would not be roaming at large. Typically a token vagrancy charge was made followed by a suspended sentence upon release in the morning. Beginning in 1951, no transient quarters were any longer available because the lodging space had been converted into a police locker room and the State decreed that transient lodgers and persons charged with crimes could not be housed in the same space. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 October 1951)

From all indications, transients would not have wanted to be housed in the jail cells, anyway. A State inspector, in a 1956 report, declared the Batavia "lock-up" to be a "disaster." It was said to violate all the rules. Among other things, the toilet facilities were useable in only two of the six cells. The City was threatened with court action. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 August 1956)

This decade was also the first time that New York State mandated training for new police officers. Officers appointed after July 1, 1960 were required to take 80 hours of training. Furthermore, they had to pass a final exam in order to be given a permanent position. This new provision did not apply to officers already employed. The mandate appears to have been the first in the Country. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 February 1960)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

According to an article in the November 29, 1952 issue of *The Daily News*, Batavia began the decade with 232 retail stores, 22 of which sold food (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1952).

Restroom facilities that had been provided for downtown shoppers had apparently ceased to exist by the 1950s. Consequently, Dwight Toal, a plumbing merchant with a shop on Park Place, announced in the summer of 1953 that he would erect a facility. It was to be attached to his building and provide two toilets each for men and women. A 7 x 16 ft. lounge was to be provided for children. A sign over the door was to read, "Public Restrooms Courtesy of Dwight Toal." Toal said he had approached the Merchants Council, Chamber of Commerce, and a City Council member, but had been unsuccessful in persuading them to build a restroom and so decided to do it on his own. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 July 1953)

Eastown Plaza, the first shopping plaza in the Batavia area, was built on the north side of East Main Street in 1955. It was erected by Roxy Gian. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 46) Residential housing had been



located in this area and at least two of the houses were moved to new sites, one on Clinton Street and the other on East Avenue (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's "mobile homes"* [Batavia, N.Y., self-published, 2009] pp. 38-39). Among the stores in the new plaza was Loblaw Market, part of a Canadian-owned chain of groceries (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p.46).

Prior to this era, when shoppers went to a merchant to make a purchase, they typically expressed their need to the sales clerk or owner; and the latter then located the items requested and brought them to the customer. This situation changed in the 1950s with the introduction of "self service." Genesee Hardware was reportedly the first hardware to provide self-service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 May 1956) and Lane Drugs the first drug store to offer self-service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 June 1956).

### 10: Factories/industries

In 1953, when local leaders learned that the Sylvania Electric Products Corporation was interested in locating in Batavia, the Chamber of Commerce initiated a fund-raising drive for the \$300,000 needed to purchase land at the desired location on Ellicott Street. The success of this effort led to a ground-breaking in June of 1953. The resulting building was billed as the largest Sylvania plant under one roof and the most modern. By the Spring of 1954, there were 600 employees and three production lines turning out television sets. The plant was enlarged in 1956. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 191-192) However, as subsequent chapters will reveal, Sylvania's presence in Batavia was short-lived.

The O-At-Ka Milk Products company was established in 1956 by a group of milk producers. Then, in 1957, ground was broken for a processing plant located on the northeast corner of Ellicott and Cedar streets. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 193-194) Unlike the Sylvania plants across the intersection, it would prove to be a permanent addition to the local economy.

In 1954, the Massey-Harris Company here in Batavia merged with the Harvey-Ferguson Company from out-of-state, to become the Massey-Ferguson Company. At about the same time, a report by the Argus Investments Company warned that the newly merged business was in financial trouble and the Batavia plant was one of the chief losers. In 1957, rumors that the plant might close were confirmed. On June 5, 1958, the Massey-Harris whistle, by which local people had set their clocks for over 70 years, blew for the last time. By September, the factory

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was empty and the City was looking for a new tenant. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 182)

In 1959, Charles Mancuso and Son bought the former Massey-Ferguson plant and set up the Batavia Industrial Center (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 182-183). The Center would come to serve as a highly successful "incubator" for start-up businesses.

### 11: Banking/financial services

According to Ruth M. McEvoy, the Liberty National Bank and Trust Company located on the north side of Main Street was the first bank in Batavia with a drive-up window (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993], p. 66). This appears to have been in the 1950s.

The Educational Employees Federal Credit Union was formed in this decade. The original members were a group of teachers who each joined by making a minimum deposit of \$5.00. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 May 1987)

### 12: Education

In 1951, Severne Hall was opened at the State School for the Blind. It was on the site of the original main building and stood between Park Lewis Hall and Hamilton Hall. It included an auditorium, practice rooms, dining rooms and kitchens, business offices, and classrooms. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 May 1951)

Several of Batavia's public schools were closed in this decade. The Pringle Avenue School closed in 1953 and the site became a playground (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1953). The East School on East Main Street and the Washington School on Washington Avenue closed in 1956 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 September 1955). The Washington School building was later chosen to be used for the school district's offices (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 August 1960).

The former Union School building on School Street was razed in 1957 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 June 1957).

A new elementary school, named after one of Batavia's famous educators, John Kennedy, was opened on Vine Street in 1956 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 September 1956).

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Meanwhile, a search went on for a site for a new high school to replace the one on Ross Street. One proposal was to use the State park across from the State School for the Blind (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1958). However, in 1959, a decision was made to purchase the Krantz property on State Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 August 1959).

The year 1960 marked the Batavia School District's 24<sup>th</sup> year of operating an adult education program. Nearly 300 students were enrolled that year. Beginning typing was the most popular course. Bookkeeping, driver education, and conversational Spanish were also high in popularity. Students in the program registered at the High School. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 September 1960).

There were many changes and/or additions among the parochial schools, as well. Notre Dame High School on Union Street opened September 30, 1952 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 August 1952). St. Mary's School, an elementary school, opened in the Notre Dame building in 1954 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 September 1954). Sacred Heart School, again an elementary school, moved into a new south-side building on Sumner Street in 1955 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 February 1955). Finally, St. Joseph's School on Summit Street moved into a new building in 1958 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 November 1958).

During this era, there was a great fear of Communism. Many people were especially concerned about the possibility of Communist agents in the government, schools, and elsewhere. In 1949, the "Feinberg law," passed by the New York State legislature in an effort to combat alleged subversive elements in the State's school systems, set the stage for loyalty oaths among school employees here in Batavia. In 1952, *The Daily News* reported that teachers and all other District employees would be required to sign a statement saying that he or she did not belong to an organization advocating the violent overthrow of the United States Government. Individuals who did not comply were threatened with dismissal. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1952)

### 13: Religion

Batavia was originally a predominantly Protestant community. However, by the late 1950s, that had changed dramatically. In January of 1959, *The Daily News* reported that there were 10,285 Catholics in Batavia, 2,548 more than "any other religion" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 January 1959).

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Area Jehovah Witnesses first met in 1940. Then, in 1951, they purchased a building on North Lyon Street which, in turn, was named, "Kingdom Hall." (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 125)

As of 1960, a Jewish synagogue existed at 232 Liberty Street. Then, in 1960, that building was sold and the society worshipping there merged with a Jewish society owning a temple at 124 Bank Street. The merged group became Temple Emanu El. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 121 and *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1960)

Beginning in the mid-50s, if not earlier, a nativity scene constructed by the Junior Chamber of Commerce was displayed on the City Hall lawn during the Christmas season (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1954 and 16 December 1954). However, there were no recorded objections raised regarding this implied sanction of Christianity by the City Government. It would be more than 30 years before the issue was publicly recognized and appropriately addressed.

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In 1959, steps were taken to change the Richmond Memorial Library from a school library to a public library so it could become a member of the Nioga Library System (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 98. Then, in March of 1960, the Richmond Library signed a contract with the Nioga system (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 March 1960). Among other features, membership in the system provided access to the collections of other member libraries by patrons of the Batavia facility.

### 15: Cemeteries

There is no Jewish cemetery as such in Batavia. However, in 1956, a Jewish burial ground was dedicated in the Elmwood Cemetery (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 June 1956).

### 16: Firefighting

There appear to have been no significant developments in this decade.

### 17: Healthcare

In 1951, the construction of the new Genesee Memorial Hospital was completed. A bronze tablet identifying the building as a war memorial was placed at the front entrance. When the building opened for inspection, somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 visitors toured the facility. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 78)

Also in 1951, the new sections of St. Jerome Hospital were completed. They included a main section plus a north wing to balance the south wing constructed much earlier. In December, the structure was dedicated and opened for inspection. Reportedly, 5,000 visitors inspected the premises. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 79)

In 1954, the Genesee County Health Department opened for business (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1953) This led to the closing of the City Board of Health in 1955 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 May 1955)

The generally swampy terrain on which Batavia was built has long been conducive to mosquitoes. Allegedly, the Seneca Indians referred to early Batavia as "Mosquito Town." In 1952 and 1953, like many other communities, Batavia employed a spray in an effort to control the problem (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 May 1952 and 15 April 1953). The spray was typically delivered by trucks driving up and down City streets and created a temporary fog of insecticide.

Batavia's schools were among the first in the State to give a vaccine to immunize large numbers of children against polio (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 244). Shots were first given in April of 1955 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1955).

In 1955, St. Luke's Manor, a facility for the chronically ill owned by Catholic Charities of Buffalo, opened on Wiard Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1955).

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

The Batavia Youth Bureau was established by a resolution of the Batavia City Council on July 14, 1958. The purposes and duties of the Youth Bureau included a) making studies and surveys of youth services and needs, b) promoting better understanding of youth needs and services, c)

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promoting the expansion of youth services where needed and which were not now available, d) carrying out services and programs necessary to best serve the youth of the community, and e) coordinating efforts of all agencies and personnel handling youth services. (Larry Barnes, *A brief history of the Batavia Youth Bureau with emphasis on the early years* [Batavia, N.Y.: Self-published, 2008] pp. 1-2)

### 19: Disasters

Throughout the history of the community, flooding from the Tonawanda Creek has been a recurring event. In 1954, work was undertaken to clear the creek below the dam so that water could flow more quickly and be less likely to back up to the point of overflowing the banks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 November 1954 and 1 December 1954).

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

As the Sylvania Electric Products Corporation was about to come to Batavia, the Agricultural Fair Association was faced with the loss of its site on Ellicott Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 1953). It eventually relocated to East Main Street Road.

In 1958, *The Daily News* reported on plans for a roller skating rink in the former Lafayette Theater on Jackson Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1958). Later the same year, ice skating rinks were prepared at the corner of Otis and James streets, in Kibbe Park, and in Austin Park (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 1958).

For years, one of the major social attractions was the annual police ball. The 35<sup>th</sup> such ball was held in November of 1958. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 November 1958)

### 21: War, impact of war

During the early 1950s, the United States was engaged in war on the Korean peninsula. The war began when North Korea invaded South Korea and the United Nations went to the aid of the South Koreans. Later, China became directly involved in the conflict when it sent troops to reinforce the North Koreans. The military action ended with a truce declared in 1952. The resulting boundaries between North and South Korea at the time of the truce were pretty much the same as they had been when the fighting began. Those boundaries and an uneasy truce continue today. Twenty-eight Genesee County residents lost their lives in Korea (a figure based on the names listed on the war memorial at the corner of Bank and Washington streets).

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Although a "hot war" ended when fighting ceased in Korea, the United States was by then engaged in what was termed a "Cold War." The Cold War, pitting the United States and its allies against the Soviet Union and its supporters, lasted until the 1990s. Throughout the Cold War, the two sides engaged in competing military buildups that included an accumulation of nuclear weapons and the hardware for delivering them to both civilian and military targets. As a result, the development of means for detecting an enemy's aircraft or rockets after launch was a high priority. Also of high priority was developing a means for minimizing death and destruction from possible nuclear attacks.

Beginning in 1952, local air raid posts were established as part of such posts nation-wide. The posts were staffed 24 hours a day with observers who were trained to identify and report enemy aircraft. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 April 1952) Five years later, in November of 1957, the posts ceased to be manned (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 November 1957) The development of a radar "shield" and intercontinental ballistic missiles made air raid posts obsolete.

Fallout shelters were another feature of the Cold War during the earlier years. In an effort to protect civilians from radioactive fallout from nuclear explosions, Americans were urged to build personal fallout shelters at their homes. In the summer of 1960, a model shelter was on display at the County Fair. Free pamphlets detailed the construction. The shelter measured 11 x 9 x 7 ft. tall. It had provisions for a family of six including sleeping bunks, blankets, bedding, a table, chairs, a battery operated radio, lanterns, water containers, and simulated food stocks. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 August 1960)

A unit of the National Guard had been organized in Batavia in 1949. As there was no armory in Batavia, during the 1950s the unit drilled in the gymnasium at the State School for the Blind or at St. Anthony's Community Center. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 169)

Army Reserves were organized in Batavia about 1957 to give local reservists a "home base." The men had been travelling weekly to Rochester. The Batavia Reservists initially drilled in the warehouse of R. A. Haitz Roofing Co. on the north side of Ellicott Street. Then, in May of 1960, a contract was let for the construction of Reserve facilities at the southwest corner of Oak Street and Park Road. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 170)

### 22: Families, persons of note

Batavia's first City Manager was C. Richard Foote. He was appointed to the position in December of 1957. He was City Manager here until 1962 when he resigned to take a similar post in Wheaton, Illinois. As nearly as the author can determine, it does not appear that he was related to Georgia Foote, Batavia's City Historian of that time period.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

The Quota Club, a women's service club, received its charter in April of 1953. Its chief service aim was to serve the deaf. The Town and Country Garden Club started in January of 1958. Members planted flowers around the city. The Zonta Club of Batavia—Genesee County received its charter in May of 1958. Its goal was the advancement of understanding, good-will, and peace through fellowship among executive women in businesses and the professions. The Sertoma Club received its charter in December of 1960. It supported student sports, Olympics for the elderly, and special Olympics for the handicapped. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 148, 157-159)

The local Optimist Club, which had started in July of 1948, disbanded in 1960. Its chief aim had been service to boys. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 159)

In 1959, the Community Chest was renamed "United Fund" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 March 1959).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There do not appear to have been any significant changes in this decade. In the next decade, the oral contraceptive would become available and the beginning of what was termed, "The Sexual Revolution" would occur, but in the 1950s, personal sexual conduct seems to have remained much as it had been a decade earlier in the 1940s.

### 25: Urban renewal

Major urban renewal was about to strike Batavia, but it was still a few years away.



## The Seventeenth Decade

### Overview

This decade marks the beginning of Urban Renewal in Batavia, arguably the single most important event shaping the appearance of the community. Before the Urban Renewal changes ran their course, the areas north and south of Main Street and the area south of Ellicott Street and West Main Street between Oak and Evans streets were all radically altered.

This decade also marks the beginning of an on-going loss of population. In 1970, the number of residents had fallen to 17,338 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), a decrease of 872 since 1960.

### 1: Infrastructure

Parking along Main Street has undergone a number of changes over the years. Sometimes the configuration of the parking spaces (diagonal versus parallel) and other times the availability of spaces have both been altered. In 1968, parking was banned altogether on both sides of the street from Summit Street to Jefferson Avenue, Monday through Saturday, from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 August 1968).

In the early 1960s, four new streets were approved by the Planning Board for the area north of East Avenue and east of North Spruce Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 December 1962).

Sidewalks continued to be an issue in this decade. City Council again decreed that it could install sidewalks if homeowners would not. However, the City leaders also indicated that this policy did not necessarily mean that all streets were to have sidewalks. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 February 1964) In this regard, they may have been responding to changing public attitudes toward the necessity of sidewalks as residents came to rely with increasing frequency on automobiles for getting about. Some might say that a shift from walking to driving was being reflected at that time in the newly popular design of houses wherein garages were attached to the front of the structures rather than being free-standing at the rear.

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Several developments took place this decade in regard to Batavia's water supply. As in other communities, the question of whether to provide fluoridation of the water was a controversial issue. The proponents argued that there would be a clear benefit in terms of preventing dental decay among children in particular. Opponents raised objections relating to perceived health risks. The proponents in Batavia won out when Common Council gave its approval to fluoridation in March of 1963 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 March 1963). Nine months later, fluoride treatment of Batavia's water went into effect (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 December 1963).

The adequacy of Batavia's water supply was periodically called into question when drought conditions led to a reduced flow of water in the Tonawanda Creek. This issue was finally addressed in this decade by drilling wells and building a pumping station on Cedar Street in order to tap into an underground supply (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 1964). Batavians subsequently consumed water that was derived from both the creek and the aquifer.

In 1967, the city was given Federal land near the Veterans Administration Hospital to erect a second water storage tank. (This land was a portion of the area originally donated by the City to the Federal Government for the construction of the hospital.) The planned tank had a capacity of 1-1/2 million gallons, thereby doubling the City's storage supply. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 June 1967) In May of 1968, the completed tank was filled and began supplying water to Batavians (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 May 1968).

This decade also saw a new sewage treatment plant go on line. The original treatment plant, 40-plus years old, located where Lambert Park is now situated on Hillcrest Avenue, had become obsolete. The City chose, for a new site, land east of River Street and north of South Main Street along the south bank of the creek. Bonds in the amount of \$1,129,000 were issued by the City to pay for the plant and to rebuild most of the sewer lines in the City. This was supplemented by a grant of \$450,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency. In November of 1965, sewage began to flow to the new facility. However, barely more than a year later in January of 1967, engineers discovered that industrial wastes were overloading the new plant and that the new shopping plaza on West Main Street was providing a further burden on the facility. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 9) Consequently, Batavia would soon be in the business of planning for yet another new sewage treatment plant.

In September of 1961, the City purchased 17 acres on the west side of Cedar Street for a landfill. The existing dump on the east side of the street was almost full and had only two to three months capacity left. The new location was Batavia's first sanitary landfill (*The Daily*

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*News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 September 1961). As such, it ended open dumping (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 July 1961). Then, six years later in 1967, the City announced plans to close the Cedar Street site and transfer dumping to a Kelsey Road landfill facility (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 September 1967). Meanwhile, also in 1967, a four-year contract was awarded to the Z-B Processing Corporation for garbage and trash pickup. Homeowners were able to combine garbage and trash in the same receptacle, a relatively new practice, using containers that had to be within 15 ft. of the rear of their homes. The refuse was then trucked to the landfill. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1967)

### 2: Transportation

The 1960s saw railroad passenger service fade away. In 1962, the New York Central Railroad closed its ticket office in Batavia and passengers had to purchase their tickets after boarding the train (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 July 1962). From this point on, no train stopped unless signaled to do so (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 21). In 1965, the railroad closed the waiting room at the Batavia depot (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 March 1965). By 1968, it appears that the only passenger train that Batavians could board was a single west-bound train scheduled to arrive in Batavia around 3:25 p.m. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 April 1968). It's not clear how one was supposed to return to the city.

### 3: Housing

Housing was still being built despite a loss of population. For example, 32 house permits were issued in 1962 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 March 1963) and there were 31 new homes built in 1965 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 January 1966). Presumably all of these structures were of high quality. However, according to census takers, many of the older homes were inferior in one respect or another. According to a report in a 1963 issue of *The Daily News*, 17% of the city's dwellings were "substandard" and failed to meet normal building code requirements (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1963).

The first real apartment houses in Batavia were built in this decade. In 1961 and 1962, James Pero erected Park View Apartments on Pearl Street. In 1962, John Martino constructed five buildings with a total of 144 units on East Main Street. Originally named "Heritage Gardens," they were later renamed "Batavia Gardens." In 1966, the Veiden Corporation built apartments at 269 State Street which totaled 24 units among six buildings. In 1968, the Tech-Chem Company erected seven buildings with a total on 77 apartments on the east side of North Spruce Street. In 1968 and 1969, Mark Twain Builders constructed apartment buildings at 541

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East Main Street and on North Spruce Street at Margaret Place. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 129-130)

Low-income housing also first appeared in Batavia during this decade. In 1970, two-story town houses were built on South Main Street near River, on Edward Street, and on MacArthur Drive off State Street. Each apartment had both a first and second floor. Each location housed between 12 and 20 families. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 130 and *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 August 1970 and 1 September 1970)

Batavia's largest low-income housing venture began in 1969 when the Council of Churches, with support from the City, proposed to apply for Federal building funds. As the venture moved ahead, the Council reorganized as a development company and hired a Buffalo firm to design a 200 unit complex south of Pearl Street and east of River Street. Construction by a Williamsville firm began in 1970. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 130) Subsequent problems that developed over the next two years and slowed construction will be discussed in the next chapter.

Housing for transients remained an issue in this decade. Although back in 1951, the Salvation Army had announced that it was no longer providing free housing to transients (see the previous chapter), in the early 1960s it was apparently involved again and had been for several years. For example, In March of 1962, representatives stated that the Salvation Army had paid, in the previous month alone, the cost of 21 overnight "guests" at a rooming house on Ellicott Street where transients were generally assigned. At this time, the Salvation Army started to again question its responsibility for transients and suggested that Genesee County should assume at least some of the costs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 March 1962)

The rooming house mentioned above was evidently called "Duffy's" and was located at 50 Ellicott Street. In 1964, Duffy's closed and the City appears to have offered the police station building on School Street to the Salvation Army. The notion was that the building could serve as a center for transients under the auspices of the Salvation Army. The offer was rejected. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 April 1964)

For preservationists, especially, this decade was a particularly sad one. Early in 1964, St. Jerome Hospital razed the Cary mansion and replaced it with a new nursing school building (Larry Barnes, *The Cary Family of Batavia*- [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] p. 20). In June of 1970, the former Richmond mansion on East Main Street, a building that had housed the Children's Home for many years, was razed by the Board of Education, its current owner (*The*

*Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 June 1970). In addition to these structures, buildings in the Urban Renewal area, some of architectural significance, began to go down.

### 4: Energy sources

In 1963, City Council complained that there were too many gasoline stations on West Main Street. Council members termed the street, "gasoline alley." (*The Daily News*, 15 January 1963) It seems unlikely that they would be complaining, today, since there are only two stations at the time this book is being written.

Three years later, in 1966, *The Daily News* reported that Niagara Mohawk was removing 1,300 incandescent lamps in street lights and replacing them with mercury vapor lamps. The latter used less electricity. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1966)

### 5: Communication

In 1963, across the United States, users of the U.S. Mail needed to add another item to the addresses used for both sending and receiving mail: a zip code. Batavia's zip code was (and is) 14020. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 June 1963)

Two years later, in 1965, touchtone phones began to appear in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 1965). Despite the fact that phones no longer had rotary dials, users continued to say that they were "dialing a number" when making a call. That idiomatic expression still continues in 2015 and shows no sign of disappearing any time soon.

### 6: County, village, city boundaries

When, in this decade, the City purchased land for creation of an industrial park off Pearl Street, it appears that some of the land had previously been in the Town of Batavia. Maps of the City from this point forward show a different boundary in the southwest quadrant of the community. (See the section titled, "Factories/industries.")

### 7: Government, governing structure

This decade saw the beginning of sales taxes. In November of 1962, the City Council approved a 1% sales tax on all sales except groceries (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 November 1962). In 1964, the City sales tax was raised to 2% (*The Daily News*, Batavia, 16

December 1964). In June of the next year, the County Board of Supervisors approved enactment of a County sales tax (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 June 1965) and, in December, established a rate of 4% on all items except groceries. Thus, for City residents, the sales taxes on purchases became 6%. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 December 1965) The revenue from the County tax was dispersed among the County, City, and townships according to a formula that was periodically modified (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 6).

### 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

Part way through this decade, the curfew restrictions that had been adopted in 1944, but enforced only periodically, were again removed from the shelf and dusted off. In June of 1963, another "crackdown" was announced following incidences of park vandalism and the beating of a junior high student after a school dance. According to police, officers saw no one under 16 on the street after 10 p.m. the first night of this latest enforcement. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 June 1963)

The year 1962 saw the first major revision of the State court system in over 100 years. Each Childrens Court was replaced by a Family Court. The latter was given jurisdiction over individuals up to the age of 16 in addition to jurisdiction over all aspects of family life including crimes by one family member against another. Exceptions were limited to divorce, separation, and annulments which continued to be under the jurisdiction of State Supreme Courts. (*The Daily News*, 25 April 1962)

This decade saw the Police Department move to new quarters. An addition was built onto the rear of City Hall in 1963 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1963) and in January of 1964, the Police Department moved to 10 West Main Street from its previous location on School Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 January 1964). The School Street structure was demolished in 1965 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 June 1965).

The new police headquarters had a new "lockup" with four cells (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1964). It wasn't very long, however, before State inspectors found fault with the jail, a situation that has occurred repeatedly in Batavia over the years. The State Commission of Corrections recommended changing the location of the cells, noting that there was inadequate ventilation, a problem with odor, and complaints that obscene language by the inmates was audible to nearby staff and the public. Furthermore, it was discovered that the construction had not been reviewed and approved by the State before the jail was built six years earlier. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 May 1969 and 10 June 1970)

In the previous decade, police had used a motorcycle squad and a special camera in an effort to apprehend speeders. Beginning in 1964, police began using radar (*The Daily News*, 29 April 1964).

Under New York State law, public employees were first able to unionize and negotiate terms of employment beginning in the late 1960s. In November of 1967, the officers of the Batavia Police Department voted to join the AFL/CIO (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 November 1967).

By 1970, the police force in Batavia had grown to 37 officers (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 April 1970).

During this decade, citizens across the nation began to be able to summon emergency help, both police and fire, by dialing the same simple number: 911. This emergency service became available to Batavians in 1970 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 November 1969)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

By the 1960s, horse-drawn vehicles were a rarity. However, home delivery of milk via wagons pulled by horses was an exception. Then, that too ceased. In 1964, Branton's Dairy retired its last milk horse and an era ended (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 201). After that, all deliveries were made by motorized vehicles.

Batavia's second shopping plaza was proposed in 1965. To be located on the south side of West Main Street, it would in effect complement Eastown Plaza built on East Main Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 April 1965)

In 1969, Charles and William Doerflinger of Rochester, owners of a large parcel on West Main Street, proposed a new grocery store. The result was a 20,000 sq. ft. operation that became Tops Market. It was the first grocery store in the area to be open all night. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 46) Over a 20-year period, residents in Batavia seeking to purchase groceries went from being unable to do so after 6 p.m. and never on Sundays to being able to make purchases 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

According to *The Daily News*, in 1965 City Council was finding restroom facilities for downtown shoppers an on-going headache. It hoped that Urban Renewal would lead to a

solution. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 June 1965) It's not clear whether the restroom planned by Dwight Toal in 1953 (see the previous chapter) was no longer in existence or it was insufficient in some respect.

### 10: Factories/industries

In April of 1967, preliminary plans were revealed for an industrial park off Pearl Street in Batavia. The City Council approved the purchase of 62.5 acres to be reserved for light industry. It was anticipated that firms displaced by Urban Renewal in downtown Batavia might move to such a park. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 April 1967) The anticipated cost of the project was \$463,000 with half paid for by a Federal grant and the remainder by the sale of bonds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1968).

Through most of the decade, the Sylvania plant appeared to be doing well. The factory was enlarged in September 1956, January 1962, and April 1969. Then ominous signs appeared. In October 1970, Sylvania announced that color television production was to be moved to Smithfield, North Carolina. By the end of the year, 350 employees had been laid off. Management complained that the company was suffering losses from trade competition. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 192)

### 11: Banking/ financial services

There do not appear to have been any significant changes in this area.

### 12: Education

In 1961, Knight Hall opened at the State School for the Blind. It was built to serve young children. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1961)

Batavia's new High School, located on State Street and a replacement for the facility on Ross Street, began operation in 1961 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 October 1961). The former High School became a middle school.

The Batavia School District started classes for what were termed "trainables" in 1962 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1962). This appears to mark the beginning of instruction for mentally handicapped children.



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At the other end of the continuum, in 1962 Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) began college-level evening classes at the Batavia High School. In the fall of 1964, 150 students were expected to enroll. Ten different courses were offered that semester. The instructors and texts employed in Batavia were the same as used on the RIT campus. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 September 1964)

In 1964, the West School building on West Main Street, located just east of South Lyon Street, was demolished (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1964).

Also in 1964, New York State passed legislation allowing public school systems to organize county-wide vocational programs. Schools in Genesee County, including the Batavia School District, took advantage of this new opportunity. In 1965, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) resulted and the same year classrooms were set up in an empty school building in South Byron and at the former Harvester plant on Harvester Avenue in Batavia. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 90) In 1967, *The Daily News* reported that a permanent site was being sought for construction of a new building to serve students enrolled in BOCES classes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 January 1967)

Although the area's community college is not located in the City, it deserves to be cited in any history of our community because of its importance in the education of community residents and the general impact the institution and its faculty have had on Batavia.

Whether or not to establish a local community college was the subject of debate for several years. Finally, in 1964 the question was put before the public and in a County-wide referendum, voters approved the establishment of a 2-yr. school. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 November 1965)

In 1967, Genesee Community College admitted its first class of students. The two-year college was located on West Main Street Road in a building formerly used by a Valu department store. Hence, some nicknamed the new college, "Valu Tech." The College was an accredited public institution belonging to the State University of New York. Funding was provided through a combination of County support, State support, and tuition with, theoretically, one-third of the operating cost being provided by each source. The author of this book joined the teaching faculty in 1968 and served until his retirement in 2005.

In 1970, the Buffalo Diocese announced that the Sacred Heart and St. Anthony elementary schools would be consolidated. It was reported that for the time being, students would wear

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their current uniforms, but a new one shared by all would be used the next school year. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June 1970)

### 13: Religion

The Mt. Zion Baptist Church was organized in 1962. In 1967, it purchased a building at 516 Ellicott Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* {Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993} p. 125)

In 1963, a new convent for the Sisters of Mercy was ready to be occupied. A two-story structure, it was situated on East Main Street behind St. Joseph's Church and to the rear of the earlier convent built in 1882. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1963)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In 1968, *The Daily News* reported that the site of the Richmond mansion was being considered for a new library building (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 July 1968). However, when the proposal was put to voters the next year, it was voted down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 June 1969)

In 1970, a west wing was added to the Holland Land Office Museum (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 May 1970). A frame structure, it would be followed by an east wing seven years later.

### 15: Cemeteries

According to a newspaper account, in 1966 a private cemetery was established on the residential property at 4 Mix Place. Reportedly, the motivation for doing so may have been to gain protection from a money judgment filed against the property owners. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 October 1966) It does not appear that any burials ever took place at the site.

### 16: Firefighting

There appear to have been no significant developments in this decade.

### Healthcare

The Genesee County Mental Health Association was formed in 1963. It was affiliated with the State Association for Mental Health, Inc. and the National Association for Mental Health, Inc. It served as a voluntary, non-profit organization. According to its mission statement, the purposes of the Association were to develop a citizens voluntary movement in a program of mental health education, secure information through research and study to determine the resources and need of community mental health services in the county, to develop a program of improved methods and services in research, prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, and to assist in the formation of a county health board, serve as clearing center regarding mental health, seek financial support and carry out activities to promote mental health.

In 1965, one of the goals of the Genesee County Mental Health Association was met when the County Board of Supervisors, by a 17-0 vote, approved the creation of a Mental Health Board made up of nine members. This opened the way for the establishment of a mental health clinic. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 May 1965)

As the decade was drawing to a close, Frederick Degenhardt, President of the Mental Health Association of Genesee County and a school psychologist, advocated the establishment of a "hot line." He suggested that it operate during hours when the Mental Health Clinic was closed. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 April 1970)

In 1966, two northern wings were added to Genesee Memorial Hospital (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 78).

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

A youth center was organized in 1961 under the sponsorship of three organizations: the YWCA, the YMCA, and the B'nai B'rith Jewish Men's Service Club. The center was in the YMCA and was open from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and 8:00 p.m. to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 January 1961) The first night it was open, February 4, 1961, 150 young people of both sexes, aged 14 to 18, showed up for games, music, and dancing (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 February 1961).

A day care center for the children of migrant families was started at the YWCA in 1965 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 July 1965). It operated there under the auspices of the State Department of Labor. In 1969, the day care operation moved to the Batavia Industrial Center

on Harvester Avenue where it became one of the programs sponsored by BOCES. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 142)

In 1966, a charter was granted to the Genesee Chapter of the State and National Association to Aid Retarded Children (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 June 1966). This appears to have been the forerunner of the local Association for Retarded Children that established a sheltered workshop several years later. (See the next chapter.)

In 1967, the Children's Home closed after operating for nearly 50 years (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1967). It had been established to provide temporary refuge for children living in troubled homes and to give children without parents a safe and permanent place to live. Responsibility for such children from the time of the closing was assumed by the Department of Social Services. Throughout most of its existence, the Home had been housed in the former Richmond Mansion on East Main Street.

### 19: Disasters

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the great elm trees that graced many American cities were struck down by Dutch Elm disease. Batavia was one of the communities that fell victim to this biological disaster. In 1964, *The Daily News* reported that most of Batavia's elm trees were infected (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1964). Just three years later, 614 trees had been killed by the disease (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 February 1967)

In 1966, Batavia was struck by what many described as the worst blizzard in memory. (It seems that every few decades, there were such storms). Reportedly, over 500 travelers sought local refuge from the storm. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 January 1966) Of course, the *really big blizzard* (at least in the author's memory), was still 11 years into the future.

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

In 1961, the Genesee Civic Ballet was formed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 October 1961).

In the early 1960s, the City opened a swimming pool and bathhouse in MacArthur Park north of the ball park. It was informally named in honor of Batavian Greta Patterson following her record 1955 swim across Lake Erie from Angola, N.Y. to Crystal Beach, Ontario. The pool, measuring 60 x 100 ft., was paid for through fund-raising drives and by the gifts of individuals. The bathhouse was paid for by the City. The pool opened, reportedly without ceremony, on

July 9, 1962. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 104-105)

Over the years, the reader may recall that there were numerous ice skating areas temporarily set up in various locations. In 1965, one such skating area was created in MacArthur Park (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 January 1965).

In 1967, lottery tickets went on sale in a State-wide plan to raise funds for public education. Tickets, costing \$1 a piece, were sold by banks. There were plans to also sell them through motels. The locations selling the lottery tickets received up to 5% of the sales to cover handling costs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1967)

### 21: War, impact of war

This decade was defined by an increasing American military involvement in Vietnam. This Country's involvement in Viet Nam is rather complicated and not always well understood, so some detail is in order.

Prior to World War II, Vietnam had been under French colonial rule. During the war, the French lost control when Japanese forces occupied the country. After the Japanese were eventually defeated, the French attempted to regain their colonial role, but met resistance from Vietnamese forces led by Ho Chi Minh. This led to a French military defeat in 1954 and a Communist regime under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh came to occupy the northern half of Vietnam. Meanwhile, the government in South Vietnam, led by pro-Western Anti-Communist leaders, became engaged in a struggle with the Communist government of the north for control of the country. In the mid-1960s, the United States began sending troops to South Vietnam, acting on the notion that if the whole of Vietnam became Communist, like a row of dominoes, all the other nations of Southeast Asia would fall to Communism as well. Eventually, American involvement escalated to the point that several hundred thousand U.S. troops became directly involved in the fighting along with lesser numbers of soldiers from allied nations.

The U.S. involvement in Vietnam was prolonged and costly. Before the war would end, over 58,000 American lives would be lost. As the years passed and military success eluded American and South Vietnamese forces, public opposition to the war began to appear. As this opposition grew, it reached the point where continued American involvement became politically untenable. One of the turning points occurred when four students at Kent State University in Ohio were shot and killed by National Guard forces during an anti-war demonstration. In 1975, the U.S. withdrew all its personnel from Vietnam.

Within a year after the American withdrawal, South Vietnamese forces were soon overwhelmed and the whole of the country became a Communist nation. Ho Chi Minh was at the helm. Thus ended one of the most tragic chapters in American history.

In the course of the war in Vietnam, large numbers of area men served in the conflict. Often their service appears to have been wholly involuntary as they were forced into service by a military draft. However, deferments were available to those who could afford college, became married, and had children. As a consequence, it has been argued that service in Vietnam fell on the sons of lower income Americans to an excessive degree. By the war's end, the number of Genesee County residents who died in the Vietnamese War would total 18 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, NY., 24 January 1973).

In the previous chapter, the author noted that an Army Reserves facility was planned for a four-acre area at the southwest corner of the intersection between Oak Street and Park Road. This facility was dedicated in May of 1961 as a memorial to area residents who had given their lives in service to the Country. It included headquarters and a classroom building suitable for training up to 100 reservists. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 May 1961)

An armory on State Street was built in 1963. It housed tank battalions A and B of the Genesee National Guard. The National Guard had been using another building on the site as a headquarters for several years. In 1963, the latter structure became a garage, the use for which it was originally designed. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1963)

In 1967, a Civil Defense Center was opened in a new earth-bermed building located behind the armory on State Street. It was planned to serve as a temporary seat of government should any manmade or natural disaster destroy government offices located above ground. It was designed to shelter up to 100 people for a period of two weeks. It served in that capacity for just four years. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 136)

As described in the previous chapter, during the early years of the Cold War, Americans were urged to build personal shelters to aid in their survival during and after an enemy air raid. Not many families followed this advice. However, a local exception was the Merrit household at 652 East Main Street. According to a November 1961 issue of *The Daily News*, they built a "bomb shelter" in the back yard. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 1961)

## 22: Families, persons of note

The first President of Genesee Community College was Dr. Alfred C. O'Connell. During his tenure, construction of a new campus was begun in 1969. However, before it was completed, O'Connell resigned and Dr. Cornelius V. Robbins became the second President when he was appointed to the position in July of 1970.

Robbins, among other things, had the distinction of being the first Genesee Community College President to reside in the City. He lived at 16 Summit Street. The Summit Street house is unique in its own right. It was erected sometime in the 1850s by Major Henry J. Glowacki. The house at 16 Summit is the front half of a larger home that included the house now located at 14 Summit Street. During a remodeling project, Dr. Robbins reported finding an inscription in the walls written by a workman who wrote that he had participated in separating the two halves of the original building.

Dr. Robbins served for eight years before being succeeded by Dr. Stuart Steiner.

## 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

The Landmark Society of Genesee County, Inc. was formed in 1965. Sally Osborn and Catherine Roth were the chief organizers. The organization was established in an effort to preserve landmarks throughout the County. A major event motivating the group's formation was the impact Urban Renewal was having on Batavia. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 154)

In 1968, the YWCA dedicated a new building on North Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 April 1968).

In 1970, Harry L. Majors organized a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was elected as the chapter's President. The organization was short-lived and in only four years, the group relinquished its charter. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 255)

## 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

One feature of this decade, at the national level, was the occurrence of the so-called "Sexual Revolution." Many observers have attributed this cultural change, in part, to the invention of the oral contraceptive which greatly diminished the risk of unwanted pregnancy. The greatest shift in behavior appears to have been a dramatic increase in premarital intercourse among unmarried females. Although the author does not have data to support the supposition, there is no reason to believe that changes that were occurring nationally were not also taking place in Batavia. One consequence of the "Revolution" appears to have been the virtual disappearance of houses of prostitution in Batavia. Males who might once have had to seek sexual experience via a prostitute now had access to willing female peers. (These observations are based on the author's 30-year experience as an instructor in human sexuality classes at Genesee Community College.)

## 25: Urban Renewal

In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing concern about the health and future of America's major cities. Buildings, particularly in the inner cities, were falling into disrepair and were often abandoned outright. Urban blight was becoming more and more evident. In an effort to deal with the situation, Federal funds became available to renew these areas. The program under which they were administered came to be known as "Urban Renewal." (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 57)

Although not part of a big city, by this decade the downtown area of Batavia was also showing signs of urban blight. Many buildings were in poor shape. Development over the years had produced a jumble of structures along narrow streets and alleys running both north and south from Main Street. To a large extent, the area was physically unattractive. The new Federal program looked like a way out of this situation. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 57)

Discussion of Urban Renewal in Batavia began early in the 1960s. In 1961, the City's Planning Board was urged to start considering an Urban Renewal program as part of a new master plan. It was pointed out that under the then current formula, two-thirds of the costs would be borne by the Federal government, one-sixth by the State, and one-sixth by the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 April 1961)



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Contrary to popular perception, when the famed Richmond Hotel on the corner of Main and State streets was razed in 1962 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 January 1962), the demolition was not part of the Urban Renewal program. The latter was not yet in place.

In 1962 Batavia's City Council successfully applied for Urban Renewal funding. A year later, funding began. The first phase involved the area south of Main Street. A group of 20 local citizens was formed to act as an Advisory Committee working together with the Director of Urban Renewal. One of the issues it faced was whether to save any of the existing buildings in the affected areas. There were arguments for doing so. Some buildings, such as the former Bank of Batavia, were architecturally significant. Others, such as the Salvation Army Building, were nearly new. Ultimately it was decided to level virtually everything to make it easier to rebuild. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 57)

By 1968, the first phase of urban renewal was nearly done. That area was referred to as the Court Street Plaza. Among the former structures now absent were the Pan American Building and Trailways Diner on Court Street; the Trailways terminal at the corner of Court and Ellicott streets; the Franklin Mills, R. A. Haitz Co., Ebling Laundry, and Red's Taxi buildings on Ellicott Street; Panzone's Hotel (formerly the Ellicott House) on the corner of Jackson and Ellicott streets; Dipson's Family Theater on Jackson Street; Dean's Drugs, Scott and Beans, and the former Bank of Batavia building on Main Street; and Salway's Hardware on Exchange Place. In their place stood a variety of modern buildings, mainly one-story and of a modest size, a large Montgomery-Ward Department Store, and acres of parking.

In 1968, the only unfinished portion of the Court Street Plaza was a building at the southwest corner of Main and Jackson streets which didn't get a replacement structure until 1973. Meanwhile, plans went ahead for the next phase which was the area north of Main Street. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, S.C., 2011] p. 71) Information about this phase will be found in the next chapter.



## The Eighteenth Decade

### Overview

The major development this decade continued to be the Urban Renewal program. Having essentially completed the Jefferson Street Plaza area south of Main Street, attention was next directed to the area north of Main Street. Then, that was followed by the area south of Ellicott Street and West Main Street, stretching from about Evans Street west nearly to Oak Street.

Other developments of considerable significance included more housing for low income and elderly residents, the County Nursing Home moving to Batavia, a new fire station, a year-round skating rink, and a new building for BOCES.

Batavia's population continued to fall. By 1980, it was down to 16,703 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), a decrease of 635 residents since 1970.

### 1: Infrastructure

By the 1970s, the City's water filtration plant, located on Lehigh Avenue, was about 50 years old and in the need of major work. Thus, at a cost of \$1.5 million, plans were made for it to be completely rebuilt with the installation of modern automatic equipment and provisions for future expansion (*The Daily News*, 24 August 1970). The renovated facility was opened to public inspection on May 19, 1971 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 8).

In 1974, City Council voted to extend North Street from Vine Street to Naramore Drive (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 April 1974).

In this decade, sidewalks once more became a focus of discussion at City Council meetings. As new streets were built, plans for sidewalks were sometimes scrapped. This was the case on Naramore Drive, Bogue Avenue, and Dewey Avenue when residents on those streets objected to having sidewalks. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1976 and 14 September 1976)

Repeatedly over the course of this decade, the state of Batavia's bridges was also a focus of local officials along with that of their State and County counterparts. In October of 1972, City Council noted that the South Jackson Street overpass was badly deteriorated, but not yet seriously enough to close. In 1974, City officials decided to close the Walnut Street bridge to vehicular traffic although foot traffic was still permitted (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 13). The same year, the State announced that it would build a new River Street bridge (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 August 1974) and by a year later, in 1975, construction work was well underway (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 September 1975). The Chestnut-Law Street bridge, which had been built in 1900, was also replaced by the State in 1975 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 13). The South Lyon Street bridge had been erected in 1903, after reportedly seeing earlier service as a Walnut Street bridge and, before that, perhaps service as a railroad bridge. When, in 1975, it was judged in danger of collapsing, workmen reinforced it. In 1980, further work was done that involved replacing the plank deck with steel mesh. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 13)

As the South Jackson Street bridge continued to deteriorate, debate occurred regarding whether to repair the structure or demolish the bridge and create an alternative route. In June of 1976, City Council decided to build a by-pass (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1976). The by-pass routed drivers along Ellicott Street, over Lehigh Avenue, and to Creek Road. Less than four years later, the South Jackson Street bridge was closed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 January 1980).

By the late 1970s, the City was earnestly pursuing a recycling program. Residents were directed to separate out recyclables from ordinary trash for curb pickup. According to *The Daily News* of October 27, 1979, recycling got off to a good start. Officials predicted that recycling would bring in \$52,000 annually, a sum that would be used to defray landfill and labor costs. At the time, operation of a landfill on Kelsey Road was expected to cost about \$50,000 a year. The cost was to be shared by the Town and City in a 22-1/2% to 77-1/2% ratio. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 October 1979)

## 2: Transportation

Early in 1971, it was proposed that City bus service be completely reorganized with a dial-a-bus service to replace fixed routes (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 23). In August, according to a report in *The Daily News*, a dial-a-bus service was planned to start in late September or early October. The service was to

be under the auspices of the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transit Authority which had recently acquired the bus company. Under this new arrangement, the company planned to operate three radio-equipped mini-buses that would function in a manner akin to a taxi service. Called the "B-Line," it was expected to serve as a model across the Nation. It was touted as an answer to urban transit problems. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 August 1971) Service began in mid-September (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 September 1971). Operations were subsidized by public funds (Ruth M. McEvoy, *The History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 23).

Beginning in 1977, motorists in Batavia and throughout the State were allowed to make right-hand turns on red lights after stopping (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1976).

### 3: Housing

The East Main Street site where the Richmond mansion had stood was offered for sale in 1972 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 March 1972). A little over two years later, *The Daily News* reported that the property had been purchased by St. Joseph's Church (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 June 1974). The property became a parking lot owned by the Church, but shared with the Richmond Memorial Library. As this book is being written, all that remains of the mansion is a wrought iron fence along the sidewalk. An historic marker was placed at the edge of the parking lot in 2013 to identify the mansion's former location.

Batavia's first apartment housing for the elderly, 400 Towers, located on the south-east corner of East Main and Swan streets, was completed in 1971. It contained 150 apartments. Funding for the structure was provided by the Federal Housing Authority. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 130-131)

In September of 1980, City Council gave permission for the construction of a second high-rise for the elderly on the south-west corner of Washington and Jefferson avenues. In November, the Gautieri Construction Company began pouring the foundation and by the end of December the framework was in place for the 131-unit high-rise. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 131)

During this decade, large-scale apartment house complexes continued to appear. In 1972, the Lawn Spruce Development Corporation built five buildings on the west side of North Spruce Street. Each building had 25 apartments. The development went by the name, "Woodstock Gardens." (Ruth M. McEvoy, *The History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 129)

Also in 1972, Stanndco Developers, Inc. of Rochester began erecting apartment buildings on the north side of Bank Street opposite Ross Street. The company went into bankruptcy before work was completed and the buildings stood unfinished for over a year. In 1974, first the Sibley Corporation and then the Carmas Construction Company, took over the task of finishing the project. By 1975, the individual units were no longer planned to be apartments, but rather to become condominiums. When that didn't work out, in 1976 the development reverted to being an apartment house complex and remains so at the time this book is being written. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *history of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 130)

A smaller apartment complex was erected on Mix Place in 1972. Construction was started in September of that year. It consisted of two 4-unit buildings. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 September 1972)

Low-income housing continued to be built, as well. For example, in the early 1970s, such housing was built on the north side of Pearl Street. However, the largest development by far was that located south of Pearl Street and east of River Street. Originally referred to as "The Towne Houses," it later became known as "Birchwood Village." While construction started in 1970 (see the previous chapter), the 200 unit complex was not opened to tenants until March of 1973. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 130) Under terms earlier established by City Council, the Council of Churches as the developer agreed to make either an annual payment of \$30,000 in lieu of taxes or an amount equal to 10% of the rent collected from residents. They also agreed to assume responsibility for maintenance of the streets. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 June 1970)

### 4: Energy sources

In 1973, war in the Middle East and political retaliation against U.S. foreign policy led several oil producing nations to place an embargo on oil shipments to the United States. One of the results was a shortage of gasoline. With this shortage came restrictions on the sale of fuel. In June of 1973, *The Daily News* reported that some service station operators were closing on Sundays to save gasoline for regular customers who purchased fuel on weekdays. Some were limiting sales to \$2.00 at a time. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1973) Eventually, government restrictions were imposed which limited gasoline purchases to odd or even days of the week depending on one's license plate number.

After several months, the embargo ended and oil supplies began returning to normal levels. However, there were long-term changes in policies and practices that resulted. Among them was a concerted effort to improve energy efficiency.

### 5: Communication

Cable television became one of the options available to television consumers in Batavia at the end of this decade. In June of 1978, City Council approved in concept the granting of a cable television contract (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 June 1978). A year later, in 1979, the City granted a franchise to Cablevision Industries of Liberty, New York. The company's subsidiary, Genesee County Cablevision, began operations in December of 1980. In addition to offering multiple-channel access to viewers, programming eventually also included broadcasts originating locally such as those of meetings held by the County Legislature or City Council. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 75).

### 6: County and city boundaries

In the early 1970s, the King's Plaza, a 16-acre plaza on the south side of West Main Street, sought connections to the City's sanitary sewer system. At the time, the plaza was located in the Town of Batavia. When discussions with Town officials did not progress in a manner agreeable to plaza merchants, the latter sought annexation by the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 February 1973)

As required by State law, the proposal to annex the property went before both the City Council and the Town Board. While the City Council voted to approve the annexation, the Town Board rejected the proposal. At that point, the City Council authorized court action. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 July 1973)

Nearly two years later, a three-judge panel handed down its ruling on the matter. The judges ruled that it was in the "best interest of the people" that annexation occur. Thus, King's Plaza became a part of the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 February 1975) It was the last time that the City succeeded in expanding into the Town.

## 7: Government, governing structure

Until relatively recently, women have played little formal role in the leadership of local government. It was not until 1971 that a woman was elected to City Council. That individual was Jean Paparella who was chosen by voters to represent the 5<sup>th</sup> ward (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 November 1971).

After the County began collecting a sales tax, it shared the tax with the City and the towns and villages. Periodically, adjustments were made in the formula. For example, in November of 1971, the City's share shifted from 43.74% to 42.83%, the towns' and villages' share changed from 28.05% to 29.38%, and the County's share declined from 28.21% to 27.79%. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 November 1971)

In 1980, the sales tax throughout the County increased from 6% to 7% (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 6).

After Genesee Community College vacated its building on West Main Street Road, the County considered using the space to meet its expanding requirements. In 1972, the former college building became County Building No. 2. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 February 1972 and 25 April 1972). At this point, the County building in the City proper was renamed, "County Building 1."

It is unfortunate that when Joseph Ellicott laid out the community of Batavia in 1801 he did not establish boundaries that were more extensive. The oversight has led to ongoing tension over the years between the City which has sought to expand and the Town which has resisted that growth. Periodically, there have been efforts to rectify the problem by merging the Town and City into a single entity. In 1966, a comprehensive master plan for the Town and City was proposed that recommended a "metro government." Then, in 1974, the planning boards of the Town and the City both recommended merger. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1974) However, nothing resulted from these recommendations.

## 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

Historically, the County Sheriffs and their families have lived in quarters at the jail. That didn't change until 1971. In December of that year, *The Daily News* announced that the Sheriff would be moving out of his jail house apartment at 14 West Main Street in order to free up needed space. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 December 1971)



## 1971-1980

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Also in 1971, Batavia police resumed downtown foot patrols (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 August 1971). This would prove to be an on-again, off-again proposition.

In other police department news from 1971, the department announced that a "meter maid" had been hired to patrol parking lots and spaces (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 16).

When the police department moved from School Street to 10 West Main in 1964, the new facility had four jail cells. Because of a need for additional office space, in 1971 the number of cells was reduced to two. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., May 3 1971) Early in 1974, City Council requested permission from the State Commission on Correction to permanently close the lock-up, a request that appears to have been soon granted (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 February 1974).

A familiar theme was again sounded in 1973 when *The Daily News* reported that the police were plagued by vandalism in City parks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, 26 June 1973). Five years later, in 1978, the problem was noted once more (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 July 1978).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

So-called "blue laws" which restricted Sunday sales in New York State were still in effect in this decade. However, some retailers began to ignore them. In February of 1973, *The Daily News* reported that the City was making an effort to keep supermarkets closed on Sundays (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 February 1973). A few days later, the newspaper reported that A & P was closing the coming Sunday and that others were following suit on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 February 1973).

Nearly three years later, in December of 1975, the blue laws were still in effect, but local enforcement had shifted. The Genesee County District Attorney said the laws would not be enforced if there were no citizen complaints and none had occurred. Consequently, some stores were opening on Sunday. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1975)

In 1976, George's Dairy discontinued home deliveries of milk (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 September 1976).

### 10: Factories/industries

Monroe Davidson, a manufacturer of woolen shirts and jackets made under the name, "Melton Shirts," started operations in a building on Liberty Street in 1972. Six years later, in 1978, Davidson moved the business to the Batavia Industrial Center and added an outlet store to the operation. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 189)

In 1972, the P. W. Minor Company moved its shoe-making business on Jefferson Avenue to the Industrial Park off Pearl Street (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 178). Four years later, in 1976, the Rowell Box Company moved from its building at the intersection of Ellicott and West Main streets to the Industrial Park off Pearl Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 December 1976) In both instances, the original factory buildings were razed during Urban Renewal (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 178-179).

Only 23 years after coming to Batavia, in 1975, Sylvania announced that it was closing the local plant. A few office workers remained until the end of 1976. After that, the factory stood empty and, at first, no company showed any interest in the facility. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 192) The future looked bleak in a period of energy shortages, high inflation, and other woes.

In 1975, the Town and City began working together to create a single industrial park development off Pearl Street and Pearl Street Road. The City's section was already well along when the Town began developing its part of the complex. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1975)

### 11: Banking/financial services

This decade witnessed considerable activity in the banking sector. The Home Federal Savings and Loan opened in April of 1974 with a building at the corner of East Main and Summit streets. Then the Bank of LeRoy opened a facility in February of 1975 at 408 East Main Street. That was followed, in April of 1977, by Lockport Savings Bank which opened a bank at the south-west corner of West Main and River streets. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 65-660)

A second credit union in the Batavia area was formed in 1976 when the Batavia Federal Credit Union was organized (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 May 1987).

Credit cards had been around for quite some time. However, credit cards as we know them, i.e., buy anything, anywhere, anytime and without having to pay off the full balance at the end of the monthly credit cycle, did not appear to have become widely available before the 1970s. ("History of Credit cards," *Bankrate.com*, online, accessed 20 November 2014) In 1976, the M & T bank here in Batavia began offering VISA credit cards (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 9 November 1976).

### 12: Education

In 1972, Genesee Community College moved to a brand new campus on College Road north-east of the City. It consisted of five buildings, arranged along a north-south axis, and interconnected so students and staff did not need to go outside to move from one building to another.

When the State School for the Blind was opened in the 1800s, it was designed, as the name implied, to serve just the blind. That continued to be its focus until the 1970s. Then, in this decade, the School began primarily serving individuals who were multi-handicapped. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1974)

In 1976, a new BOCES facility opened on State Street opposite the High School. The public was invited to an open house in September of that year. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1976)

The Brooklyn Avenue School was closed in 1979 and arrangements were made for the students to attend other schools in the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 June 1979). The building was offered for sale early the next year (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 February, 1980).

### 13: Religion

The New Hope Fellowship began meeting in 1974 or 1975 in the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Richmond Avenue. At first, the congregation called itself "The Christian Faith Center," but by the end of 1977, it became "The Evangelical Christian Community." Soon after, the congregation built a parsonage and then a church on Bank Street Road. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 126)

#### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In 1977, a second wing was added to the east end of the Holland Land Office Museum (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 November 1977). It housed the Genesee County Department of History.

After abandoning an earlier proposal to build a new library on the former site of the Richmond mansion, the Richmond Memorial Library Board chose to build an addition onto the original building. The addition, 1,800 sq. ft. in size, was funded in part by Federal building funds. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 98-99). The new facility opened to the public in February of 1979 (*The Daily News*, 10 February 1979)

#### 15: Cemeteries

Potter's Field is the term given to the section of a cemetery set aside for burial of the indigent. In this decade, the nature of the Potter's Field in the Batavia Cemetery came to public attention after a relative of someone buried there complained about the Cemetery's policies. It was revealed that, due to limited space, bodies buried in the Potter's Field of the Batavia Cemetery were placed up to three deep. It was also against the Cemetery's policy to permit markers at individual grave sites in the Potter's field section, in part because the land there was not owned by the deceased. In privately funded burials, the land was purchased and a deed granted, but in the Potter's Field section, the land was not sold and it remained the property of the Cemetery Association. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 July 1975)

#### 16: Firefighting

During most of the 1970s, the fire department was housed at 3 West Main Street and at a smaller station on Ellicott Street. Beginning in 1974, City Council began to discuss building a new fire headquarters. It chose a site on Evans Street and in 1977 awarded a contract for the construction of a building to house the fire department and an ice skating arena. By January of 1978, the fire department was in its new quarters. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 18-19) An open house was held in May of 1978 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 May 1978).

### 17: Healthcare

Until the 1970s, the Genesee County Nursing Home was located in Bethany at the original site of the County's poor house and farm. In 1974, residents were moved to a new building on Chandler Avenue in Batavia. A domiciliary for individuals not needing direct supervision or nursing care was added in 1977. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 83-84)

In 1978, a Planned Parenthood office was opened on East Main Street. It was an extension of the Planned Parenthood facility in Rochester. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 August 1978)

Regional Action Phone (RAP) also began in the 1970s. It was partially funded by the United Fund (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1972). The service was created to offer help to people experiencing psychological distress.

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In 1973, a sheltered workshop was established by the Association for Retarded Children (ARC). Located in County Building No. 2 on West Main Street Road, it was designed to prepare mentally-challenged adults for gainful employment in the community. Thirty clients were enrolled in a 33-week program. The Association had subcontracts with area industry for work that was performed by the clients in the workshop. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 January 1973) Later in the year, the workshop was renamed, "Achievement Center" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 October 1973). In 1976, ARC moved the Achievement Center to 64 Walnut Street in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 1976).

In 1977, the Youth Center, most recently housed in the rear of the fire headquarters at 3 West Main Street, was relocated to the second floor of a new building located on Bank Street just north of the former Bank of Genesee. The building was constructed with Federal community development funds. The Youth Center shared the building with a Senior Center and the Office for the Aging located on the first floor. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 May 1977) Before moving to the Bank Street address, the Office for the Aging had been in County Building 2 on West Main Street Road (*The Daily News*, 19 August 1974). An open house for the two facilities took place in August of 1977 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 August 1977).

### 19: Disasters

The "Blizzard of 1977" is arguably the worst storm to hit Batavia in modern times. It began on January 28, 1977 and the main blast lasted for more than a day as powerful winds swept the length of a frozen Lake Erie, picked up snow from the Lake's surface, and carried it inland for close to 40 miles. The blizzard completely paralyzed the area and marooned thousands. The wind chill dropped to as low as minus 68 and drifts piled as high as two-story houses. Roads could not be reopened for many days in some instances. One of the common recollections of individuals who lived through the experience was the suddenness with which the storm struck. One minute, the day was calm and visibility fine. Literally the next minute, the winds were roaring and visibility dropped to nearly zero. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 January 1997) The author recalls finishing lunch at home, looking out the window as he prepared to drive downtown, and everything looked normal. A minute later, he looked out the window again and he couldn't see the neighbor's house only 30 feet away.

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

The Genesee Chorale was organized in 1971 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] pp. 151-152).

The park located on the former site of the sewage treatment plant on Hillcrest Street northwest of the State School received a name in 1971. It became Lambert Park in honor of Henry Lambert who had been in charge of the sewage facility for many years. During his tenure, he had set out bird houses at the site and was known for his love of nature. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 December 1971)

In 1974, Off Track Betting opened in Batavia. James Lullo was appointed as manager of the local operation. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 August 1974) The facility began in the basement of the Grant store on Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 May 1974). In 1976, it was relocated to a site at Center and Main streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 February 1976).

The next year, 1975, a hockey league was started by the Jaycees. For the first three years, teams skated at the Fairgrounds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 January 1975). Perhaps this development was partly in anticipation of the indoor skating rink on Evans Street that was approved by City Council in 1976 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 May 1976) and opened in November of 1978 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 November 1978).

In February of 1976, *The Daily News* reported that the Sacred Heart Social Center would hold its grand opening on March 1<sup>st</sup> (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 February 1976).

### 21: War, impact of war

Direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam ended in 1973. The last American personnel were evacuated from Saigon in 1975 as North Vietnamese forces attacked the City. The latter's subsequent capture of Saigon effectively marked the end of the War. In the following year, 1976, North and South Vietnam were united under a single, Communist, government. (Vietnam War, *Wikipedia*, online, accessed 20 November 2014) In the course of nearly 20 years of war, 18 Genesee County residents lost their lives (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 January 1973). It would be well over a decade before Batavians were again involved in a military conflict.

In 1975, Batavians no longer faced involuntary military service. The military became an all-volunteer force. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 June 1975)

### 22: Families/persons of note

In the last chapter, it was noted that Genesee Community College, while not physically located in the City, deserves to be included in this book in part because of the impact its faculty has had on the community. An example of that impact can be seen in the example of Dr. Theodore Ashizawa who came to be in the area solely because of employment offered by the College.

Ashizawa moved to the Batavia area in 1971 when he was hired as an instructor in music at Genesee Community College. Over the course of his subsequent career, he organized and directed several choral groups, most notably the Genesee Chorale which he founded soon after his arrival.

Aside from his musical talents, Ashizawa is also of interest because of his personal history. Of Japanese ancestry, he was born in 1934 in the United States and lived with his parents in California at the time World War II broke out. Ashizawa's family was among those Americans of Japanese descent who were forced into internment camps by the U.S. government. They were interned first in Northern California and then in Idaho until the end of hostilities.

Following their release from the internment camps, Ashizawa's family moved to Nevada for several years before returning to California. After high school, Ted Ashizawa earned a

bachelor's and a master's degree from San Jose State College, a Ph. D. from the University of Washington, and a certificate in choral conducting from Julliard. While pursuing his education he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1956 and served two years before receiving an honorable discharge. The irony of being interned as a possible threat to national security and also drafted into the army to insure the nation's security should not be lost on the reader.

In addition to his lengthy tenure at Genesee Community College, the institution from which he retired, Ted Ashizawa also taught high school students for two years in the 1960s.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

In 1972, the Batavia Chamber of Commerce became the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 November 1972).

In 1973, the Batavia Moose Club was fined under a ruling of the State Human Rights Appeal Board when the Club refused bar service to seven black citizens who were attending a private party. Five women and two men were each awarded \$250 by the Board. The event in question was a fashion show run by promoters who had rented the Club's facilities. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 February 1973)

In 1973, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) was started under the auspices of the Office for the Aging (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 May 1973). The program linked retired persons seeking opportunities to volunteer with organizations, government offices, or other local entities needing volunteers to provide various services.

Also in 1973, the Christian Business and Professional Women began meeting. The group was made up of individuals who were concerned with the role of Christian ethics in business. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 145)

A new building on East Main Street was dedicated by the YMCA on May 15, 1977 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 May 1977).

The Herb Society was organized in 1980. The group planted and maintained a herb garden in front of the Richmond Memorial Library. Each Christmas, it also decorated a Christmas tree in the Library. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 149)



## 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

Exotic entertainment featuring topless female dancers appeared at some area establishments during this decade. For example, one such place was a tavern on West Main Street Road about a mile outside the City. However, City officials actively sought to prevent such establishments within City boundaries and no such businesses appeared within Batavia with one brief exception that will be cited in a later chapter.

## 25: Urban renewal

The second phase of Urban Renewal got underway in the very early 1970s. It included mainly the area north of Main Street from Bank Street west to Jefferson Avenue and north to Washington Avenue. Also included were the structures on the east side of Bank Street between the former Bank of Genesee and St. Jerome Hospital. Well-known establishments that disappeared included the New Hamilton Hotel, the Batavia Dipson Theater, Capuano's Post House, and the Dagwood Restaurant. After razing all the structures in this area, a decision was made to build a downtown mall. That decision occurred after rejecting the original plan to erect several free-standing buildings. The mall, although not yet fully complete, officially opened in 1976 as the Genesee Country Mall. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] pp. 57 and 83)

In the latter part of the decade, a decision was made to expand Urban Renewal to much of the area along the north bank of the Tonawanda Creek between Oak and Ellicott Street and then along the south side of Ellicott Street nearly to Evans Street. After razing the structures involved, most of the area between the Holland Land Office Museum and 3 West Main Street became a green area. Some of the establishments or firms that disappeared included the E. N. Rowell Co., Granny's Attic, and Sloat's Tires (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] p. 84) The Rowell Company and Sloat's relocated.

By the time Urban Renewal ended, it had seen four different Directors. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia Revisited* [Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011] pp. 83) In the years since completion of the program, residents of Batavia seem to generally feel that it was a mistake and an alternative manner of dealing with the decay of some downtown buildings should have been taken. The downtown areas of LeRoy, Brockport, Albion, and Medina are often cited as examples of what Batavia lost.



## The Nineteenth Decade

### Overview

After 25 years in which major changes had occurred in the community, this decade was marked with relatively less significant change. It was almost as if Batavians were taking a deep breath before moving on. The single big issue appears to have been what to do about replacing the ill-fated sewage treatment plant on South Main Street.

Continuing a trend that had started two decades earlier, the City again lost population. By 1990, the number of residents was down to 16,310 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), a loss of 393 since 1980.

### 1: Infrastructure

In 1983, The Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) received a contract for garbage and trash collection in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 July 1983). It would continue to hold contracts for this service for nearly 20 years.

After significant repairs on at least two earlier occasions, in 1986 the County decided to replace the South Lyon Street bridge. The replacement was a Bailey bridge, purchased from a company in Latham, New York. Bailey bridges are truss-type structures developed by the British in World War II. The new bridge was predicted to last between 20 and 40 years. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 October, 1986) The new one-lane structure was opened to traffic in January of 1987 and was expected to serve an average of 2,000 vehicles per day (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1987)

The Walnut Street bridge had been closed to vehicular traffic for nearly 15 years when a decision was made to replace it with a pedestrian bridge. In July of 1989, the County Highway Department installed a bridge built of Bongossi wood, a wood from Africa that is particularly rot resistant. The new bridge was placed on the foundation of the former bridge. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 13)

The frequently changing policy in regards to sidewalks made the news again in February of 1989. *The Daily News* reported that City Council was holding a hearing on a proposal for the

City to pay 80% of the cost of sidewalks with property owners paying the balance. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 February 1989). It appears that the proposal was adopted after the hearing.

Recall that the sewage plant that was built in the mid-1960s on South Main Street quickly proved to be inadequate. The appropriate location and design for a replacement facility became an issue that generated great controversy. At issue were such concerns as the possible loss of farmland, threats to wildlife habitat, and odors that might be generated by the plant. However, the matter was resolved when, in March of 1988, the City awarded a contract for a sewage treatment plant south of the Industrial Park on Pearl Street. The design called for holding ponds placed on a 250-acre tract of farm land. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 9) The new plant began operating in July of 1990 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 July 1990).

### 2: Transportation

When the New York Central Railroad tracks were moved in the 1950s, the Railroad's old downtown passenger station was razed and a new station was built on Lehigh Avenue. Readers will recall from earlier chapters that passenger service to and from Batavia gradually faded away before finally ending about 1970. In 1987, the platform area of the Lehigh station was torn down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1987).

### 3: Housing

After two decades of major expansion in apartment housing, housing for the elderly, and low-income housing, the developments of this decade were relatively modest. The high-rise for the elderly at the corner of Washington Avenue and State Street, begun in 1980, was completed in late 1981 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 May 1981). Residents began moving into the 131-unit complex, named "Washington Towers," in 1982 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 131).

The other development of note occurred in 1990. At that time, St. Jerome Hospital prepared to raze the former Kate Fisher McCool mansion at 427 East Main Street, a building that most recently had served as a Christian Science Church. Plans called for the construction of up-scale housing for the elderly. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 March 1990). Preservationists were again unhappy as another of the mansions that had once graced East Main Street was about to disappear.

### 4: Energy sources

In 1982, the street lights in Batavia were being converted from mercury vapor to sodium lights. The switch conserved energy. The 400-watt mercury vapor lights were replaced by sodium lights drawing only 150 watts. The 175-watt mercury vapor lights were replaced by 70-watt sodium lights. Sodium lights were identifiable by the rosy glow they emitted. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 February 1982)

Solar panels to heat living spaces were being erected around the Country during this decade. However, there were very few such applications in Batavia despite tax incentives available to homeowners.

### 5: Communication

Cable television, which had been introduced in the last decade, was proving to be popular. By 1990, Genesee County Cablevision had 4,200 City homes tied into its system (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 75).

### 6: County and city boundaries

There were no changes in this decade.

### 7: Government, governing structure

In July of 1990, about 30 County, City, and Town of Batavia officials gathered at a meeting in the Genesee County Industrial Development Agency offices. The meeting, described as free-wheeling, was called by the Agency in hopes of "encourag[ing] the orderly development of Batavia." The immediate situation prompting the meeting was a conflict between the Town and City regarding sewer and water infrastructure for a proposed truck stop north of the Thruway exchange. In the course of the 90-minute session, the possibility of a metro government or merging the Town and City were among the ideas broached. Nothing productive appears to have resulted from the meeting. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 July 1990) The truck stop never materialized.

## 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

In 1982, the police department acquired a police dog that went by the name, "Ringo." A dog, the department claimed, could in some cases do the work of three to four officers, particularly in tracking suspects. The need for a dog was said to have been the result of a decrease in the size of the force compared to six or seven years earlier. There were currently just 30 officers as opposed to 38 previously, a cut resulting from shrinking budgets. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 May 1982) Two years later, Ringo was joined by a second dog named, "Candor" (*The Daily News*, 25 August 1984).

In 1983, a Rape Crisis Service was inaugurated by Planned Parenthood (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 April 1983).

Also in 1983, the County Legislature authorized a \$28 million bond issue to pay for a 2-story addition and renovations to the County Jail at 10 West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 August 1983). The expanded facility was completed in the Summer of 1985 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 February 1985).

In 1985, A domestic violence program was started through a grant application submitted by the Y.W.C.A. The funding was provided by the New York State Department of Social Services. The program sought to provide emergency housing, peer counselors, and referral help for women and their children. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1985)

During the mid-1980s, programs emerged that were designed to provide for alternatives to incarceration. Generally, this entailed individuals who had committed crimes being required to perform community service instead of spending time in jail. Dennis Wittman headed the programs in Genesee County. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 February 1986 and 1 April 1988)

## 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

In 1986, Scott and Bean celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was the oldest, continuously operated, business concern in the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 April 1986)

## 10: Factories/industries

In 1981, the Rowell Box Company, by then located in the Industrial Park off Pearl Street, closed down its operations. Mark IV Industries of Williamsville, owners of the company, had

## 1981-1990

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earlier announced plans to sell the business, but no buyers had surfaced. Equipment in the plant was sold piecemeal. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 January 1981)

Also in June of 1981, the former Doehler-Jarvis Company, more recently NL Industries, moved all office workers from Batavia to Tennessee. In July, the Batavia plant was offered for sale, but there were no interested parties. Then, in February of 1982, the remaining workforce was informed that the local plant would close at the end of the month. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 186)

The vacant NL Industries plant on Mill Street was donated to the City in 1985. The City then transferred the title to the Industrial Development Committee (IDC). \$1.2 million in renovations that divided the building into seven tenant areas began in June 1986. The IDC placed the resulting operation under the auspices of a new organization called, "The Genesee Center for Industry." The primary purpose was to provide locations for start-up businesses and by 1987, there were already three such companies in place (*The Daily News*, 22 July 1987).

### 11: Banking/financial services

As the mid-1980s approached, there were two credit unions that had been formed in Batavia. They were the Educational Employees Federal Credit Union, the older of the two, and the Batavia Federal Credit Union. In December of 1986, *The Daily News* reported that the two were merging to form the Tonawanda Valley Federal Credit Union (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1986).

### 12: Education

In December of 1989, the Board of Education announced plans for a school on River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 December 1989). Nearly a year later, it was revealed that the District had already purchased the proposed site at a cost of \$180,000 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 November 1990). Despite the Board's plans and prior acquisition of the property, when the proposed elementary school went before voters in December of 1990, they turned it down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 December 1990). The school was never built and eventually the land was sold.

### 13: Religion

There were no significant developments during this decade.

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

Personal computers began to become popular in the 1980s, but most people did not own one. In 1984, the Richmond Memorial Library announced that it had one to loan (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 April 1984).

As of early 1990, the Richmond Memorial Library had 81,000 books, 167 periodicals, 2,700 recordings, and 470 video cassettes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 February 1990). As new technologies continued to appear, the composition of the Library's collection continued to undergo change, as will be evident in later chapters.

### 15: Cemeteries

There were no apparent developments of significance during this decade.

### 16: Firefighting

In 1989, the Batavia Fire Department was staffed with 40 firefighters and a chief. At least twenty-five percent of the force was on duty at all times. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 19)

### 17: Healthcare

As a means for providing terminally ill persons with hospice care, in 1984, a specially furnished suite was opened at the County Nursing Home (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 84)

In 1985, Mercy Flight began a 24-hour per day helicopter ambulance service. The aircraft flew out of the Buffalo area. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 October 1985)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

The YWCA opened a daycare center in 1985 on Brooklyn Avenue in the former elementary school (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 September 1985).

In 1987, the Rochester Center for Independent Living opened an office for the disabled at 61 Swan Street in Batavia. It was renamed, "Batavia Center for Independent Living." (*Batavia City*



*Directory* [Delaware, Ohio: Dickens Directories, Inc., 1991] p. 80). Its goal was to teach coping skills that would allow disabled persons to achieve independence. All sorts of disabilities were addressed. The staff itself was made up of people with disabilities. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 April 1987)

### 19: Disasters

Late in February of 1984, a monster snow storm hit the area. It was part of a system that affected much of the country from Texas to New England. Nationally, 42 deaths were attributed to the storm. In the Batavia area, the local motels were jammed with stranded travelers. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 February 1984)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

By the early 1980s, the City's Greta Patterson pool, located in MacArthur Park, was badly deteriorated. Attendance had also declined. Consequently, in November of 1982, City Council considered closing down the pool. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 1982) However, it remained open for several more years.

Beginning in 1985, a tourism booth, staffed by volunteers, was placed in the Holland Land Office Museum parking lot (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1985). The booth proved to be a success. For example, the next summer alone 11,666 tourists stopped to obtain information. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 September 1986)

In 1987, the P. W. Minor Company dedicated a park in memory of Joe Rosica, a long-term employee. Named "Rosica Park," it was located behind the plant in the Industrial Park on Pearl Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1987)

The famed "log cabin" erected on the County fairgrounds in 1912 was relocated in 1987 to the fairgrounds on East Main Street Road. It was originally built for the purpose of displaying exhibits of an historic nature. Funds for its construction had come from money given by the widow of Charles Rand to the Holland Purchase Historic Society (HPS). The HPS sold the cabin to the Agricultural Society in 1924. Somewhere along the line, the cabin came into the possession of Batavia Downs. After reportedly having been moved twice, it most recently had been located behind Tops Supermarket. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 October 1987)

In 1989, Off Track Betting built a parlor at the east end of Genesee Country Mall (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 October 1989).

## 21: War, impact of war

For the first time in 40 years, Batavians lived through a decade almost free of war. Then, in 1990, a brief, but intense war occurred in the Middle East. Known as the "Gulf War," it involved a retaliation by the United States and several other nations against Iraqi forces when the latter invaded Kuwait. No residents of Genesee County lost their lives in the conflict.

In September of 1990, the grave of Major Philemon Tracy in the Batavia Cemetery received a bronze plaque during a ceremony commemorating Tracy's service as a Confederate soldier in the Civil War. He was a major in the 6<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry. Philemon Tracy was born in Macon, Georgia on June 27, 1831. He spent several summers in Batavia at the home of an uncle, Judge Phineus Tracy. The younger Tracy graduated from Yale and then worked in Georgia as a lawyer and newspaper editor. He also served as a state senator. Following his death in the first battle at Antietam, his uncle had his body exhumed and shipped to Batavia for burial. The body was dressed in a union uniform in order to assure its safe passage to Batavia. The plaque for the grave was provided by the Veterans Administration. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 September 1990)

## 22: Families, persons of note

Arguably the Batavian who has done more than any other in recording Batavia's history was Ruth M. McEvoy. She was Batavia's appointed Historian from 1971 to 1985. From 1962 to 1971, she was also Director of the Richmond Memorial Library, a facility with a large local history collection. In 1993, McEvoy published *History of the City of Batavia*, a book focusing on the years from 1915 to the early 1990s. She also developed an index of history-related news articles that appeared in *The Daily News* from its inception in 1878 until 2001. In 2003, Ruth McEvoy was named a "Fabulous Female" by the Y.W.C.A.

## 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

The Optimist Club came to an end in 1982. Harmon Houseknecht was the organization's last President. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1982)

The Viet-Nam Veterans of America, post no. 193, was organized in 1985. Meetings were held in its headquarters located at 113 Main Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 148)

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There do not appear to have been any notable developments in this decade.

25: Urban renewal

In June of 1981, City Council asked the State to end the Urban Renewal program in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 June 1981). *The Daily News*, in August of 1981, reported that the subsequent closeout netted \$344,000 for the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 August 1981). With Urban Renewal ended, for better or for worse, the community now commenced to live with the results.



## The Twentieth Decade

### Overview

This decade was witness to several changes. Among them, the Monroe County Water Authority moved toward supplying water to an extensive area of Genesee County, more senior and low-income housing was constructed in Batavia, residents began connecting to the Internet, another prominent manufacturing concern closed its doors, the City celebrated a new baseball stadium, and the Sisters of Mercy gave up St. Jerome Hospital leaving the community with just one hospital for the first time in 93 years.

Once again, Batavia's population declined. In 2000, there were 16,256 residents ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), a loss of 54 since 1990.

### 1: Infrastructure

The bridge carrying traffic from South Jackson Street over railroad tracks to Creek Road was closed in 1980. However, the decision to demolish the structure didn't occur until 1993 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 August 1993). Then it was another six years before demolition actually occurred (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 September 1999).

In 1992, blue boxes were provided for residents to use in leaving out recyclables for collection (*The Daily News*, 29 August 1992). At that time, paper, glass, and metal were accepted for recycling purposes. A year later, in 1993, recycling in Batavia was expanded to include plastics. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 March 1993)

During this decade, extensive discussion occurred regarding the need for public water throughout the County and how to provide it. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 October 1998) In 1999, *The Daily News* reported that an agreement had been reached between the City and the County whereby Batavia would become a member of a County-wide water agency. However, while the Monroe County Water Authority would supply water to much of the eastern part of the County, the City would continue to rely primarily on its own Cedar Street wells and water from the Tonawanda Creek. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 September 1999). As this system was eventually constructed, a physical connection between Batavia's

water plant and the Monroe County Water Authority lines was made so that water could flow in either direction between the two as conditions warranted. (Interview with Matt Worth, Batavia Bureau of Water and Wastewater, Batavia, N.Y., conducted by the author, December 2014)

## 2: Transportation

In the early 1970s, Dial-A-Bus service was begun in Batavia. At the time, it was expected to serve as a model across the nation and was touted as an answer to urban transit problems. Twenty-five years later, with the support of the Bus Service Advisory Board, City Council, Batavia School District officials, and the County Legislature, the service was terminated. It was replaced with a conventional loop system. The rider fees were \$1 for an adult, 75 cents for a student, and 50 cents for seniors. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 August 1996)

## 3: Housing

In this decade, additional housing for seniors with limited income was erected. This included a two-story apartment complex at 172-1/2 South Main Street just west of the former sewage treatment plant. Named, "The Meadows," it opened in 1992. There were 24 units. Built by V & V Development, funding was provided by a low-interest mortgage from the Federal Farmers Home Administration (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 October 1992)

Monsignor Kirby Apartments, a 40-unit complex at 203 Oak Street, was next. It was dedicated in 1996. Funding totaling \$2.5 million was provided by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 October 1992)

Park Place, located at the intersection of Richmond Avenue and Park Road, provided 32 units for low-income elderly residents. It was officially opened in late 1999 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 November 1999). The facility was funded with State monies (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1998).

In this decade, an apartment complex for more affluent seniors was built on East Main Street, just east of Vine Street, on the site of the former McCool Mansion. It was sponsored by St. Jerome Hospital. The facility initially included a restaurant open to both residents and the public, but the restaurant was soon closed to the latter although it continued to serve residents (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1998). The first apartment was occupied in March of 1995. While the complex was initially financed with private, short-term loans, soon after long-term, tax-free bonds were sought from the Batavia Housing Authority. (*The Daily News*,

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Batavia, N.Y., 2 March 1995). Originally named, "Trocaire Place," the complex was renamed "Victorian Manor" after changing hands in 1998 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 July 1999). As this book is being written, its name has changed once again, this time to "Manor House."

### 4: Energy sources

Batavia Energy Facility of Sithe Energies USA, Inc., a co-generation plant on Cedar Street, became operational in 1992. The facility, fueled by natural gas, generated 56 megawatts of electric power, enough to serve 18 to 20 thousand homes. Steam produced in the plant was sold to O-At-Ka Milk Products Corporation. The electricity was sold to Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation. Most power plants had a thermal efficiency of 30%, but this one had an efficiency rating equal to 50%. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 1992) In 1998, O-At-Ka ended purchase of steam from the Batavia Energy Facility and this appears to have ended the co-generation aspect of the latter's operation (*The Daily New*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 March 1999).

In 2000, *The Daily News* reported that Nationalgrid was acquiring Niagara Mohawk (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 September 2000).

### 5: Communication

In this decade, home computers were appearing in increasing numbers, but internet access was rather limited at first. Initially, access was available locally only by long-distance dial-up connections over telephone lines to Buffalo or Rochester. Then, in 1995, a local company called Xcalibur began offering dial-up internet service via a local telephone number. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1995) Aside from being slow by more modern standards, an additional frustration stemmed from the inability to place and receive telephone calls while connected to the internet. Batavians from this era may recall trying to reach someone by telephone only to get endless busy signals because the resident was "on the internet."

### 6: County and city boundaries

There were no changes during this decade.

## 7: Government, governing structure

In March of 1994, the County and City agreed on setting an 8% sales tax (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 March 1994). Three months later, the State approved the new rate (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 June 1994).

An addition was built on the west end of County Building No. 1, in 1998 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 July 1998).

In 2000, a City Charter Review Commission considered and then rejected a proposal to switch back to a mayor/city council form of government (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 July 2000).

On April 25<sup>th</sup> of 1995, City Council created an Historic Preservation Commission consisting of seven members appointed by the Council for 3-year terms. The Commission was granted the power to designate landmarks and historic districts. The Commission was also granted authority to grant or withhold certificates of appropriateness for proposed alterations or changes to the exterior of designated structures. (General Code, City of Batavia, Section 100)

On August 14<sup>th</sup> of 2000, City Council created a Historic Overlay District intended, in part, to protect buildings, structures, and areas within the district which were recognized as historic and/or landmarks. The district was also intended to insure that new development was compatible with the character of the area. The Historic Preservation Commission was charged with reviewing all plans for construction and alterations and then forwarding its recommendations to the Planning and Development Committee. The district included much of the area from Court Street west to the Holland Land Office Museum. (General Code, City of Batavia, Section 190-28)

## 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

For decades, in fact for nearly the entire history of the Police Department, officers had patrolled on foot. Then the practice ended. In a 1991 article that appeared in *The Daily News*, Chief David Mullen of the City Police Department was reported as saying foot patrols had been dropped due to changes in the downtown area brought about by Urban Renewal (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 October 1991). Nonetheless, in 1993, Chief Mark Robinson reinstated downtown foot patrols (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 October 1993).



In 1995, the Police Department announced that it was setting up bicycle patrols. The patrols were to be in operation for 20 weeks out of the year with three officers who shared a single bicycle and were on duty for a total of 8 to 10 hours a week. It was hoped that the bicycle patrols would reduce vandalism downtown, in parks, and in the cemeteries. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June 1995).

Early in the previous decade, the Police Department acquired a police dog. Eventually, there were two dogs employed at a cost of \$10,000 per year. The animals were trained for tracking, building searches, crowd control, and suspect arrests. However, by 1996, officials concluded that there was insufficient need for a "canine corps" and the practice of using police dogs was discontinued. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 January 1996)

In February of 1991, the domestic violence agency operating out of the Y.W.C.A. acquired a permanent shelter for victims of domestic violence. The location was confidential. Prior to that time, the agency had used a dozen private homes where women could stay for up to three days. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 February 1991)

On November 29<sup>th</sup> of 1994, *The Daily News* reported that the County Legislature, after seven years of discussions about the matter, had decided to build a new two-story building for housing the County, Family, Surrogate, and City courts (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1994). Two weeks later, the Legislature voted to spend \$9.8 million on the project (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1994). Ground was broken in June of 1996 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1996) and the structure was dedicated in early September of 1997 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 September 1997).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

For most of its existence, the retail center of the area had been in downtown Batavia. However, beginning with the era of Urban Renewal, activity began to shift to the Town of Batavia. Sometimes businesses actually moved out of the City. One such example was the K-Mart store, originally located in Eastown Plaza, which moved to the Town in 1994 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 May 1994).

### 10: Factories/industries

In 1996, the Melton Shirts factory, located on Harvester Avenue in the Batavia Industrial Center, closed its manufacturing facilities and moved them to Mississippi (*The Daily News*,

Batavia, N.Y., 24 July 1996). Less than two years later, in 1998, Melton's closed its outlet store as well (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 March 1998).

By May of 1997, The Genesee Center for Industry, established in the former Doehler-Jarvis plant, had 10 companies renting space. It was nearly full. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1997)

### 11: Banking/financial services

There do not appear to have been any particularly significant developments in this decade.

### 12: Education

In 1995, plans were announced for additional classrooms for Robert Morris School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 1995). Less than 20 years later, the school would be closed.

In 1997, St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Washington Avenue announced plans to begin offering elementary-level classes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 October 1997).

Two major additions were made during this decade on the Genesee Community College Batavia campus. An arts center building that included a "state-of-the-art" theater opened in 1991 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 December 1990). The theater was named, "The Stuart Steiner Theater," in honor of the college's longest-serving president.

The second addition to the college was the Conable Technology Building, dedicated in August of 2000. It was named in honor of Rep. and Mrs. Barber Conable, both of whom were long-time supporters of the college. (*Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 August 2000).

### 13: Religion

In 1997, City Church was organized by Marty and Karen Macdonald and Kathy Cervone. Initially, the congregation met in the Macdonald's Stafford home. However, beginning in 1998, services were held in the Batavia Y.W.C.A. (Marty Macdonald and Kathy Cervone, conversations with the author, 25 November 2014)

For many years, a nativity scene had been erected every Christmas season on the front lawn of City Hall. The crèche was provided by the Jaycees. In December of 1999, Councilwoman Ann

McCulloch questioned the appropriateness of the display, noting that guidelines from the New York State Council of Mayors advised against religious displays on public property. She asserted that taxpayers should not be required to pay for the sponsorship of other people's beliefs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1999) The following year, the Jaycees erected the display on the Oliver's parking lot at the corner of West Main and Oak streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 December 2000). Since that time, a menorah has been added to the display.

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

In the 1980s, the Richmond Memorial Library had a computer it made available to patrons. Then, in 1998, it set up two internet terminals for use by the general public (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1998).

In 1998, the County Historian's Office and Genesee County History Department were moved from the Holland Land Office Museum to 3 West Main Street where it shared the building with the County's Department of Buildings and Grounds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 August 1999).

### 15: Cemeteries

There were no significant developments during this decade.

### 16: Firefighting

There were no apparent developments of particular significance during this decade.

### 17: Healthcare

By July of 1991, Genesee County Hospice was ready to become accredited and to provide care of its first patient. The goal of the organization was to provide pain relief and psychological support in the last six months of life. To aid in providing this care, a hospice room was established at Genesee Memorial Hospital by the Hawley family in memory of Ellen S. Hawley. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 July 1991)

In 1993, *The Daily News* reported that a nursing home was being designed for erection on the grounds of the Veterans Administration Hospital (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1993). Two years later, the 126-bed facility was opened for use (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y.,

29 August 1995). Nursing home care was available not only to veterans themselves, but also to their family members.

As of 1997, Regional Action Phone (RAP) had provided 25 years of service to the community. It had received over 300,000 calls during that period of time. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 October 1997) The goal of RAP was to aid individuals experiencing psychological distress.

In January of 1998, Crossroads House, was opened and accepted its first resident. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 January 2008) Operated by a non-profit organization, it provided personalized comfort 24 hr. a day, seven days a week, for terminally ill patients. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 September 2003)

In the late 1990s, the City's two hospitals were finding the cost of maintaining ambulance service exceeding the revenue such service generated. The problem was said to stem from restrictions on the fees that hospitals were allowed to charge. In late July of 1998, by a vote of 6-2, City Council agreed to spend \$203,000 for the purchase of the ambulances and equipment. It also agreed to add 14 full-time union employees and nine part-time non-union employees to the City Fire Department in order to provide an ambulance service for the community. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1998)

For 70-plus years, Batavians had been receiving health care from two hospitals: Genesee Memorial and St. Jerome. By the 1990s, continuing to have two independent facilities in one relatively small community was becoming increasingly problematic. After earlier discussing ways to collaborate, in 1995 the two hospitals began to propose an actual merger. (Larry Barnes, *A brief history of Batavia's public hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y., self-published, 2013] pp. 11-12)

In 1998, organized opposition to the proposed merger emerged with the formation of a group calling itself, "People Against Lost Services" (PALS). A major focus of the opposition was on by-laws of the merged hospital that would require it to follow the Ethical and Religious Directives for Health Care Services published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (Larry Barnes, *A brief history of Batavia's public hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y., self-published, 2013] pp. 14-15)

Throughout 1998, the debate over the proposed merger intensified. As 1999 began, the necessary State approval for a merger had not yet been forthcoming and the merger process seemed to have stalled. Then, abruptly and without warning, the conflict came to an end. As reported in *The Daily News* of February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1999, the hospital merger was suddenly called off.

(Larry Barnes, *A brief history of Batavia's public hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y., self-published, 2013] pp. 16-17)

Under the terms of the agreement ending the proposed merger, the Sisters of Mercy ended their sponsorship of St. Jerome Hospital, St. Jerome Hospital property was transferred to the Genesee Memorial Hospital Group, and a new name was to be chosen for the resulting medical facility. (Larry Barnes, *A brief history of Batavia's public hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y., self-published, 2013] pp. 17-18) In May of 1999, *The Daily News* reported that "United Memorial Medical Center" had been selected as the new name for Batavia's sole remaining hospital (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 May 1999).

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In January of 1995, the Association for Retarded Children was renamed, "Association for Retarded Citizens" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 January 1995).

Later the same year, the Youth Center moved from its Bank Street location to the former pool house at MacArthur Park (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 September 1995).

Three years later, in 1998, the Senior Center at 2 Bank Street was sold to the County by the City for \$1.00. Under terms of the sale, the County agreed to keep senior programming at the site for at least 20 years. The Office for the Aging, housed in the Senior Center, was a County agency since its inception. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1998).

Also in 1998, \$7 million was bequeathed by Roxanne Marshall to the Muriel H. Marshall Fund to pay for non-medical services for the elderly in Genesee County. A few years earlier, she had created the fund in honor of her mother. The bequest was to be administered by the Rochester Area Community Foundation with a local advisory committee recommending specific grants. Marshall had suggested using the money to purchase a van to transport seniors free of charge, to purchase halogen lamps, to buy special telephone devices for the deaf, to acquire amplifying devices for TVs and radios, for subscriptions to magazines and newspapers, and for special outings such as a trip to a show, among other uses. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1998)

Roxanne Marshall was born in Genesee County in 1932 and was a graduate of Batavia High School. After completing her higher education, she taught at the 12-Corners Middle School in Brighton until her retirement in 1987. Her father, Arthur H. Marshall, was the Chairman of the Board of Griswold and McWain, the publishers of *The Daily News* at that time. He was also

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President of Genesee County Savings and Loan. The money Roxanne Marshall inherited from him was the core of her estate. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1998)

### 19: Disasters

In what was termed at the time as the biggest fire in the City's history, the Eastern Molding International plant on Elizabeth Street was destroyed in April of 1999 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 April 1999). The facility covered 4,600 sq. ft. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 April 1999). Nearly a month later, a local man was arrested on charges of arson (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 April 1999) and then, after the passage of several more months, he was found guilty of the crime (*The Buffalo News*, Buffalo, N.Y., 11 December 1999). The plant was rebuilt (*The Buffalo News*, Buffalo, N.Y., 27 February 2000)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

A three-day airshow at the County airport in the Summer of 1994 drew an estimated 70 thousand of spectators. This was the first time the event, sponsored by the Warplane Museum in Geneseo, had been held in Batavia. Previously, it had taken place only in Geneseo, starting there in 1981. The event, named "Wings Over Batavia," was intended to be an annual attraction. In fact, the Warplane Museum President was quoted as saying, "I think we'll be here for a long time." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 August 1994) Unfortunately, that was not to be and later in the decade the promoters moved the airshow to the Southern Tier.

In 1996, a new baseball stadium opened on the site of the former MacArthur Stadium. Named "Dwyer Stadium" in honor of Edward Dwyer, long-time president of the Genesee County Baseball Club, it cost \$3.4 million and could seat 2,600 baseball fans. The stadium it replaced, with a capacity of only 1,680, had been built in 1939. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1996)

Western Regional Off-Track Betting Corporation (OTB) purchased Batavia Downs in 1998. It paid \$2.48 million for the 45-acre site that included the grandstand, clubhouse, track kitchen, and 22 stables. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 October 1998)

### 21: War, impact of war

This decade was free of any war that took lives of Batavians.

## 22: Families, persons of note

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Mancuso family was arguably the most prominent family in the community. Early in the 1900s, Vincenzo (Charles) Mancuso and his son Rosolino (Benjamin) Mancuso came to Batavia, the latter by the way of the sugarcane fields in Louisiana. As described by their biographer, William Brown, Jr., Benjamin recognized that he needed to master a trade and consequently went to a trade school in Chicago where he learned plumbing. When he returned to Batavia, he and his father connected households to the community's new sewer system. Later, Benjamin and Charles purchased some plumbing tools and opened a plumbing business on Hutchins Street. (William F. Brown, Jr., *The Mancusos of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 1986] p.iii)

The plumbing business was the beginning of a dynasty. Within a few years, Benjamin and his four younger brothers: Dominic, Joseph, Lawrence, and Thomas built a retail and wholesale empire unlike anything the community had seen or would likely later see. It included automobile dealerships for all six General Motors vehicles, a restaurant, bowling alleys, a theater, a furniture store, a plumbing and hardware store, and extensive real estate holdings that included offices, shops, and homes. The Batavia Industrial Center, a pioneering venture in developing incubators for start-up businesses, was also a Mancuso undertaking. (William F. Brown, Jr., *The Mancusos of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 1986] pp. iii and 102) The family's influence continues into the current decade.

## 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

In 1992, the Orleans and Genesee arts councils consolidated into the Genesee-Orleans Regional Arts Council (GO ART!). The merger provided several advantages including the prospect of additional funding opportunities and savings from consolidation. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 February 1992).

Also in 1992, the local Red Cross celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 March 1992).

Two years later, in 1994, *The Daily News* reported that the Batavia Club was in financial trouble with significant cash flow problems. It had 120 members, each of whom was being assessed \$600 annually. In 1992, the club had taken out a \$125,000 mortgage from several of its members to cover the costs being incurred. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 April 1994)

Leadership Genesee, operating under the auspices of Cornell Cooperative Extension, held its first meeting in December of 2000. The organization's mission was to discover and nurture emerging community leaders. Additional members were selected once each year on the basis of their commitment to the well-being of the community, their desire for a shared vision for the County, and their desire to work to bring about positive change. They met once a month for day-long programs led by community experts in various fields. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 December 2000)

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

Batavia's only top-free female performers lasted just a few days. In late 1994, Topper's Playground Theater opened at 220 West Main Street. It advertised "exotic dancers." In less than a week, the business was closed by a court injunction for failing to have a permit. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 November 1994 and 8 November 1994)

### 25: Urban renewal

Formal urban renewal had ended a decade earlier.



## The Twenty-first Decade

### Overview

As was true of most of the preceding decades, multiple changes occurred. Perhaps the most noteworthy were a new City Hall, a changed configuration of downtown streets, and the changes associated with the emergence of a single hospital. The population fell once more, this time declining by 791 residents to a total of 15,465 ("Genesee County Information," *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014).

### 1: Infrastructure

In 2002 a suit seeking to block the water agreement between the City and the County was rejected for the third time. Under the agreement which precipitated the suit, the City leased the water plant to the County for \$550,000 each year. The plant was run by City employees who were paid by the County. The City then bought the water produced by the plant from the County, water that came from wells on Cedar Street and out of the Tonawanda Creek. Should a back-up supply ever be needed, that was made possible via a connection into the Monroe County Water Authority line on East Main Street Road. The County agreed to do \$7.5 million in repairs to the plant and pay the City a one-time payment of \$700,000 for its maps, records, equipment and tools. As a part of the agreement, the City was also given a larger share of the County sales tax, estimated to be worth \$50 million over four decades. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 November 2000) This agreement had been ratified in its final form by a 5-4 vote of City Council in early February of 2001 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 February 2001).

With the new water agreement in place, a water tower near the Veterans Administration facility, and water towers newly built for the Monroe County Water Authority line on East Main Street Road, the old water tower in downtown Batavia was no longer needed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 September 2003). A firm by the name of "Advanced Explosives Demolition" was employed to bring down the tower (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 August 2003). Although the firm's name implied that the structure was to be imploded, in practice it was cut up and taken apart piecemeal. A crowd gathered on August 30, 2003 to watch the first section coming down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 November 2003). Most of those present likely understood that this represented the end of a significant landmark and the disappearance of an important piece of Batavia's history.

The first half of this decade witnessed significant changes to East Main, Main, and West Main streets and Jefferson Avenue. In July of 2001, City Council reviewed a \$14 million proposal that reconfigured Jefferson Avenue into an S-curve that terminated on Main Street east of the intersection that had existed for nearly the entire history of the community. The proposal also included raised medians and curb cut-outs along portions of East Main, Main, and West Main streets and reconfigured intersections at Lewiston Road, Oak Street, and Ellicott Street. Furthermore, the plans called for trees, shrubs, and decorative light fixtures. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 July 2001)

Work on the above streets began April 28, 2003 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 May 2003). The project was finished in late December of 2004 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 December 2004). The final cost was \$21.6 million (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 April 2003). While most Batavians probably appreciated the changed streetscape, not everyone was pleased. In particular, the S-curve on Jefferson Avenue inspired many detractors.

Late in this decade, a major project involved rebuilding Ellicott Street at a cost of \$1.28 million. As with Main Street, the work included curb cut-outs and the addition of trees. The existing four driving lanes were reduced to two and a bicycle lane was added between Court and Cedar streets. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 2010)

For several years, the City and the Town of Batavia used a landfill off Harloff Road in the Town of Batavia. Eventually, it was determined that hazardous wastes were being deposited there apparently beginning around 1968 and continuing to 1980. Both ground water and the soil became contaminated. The City, Town, and NL Industries were held responsible for most of the cost of clean-up. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 October 2005) In 2001, the City Council authorized the Council President to sign agreements that were part of a \$7,347,176 clean-up effort. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 March 2001) In 2005, the Federal Government, satisfied with the remedial efforts, removed the site from its list of hazardous waste sites requiring action. The landfill had been on the list since 1982. The City and Town were both reimbursed for about 75% of their clean-up costs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 October 2005)

Since 1918, Batavia's City Hall had been the former Brisbane mansion at 10 West Main Street. Beginning in 1964, an addition housed the Police Department. As the turn of the next century arrived, plans were made to construct a new, two-story City Hall facility at the southwest corner of Genesee Country Mall. The projected cost was \$4.2 million. In July of 2004, the new City Hall was officially opened. By then, the cost had risen to \$4.5 million. (*The*

*Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 November 2004) The Police Department remained at 10 West Main Street, expanding into the space vacated by offices that moved to the new location. At the same time all of the above changes were occurring, the Mall's name was changed to "City Centre."

### 2: Transportation

Over the years, numerous improvements were made to the airport on Saile Road. (The airport is included in this history of Batavia because the City is the principal community served by the facility and, historically, it is the final successor to the airport once located at the site of present-day Bogue Avenue.) In 2002, plans were made to extend the runway by 1,100 feet. This required relocating a section of State Street Road. The project was 90% funded by the Federal Aviation Administration, 5% by the State, and 5% by the County. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 February 2002)

### 3: Housing

During this decade, housing to accommodate individuals with limited income and/or special needs continued to be built. One such example was the Havenwood Congregate Living Apartments located on three acres of land within the Veterans Administration hospital grounds. Ground-breaking ceremonies took place in October of 2004. The individuals served were primarily low-income senior citizens over age 60 and disabled veterans of all ages, but were not limited to just those two groups. The facility, costing \$3.5 million, was built by the Genesee Valley Rural Preservation Council (GVRPC). It consisted of 32 1-bedroom apartments. The residents lived semi-independently, but could receive help with support services such as meals and transportation. Social and recreational activities were also provided. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 October 2004) Havenwood opened in September of 2006, reportedly to "rave reviews" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 September 2006).

A second example of new housing to serve older individuals with limited income and/or special needs was Jerome Place. Located at 18 Bank Street, it utilized the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> floors of the former St. Jerome Hospital building. A product of collaboration between United Memorial Medical Center and Conifer Realty, it consisted of 37 apartments. Both 1- and 2-bedroom units were available, some with handicap/wheelchair accessibility that included lowered countertops and stove controls plus roll-in showers. Residents had to be at least 55 and meet income specifications. Construction began in October of 2009 and the apartments were ready for rental in August of 2010. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 August 2010)

#### 4: Energy sources

By this decade, solar panels, used to generate heat or to produce electricity, had become alternative sources of energy in many places across the country. However, they were still seldom employed in Batavia. Wind farms, consisting of multiple wind-powered generators, were beginning to be built at several rural locations in Western New York. Single wind generators for use by individual landowners also appeared here and there on rural property. No such generators were erected within the City during this period.

#### 5: Communication

Before this decade, local news was communicated via commercial media solely by radio, television, and newspapers. Then, in this decade, two new sources emerged, both employing the Internet. On December 9, 2008, *The Daily News* launched an on-line newspaper: *TheDailyNewsOnline.com* (Daniel Zwierzynski, President and Systems Manager for *The Daily News*, e-mail message to the author, 29 October 2015). Less than three months later, March 1, 2009, Billie and Howard Owens began operating a competing on-line news service: *TheBatavian.com* (Howard Owens, e-mail message to the author, 30 January 2015).

#### 6: County and city boundaries

There were no changes in the County or City boundaries in this decade.

#### 7: Government, governing structure

Periodically, consideration has been given to consolidation of the City and Town of Batavia. That possibility again came up for review in this decade. In June of 2009, Charles Zettek of the Center for Governmental Research in Rochester presented an overview of a possible consolidation in a public meeting of Town and City officials held at the Batavia Town Hall. The report suggested a three-tiered property tax structure to accommodate the differing levels of services that would result within the consolidated community. It predicted that consolidation could reduce overall administrative costs by \$212,000 per year. It also anticipated that State incentives to encourage consolidation would become available. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 June 2009)

Consolidation, as in the past, proved to be a controversial matter. When a State grant of \$49,500 became available for pursuing consolidation, two of the nine City Council members

voted against accepting it and they also opposed spending \$2,750 of the City's funds to explore consolidation. After a majority of City Council members voted to accept the State grant, the Council then appointed an interview committee to select persons to serve on a joint Town/City Charter Task Force. The task force was to be charged with creating a potential charter for a consolidated community. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 2010) Further developments are described in the following chapter.

### 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

In addition to considering consolidation of the City and Town, discussions also took place in regard to consolidation of individual services with the Town or with the County. One such area of discussion involved the possibility of consolidating the City and County emergency dispatch services. The latter proved to be at least as controversial as consolidation of the City and Town. However, in March of 2008, the City Council, by a 7-2 vote, agreed to proceed with an application for a grant to consolidate dispatch services with the County (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 March 2008).

Consolidation of emergency dispatch services began on September 1, 2008. Persons answering 911 calls from within the City were no longer operating out of the Police Department at 10 West Main Street, but were in the County Sheriff's Office communication center on Park Road. From the public's standpoint, the most obvious result (and the most controversial one) was the change in Police Department hours. The Department was thereafter open to the public only weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Persons showing up at the Department after hours were instructed to use a phone at the back door to contact the Sheriff's dispatch center and request that an officer be sent. In an emergency or dangerous situation, they were advised to go to the Genesee County Jail lobby next door. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 August 2008)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

For nearly 95 years, the premier department store in Batavia had been the C. L. Carr Company. In June of 2001, *The Daily News* reported that this locally owned landmark was permanently closing as soon as the remaining merchandise and store fixtures were sold. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 June 2001)

## 10: Factories/industries

In 2004, Batavia's former gas holder on Evans Street, long used for other storage purposes, was renovated and converted into a doctor's office. (Dana Lamb, Office Manager for Dr. Anna Lamb, telephone call to the author, 9 February 2015) The structure had first come into use when Batavia's streets were illuminated with gas lights.

## 11: Banking/financial services

In 2004, a multi-story building, the Tompkins Financial Center, was erected at 90 Main Street. Occupied beginning in 2005, it had employees of both the Bank of Castile and Tompkins Insurance Agencies. (Krysia Mager, Marketing Officer, e-mail to the author, 11 February 2015)

During this decade, banks commonly began to offer banking services on line, giving customers access to their accounts through the Internet. Beyond this, there appear to have been were no particularly significant developments in this decade except for the shuffling of bank names and ownership reflecting changes at the State or National level.

## 12: Education

Genesee Community College continued to expand its home campus northeast of the City. In 2004, a new student union was approved by State University of New York (SUNY) Trustees. Plans for the 12,000 sq. ft. addition on the east side of the main structure called for multipurpose rooms for educational activities, student clubs, and other student gatherings. Also included in the plans were a large group assembly space, a social area, and a small café that students could use for after-hours meals and study. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 2004) Construction was planned to begin around March 1, 2005 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 2004). The facility opened the following year.

Near the end of this decade, the County Ways and Means Committee recommended approval of a 2,200 sq. ft. art gallery attached to the fine arts addition on the west side of the main structure. It would allow students an opportunity to gain experience in such fields as curatorship and museum work. Furthermore, it could be used for traveling exhibits, local shows, and receptions. In addition to the action by the Ways and Means Committee, the Genesee Community College Board of Trustees also voted to approve the project. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 2009) Further information on the art gallery is in the next chapter.

Local parochial schools, as was the case elsewhere, continued to suffer from declining enrollments. In December of 2003, parents of students at St. Mary's School on Woodrow Road received a letter from Bishop Henry J. Mansele stating that the school would be closed at the end of the 2003-04 academic year (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 December 2003).

In an effort to continue Catholic education for their children, parents of St. Mary's School students sought and received approval from the State for the incorporation of the Batavia Grace Ann Foundation. They planned a fundraising to provide for a new school. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 April 2004) By August of 2004, 30 students had signed up for classes at what was named, "Mary's Grace School." Students in K-8 were scheduled to meet at the First United Methodist Church on Lewiston Road where space could accommodate up to 50 children. The school was to be served by five full-time teachers and a few part-time staff. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 August 2004) Although enrollment was strong, two years later, Mary's Grace School was forced to close. The stated reason was the loss of transportation for outlying students. This occurred when a bus transporting a Notre Dame student from Albion, on which Mary's Grace students were able to ride, ended its operation after the Notre Dame student graduated from high school.

Further loss of parochial schooling occurred when the Buffalo Diocese announced in early 2006 the closing of St. Anthony's School at the end of the 2005-06 school year. The school, located at 114 Liberty Street, and one of four schools being closed in the Diocese, had opened in 1908. Declining enrolments and financial difficulties were cited as the reasons for the closing. Most of the current students lived on Batavia's south side. They were expected to transfer to St. Joseph's School in Batavia or Holy Family School in LeRoy. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 2006)

During this decade Genesee Valley BOCES began name changes. By June of 2006, the facilities on State Street had been renamed, "Batavia Career and Technical Education Center" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 2006).

### 13: Religion

Just as Catholic schools experienced problems, area Catholic churches also faced difficulties. In 2007, St. Anthony's Church and Sacred Heart Church were consolidated and renamed "Ascension Parish West" and "Ascension Parish East." The sources of the difficulties reportedly were a combination of fewer priests, a declining population, and economic challenges. Masses

continued to be held in both church buildings, but as described in the following chapter, this proved to be a temporary move. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 January 2013)

Early in 2008, St. Joseph's Church and St. Mary's Church also started consolidated. They were renamed "Resurrection Parish—St. Joseph's" and "Resurrection Parish—St. Mary's." The merger process was expected to be complete by March of 2008. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 January 2008)

In 2001, City Church, led by the Rev. Marty McDonald, moved from the Y.W.C.A. to the former Mancuso Theater building on East Main Street. While the interior was extensively remodeled, the exterior remained much as it had appeared during movie theater days. In 2004, the Church also acquired the former George Smith Motors building on Center Street. The latter building was remodeled and reopened in 2005 as the "Generation Center." The Center served as a youth building and provided for a children's ministry. A food pantry was also located there. In addition, the Center was available for public functions, e.g., for blood drives and as a meeting place for local non-profit organizations. (Marty Macdonald and Kathy Cervone, personal conversations with the author, 25 November 2014 and 17 February 2015)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

No particularly significant developments occurred in this decade.

### 15: Cemeteries

No particularly significant developments occurred in this decade.

### 16: Firefighting

When the main lines of the railroads serving Batavia passed through the middle of the community, having a single fire station was problematic. In particular, a need to send fire trucks across the tracks was a challenge. To address this issue, a second station, what could be termed a "substation," had long been provided east of the tracks as well as the main station to the west. The most recent such substation had been erected in 1947 at 443 Ellicott Street. With a need no longer existing for a second location, Fire Station No. 2 was closed in June of 2007. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June 2007) Since it had been 50 years since the mainline of the railroads had been moved, some readers might see this delayed closing as an



example of how slowly changes often occur even when a reason to make them has long been recognized.

### 17: Healthcare

Recall from the last chapter that Genesee Memorial Hospital acquired the former St. Jerome Hospital building in 1999 and the resulting facilities, on North and Bank streets, were renamed, "United Memorial Medical Center (UMMC). Beginning in March of 2006, renovations were started on the first floor and ER wing of the former St. Jerome Hospital for their conversion to outpatient services. The work was completed in December of 2007. The renovations, costing \$10 million, totaled 31,500 sq. ft. of space and included updated labs, radiology and EKG services, and offices for visiting physicians. An open house was held on December 7<sup>th</sup>. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 November 2007) The following year, the Growney Building at the corner of Bank Street and Washington Avenue was razed and a green space created. The building had previously been used for physicians' offices. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 June 2008).

The North Street facilities of UMMC also underwent major changes in this decade. Ground was broken in October of 2009 for a \$20 million expansion. This project involved a 44,000 sq. ft. 1-story addition to the front of the existing building. It included five new operating rooms, one new treatment room, and 19 private recovery areas. Completion was slated for early in 2011. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 April 2010)

When the hospitals in Batavia stopped providing ambulance service in 1998, the City Fire Department took over the service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1998). The costs turned out to exceed revenue and in January of 2008, City Council voted 9-0 to end ambulance service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 January 2008). Effective September 1, 2009, Mercy EMS, a Buffalo-based company, took over ground ambulance operations both in the City and throughout the County (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 September 2009) This was in addition to the emergency air medical transport service already provided by the company.

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In 2001, the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) proposed a group home for five adults at 68 Chandler Avenue. This was to be in addition to earlier group homes established at 24 Garfield Avenue and 37 Chase Park. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 May 2001) The same year, a group home at 25 Meadowcrest Drive was also planned (ARC staff, conversation with the author, 12 February 2015). In 2005, ARC proposed yet another group home, a residence for

five individuals, at 33 Woodrow Road (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 October 2005). All such facilities were designed to provide persons with developmental disabilities 24-hour on-site supervision in a home-like setting (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 May 2001). Despite some initial opposition from other residents in the neighborhoods, all of the proposed home eventually became operational.

In October of 2007, *The Daily News* reported that ARC was acquiring the former St. Mary's school at 38 Woodrow Road for recreational and office space (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 2007). The facility eventually was also used to prepare dinners for Meals on Wheels. The existing facilities at 64 Walnut Street remained in use.

In January of 2010, DePaul Batavia Apartments, located on the north side of East Main Street, began accepting residents. There were 42 apartments, 31 of which were reserved for people receiving services from the Office of Mental Health (OMH). The other 11 apartments were open to anyone with an income below a specified maximum. Residents had to be without criminal convictions, have sufficient resources to pay the rent, and meet other requirements. The 1- and 2-bedroom apartments each had a range, refrigerator, microwave, washer, dryer, flat-screen TV with basic cable access, and local phone service. Tenants had access to a community room, game and computer room, two lounges, and a secured storage area. (Rental office staff member, telephone conversation with the author, 27 January 2015)

### 19: Disasters

On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2006, a major "surprise" snowstorm struck Western New York including Batavia. The two-day storm caused major damage as the result of the trees still being leafed out and the amount of heavy, wet snow. Power was out over large areas including within the City due to falling limbs and trees that took down the wires. The event cost Genesee County alone about \$2.1 million dollars in clean-up costs. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 2007)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

In 2002, City residents participated in multiple events celebrating Genesee County's bicentennial year. Activities began March 30, 2002, the month and day that, two-hundred years earlier, the County had been incorporated. A bicentennial parade was held July 13<sup>th</sup> in LeRoy and a fireworks display was held September 2<sup>nd</sup> in Oakfield. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 2001; and *The Daily News*, *Genesee County Bicentennial Keepsake Edition*,

Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 2002) Sue Conklin, Genesee County Historian, served the lead role in organizing the celebrations.

In 2002, Genesee-Orleans Regional Arts Council (GO-ART) moved to 201 East Main Street, an early location of Bank of Genesee and later the clubhouse of the Batavia Club (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 September 2002). From 2002 until the Batavia Club folded in 2007, it and GO-ART shared use of the building.

In 2008, the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July "Picnic in the Park" was held for the 30<sup>th</sup> time. The event, held in Centennial Park, was sponsored by GO-ART. As in other years, it featured entertainment, arts and crafts vendors, food vendors, and carriage rides, among other attractions. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 2008)

### 21: War, impact of war

On September 11, 2001, two groups of foreign terrorists flew commercial passenger jets into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. A third jet crashed in Pennsylvania after being seized by a third group of terrorists who apparently intended to fly it into either the White House or Capitol Building. Several thousand lives were lost, none of whom were Batavians, but the psychological impact felt throughout the Country was very much evident in Batavia.

The 9-11 terrorist attacks led to military intervention in Afghanistan by the United States and its allies with the goal of dismembering al-Qaeda, driving the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, and seizing Osama bin Laden who was believed to have masterminded the terrorist attacks in the U.S.

In 2003, further military action occurred with a U.S. invasion of Iraq with the goal of driving Saddam Hussain from power on the pretense that the Iraq government had weapons of mass destruction and was purportedly linked in some way to the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

Both military ventures continued for many years and Batavians served in the forces involved. However, no Batavians lost their lives.

### 22: Families, persons of note

One of Batavia's most prominent women has been Catherine Kirchner Roth. Ninety-four years of age at the time this book was being written, she served the community in multiple

ways including as a member of City Council, member of the City Planning Board, member of the Mental Health Board, director on the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce, member of the Holland Purchase Historical Society, member of the Genesee Memorial Hospice League, Girl Scout leader, and as a founding member of the Landmark Society of Genesee County. Over the years, she taught more than 4,000 children how to swim as a Red Cross swimming instructor.

Born in Brooklyn August 23, 1920, Catherine Roth was one of three identical triplets, all of whom were surviving at the time this book was being written. She attended William Smith College and later taught school for two years. Mrs. Roth married Dr. Laurence G. Roth in 1943. They moved to Batavia in 1945 where their three children were born.

One of the Roth's adult children died when his vehicle was struck by an elderly driver going the wrong way. As a result of this tragedy, both Mrs. Roth and her husband became strong advocates for getting unfit drivers off the roads. Subsequently they received the State Jaycees' "Humanitarian of the Year" award for their efforts. For her service to the community, Catherine Roth was also chosen as Genesee County Chamber of Commerce "Woman of the Year." In addition, the Red Cross gave her its "Exceptional Volunteer Service Award."

(All of the above information was obtained from the Roth family file in the Genesee County History Department archives.)

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

In 2007, the Batavia Club, the City's oldest private club, voted to disband and, thus, ended a 125 year run. For most of its existence, the Club owned the former Bank of Genesee building at 201 East Main Street. President Benjamin C. Mancuso cited declining interest and falling membership as the reason for disbanding. The vote to dissolve came at the Club's annual meeting in November. Membership had peaked above 200 at one time, but more recently had numbered only around 40. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 November 2007) From 2002 to 2007, the Batavia Club shared use of 201 East Main Street with GO-ART. (See the earlier section on entertainment and recreation.)

In 2010, Elks Lodge 950 had its charter revoked and members were locked out of its building at 213 East Main Street. According to Timothy Garlock, local Exalted Ruler, the charter was revoked on February 5<sup>th</sup> when national leaders determined that the local lodge had failed to make required reports and also had failed to comply with the Elks auditing and accounting

manual. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 March 2010). The local property was subsequently sold and the building razed.

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

Suzanne Corona, 41, was arrested in June of 2010 and charged with both public lewdness and adultery after police allegedly witnessed her engaging in sexual intercourse on a picnic table at Farrell Park. Her sexual partner, Justin Amend, 21, was also charged with public lewdness but not adultery because he claimed not to know that Corona was married. The police had been called by a mother who reported that a couple was copulating in the presence of children. Corona later explained her behavior as being the result of not having sufficient sex with her husband. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 June 2010) The adultery charge against Corona was later dismissed under a plea bargain arrangement. She pled guilty to public lewdness and was sentenced to a one-year probation. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 November 2010) The case attracted national attention both because of the rarity with which adultery charges were brought against individuals and the specific nature of this particular instance.

### 25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal activity in this decade.



## The Twenty-second Decade

### First Five Years

#### Overview

Since this book was being completed early in 2015, this final chapter covers only part of a decade. Furthermore, since census data is collected only once every 10 years, there was no current information on Batavia's population.

#### 1: Infrastructure

There were no particularly significant infrastructure developments during this period.

#### 2: Transportation

In February of 2014, *The Daily News* reported that the County would receive a \$1 million State grant to help cover the cost of a new airport terminal. A new terminal was estimated to cost \$5.5 million. The grant came with the stipulation that construction had to be undertaken within five years or the County would be required to return the \$1 million to the State. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 February 2014)

#### 3: Housing

A study reported by *The Daily News* in December of 2014 gave an overall picture of the affordability of housing in the County including in Batavia. County-wide, for households living in rental housing, 43.4% paid more than 30% of their income for the housing. For households living in owned homes, only 22.1% paid more than 30%. County-wide, for households living in rental housing, 22.0% paid more than 50% of their income for the housing. For households living in owned homes, only 6.6% paid more than 50%. The study also noted vacancy rates. County-wide, the vacancy rate for homeowner property was 0.8%. For rental property, the vacancy rate was 4.5%. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 December 2014) Since the City and County were not analyzed separately, it was not possible to tell whether the above figures were also representative of the City alone. Perhaps they were.

In 2014, the former Carr's warehouse fronting on Jackson Square was renovated and converted into four apartments and one office "flex space." The contractor for the work was Thompson Builds, Inc. of Byron. The work was funded in part by a New York Main Street grant. This project was part of an effort to both preserve and repurpose historic structures and bring residents back into the downtown area of the City. (Julie Pacatte of the Batavia Development Corporation, personal conversation with the author, 27 January 2015)

Late in 2014, the Genesee Community Warming Center Coalition was established by several County organizations. There were two warming sites: one for men at the Salvation Army facility on East Main Street and the other for women and children at the First Methodist Church on Lewiston Road. The sites were opened from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. whenever the wind-chill temperature dropped to 10 degrees or lower. The sites were meant for people with no permanent or safe home. They provided a light dinner, breakfast, and a cot with blankets. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 January 2015)

### 4: Energy sources

There were no new energy sources available to Batavians during this period.

### 5: Communication

By this period, the use of personal computers and mobile devices (such as iPhones and e-readers), all with access to the Internet, had become widespread. This led to development of Internet sites such as "Facebook" by which individuals communicated with one another in a public venue. In 2014, *The Daily News* reported on a Facebook group identified as "Batavia Neighborhood Watch (BNW)," a group monitored by Bea McManis. BNW had begun in August 2013 as a protest group opposing the installation of on-street cameras intended to observe public activities. It later evolved to a site whose scope included all of the County and not just Batavia. Its focus also evolved, shifting to "positive talk" and "social engagement." As of late November in 2014, its membership numbered a little over 1,000. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 2014)

### 6: County and city boundaries

There were no changes during this period.



## 7: Government, governing structure

As described in the last chapter, consolidation of the City and the Town of Batavia was again being considered. A State grant had been received to pursue consolidation. Both the City and the Town appointed representatives to a task force to draw up a charter for a proposed consolidation. In April of 2012, the task force presented the first "official" glimpse of its work to date regarding the formation of "One Batavia." The presentation was given in the City Council Board Room before members of the Town Board, City Council, and general public. Under the proposed charter, the existing Town and City governments were to be replaced by a city government consisting of a city manager, five at-large representatives, and four representatives of wards. A tiered property tax structure was to accommodate the differences in services provided to different sections of the new city. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 April 2012)

A month later, in May of 2012, *The Daily News* reported that the consolidation process had stalled. While the City Council voted to move ahead, the Town Board did not, stating that it needed more time to give "due diligence." Further meetings of the consolidation task force, led by Chad Zambito of the Town, were suspended. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 May 2012). Had the Town given its support for moving ahead, the proposed charter would soon have gone to public vote. Approval would have been required by both Town and City residents. However, nothing further happened and, as of the writing of this book in early 2015, the proposed consolidation appeared to have been abandoned. Thus, history repeated itself.

## 8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

During the author's life time, there was a dramatic change in the roles played by women within our society. Work previously judged suitable only for men became open to women as well. For example, in January of 2013, Jamie Givens became Batavia's first female patrol officer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 2013).

The use of police officers on bicycles again began to be employed in 2013. In the Spring of 2013, City Council approved a bike patrol officer and equipment in the 2013-2014 City budget. Beginning in July, Kevin DeFelice became the bicycle patrol officer. He worked a 3-day, 2-night shift. DeFelice rode fully equipped with a bullet-proof vest, firearm and extra ammunition, baton, portable radio, taser, and bag for extra items. The advantage of a bike patrol officer was said to be greater interaction with the public and a superior ability to spot illegal activity. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 August 2013)

In August of 2014, the Police Department announced that a policy of “neighborhood policing” was beginning. City residents were told that they should expect to see police officers walking the streets and sidewalks as well as riding bicycles. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 August 2014)

The Police Department moved from School Street to 10 West Main in 1964. Over the years, there was increasing dissatisfaction with the West Main facility and eventually a consulting firm, Geddis Architects, was employed by City Council to develop proposals both for renovations to the existing location and for possible relocation. In late 2014, City Council appointed a Police Facility Task Force to review the resulting proposals, develop a critical appraisal of the alternatives, review the cost estimates and possible funding sources, and make a recommendation to City Council by July 1, 2015. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 November 2014)

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

In 2012, the former school, later school administration building, on Washington Avenue was sold by the Batavia School District in an effort to reduce costs. The building was purchased by Reed Eye Associates, a business providing many types of eye care. When the building was renovated for its new use, an effort was made to return the interior to an appearance similar to how it appeared in the 1900s. Walls were moved and ceilings raised. To meet accessibility requirements, an elevator was added at the rear of the structure. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 July 2014)

### 10: Factories/industries

In 2009, City Council had applied for a Restore New York grant to rebuild former Harvester Company property at the end of Masse Place. The project was identified as the “Masse Gateway Batavia Development Project.” In 2010, a \$1.5 million grant was approved and work begun. The rebuilding was completed in late Summer of 2011 at a total cost of about \$1.9 million. One of the earliest tenants was the Merrill-Lynch financial services company. (Julie Pacatte of the Batavia Development Corporation, personal conversation with the author, 20 January 2015)

In June of 2014, the P. W. Minor shoe company revealed plans to close after nearly 150 years of operation. However, in August, Andrew Young and Peter Zeliff announced that they would form a corporation to buy P. W. Minor’s assets and keep it open. (*The Daily News*, Batavia,

N.Y., 27 December 2014) By February of 2015, production had doubled and the number of employees increased from 55 to 71 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 February 2015).

### 11: Banking/financial services

For many years, the HSBC bank on Main Street served great numbers of Batavians often including those who had banked at its predecessor, the Marine Midland Bank. In 2011, 195 New York State branches of HSBC were sold to First Niagara Bank. The Batavia Branch was one of them. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 August 2011) The First Niagara office at the corner of River and West Main Streets was then sold to Five Star Bank.

In 2014, Tompkins Insurance Agencies and the Bank of Castile purchased the building at 113-119 Main Street. The purchase was made to accommodate a growing banking and insurance staff. Retail stores and WBTA Radio remained in place on the first floor. ("Tompkins Insurance, Bank of Castile expanding in Batavia," posted 1 March 2014, *TheDailyNewsonline.com*, accessed 13 February 2015)

### 12: Education

In the previous chapter, it was noted that by 2006 the BOCES School on State Street was being called, "Batavia Career and Technical Education Center. By 2011, Genesee Valley BOCES itself was being called, "Genesee Valley Educational Partnership" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 March 2011). Nonetheless, at the time this book was being written, often the term "BOCES" continued to be used in reference to both the school and the parent organization.

In September of 2012, voters approved sale of the Batavia School District Administration Building on Washington Avenue by a vote of 272 to 13. Previously, the School Board had approved sale of the building to Reed Batavia Properties LLC for \$500,000. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 September 2012) In November of the same year, administrative offices began operating out of the Batavia High School building on State Street. The offices were accessible through the State Street parking lot.

Also in 2012, Robert Morris Elementary School was closed. Grades were shifted around at Jackson and John Kennedy schools. Fifth grade classes were moved to the Middle School on Ross Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 September 2012)

Other Batavia School District changes occurred in 2013. City school officials decided to sell 12 acres owned by the District and located off the end of North Street Extension, but formally

listed as 279 East Avenue. A sales agreement was made with Reinhart Enterprises in the amount of \$150,000. Reinhart Enterprises planned to use the property for the construction of housing. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 October 2013) Also in 2013, the School District began renting space in the former Robert Morris School. In October of that year, *The Daily News* reported two rooms had been rented out and three more tenants were seeking space. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 October 2013) A daycare operation was one of the tenants.

In 2014, voters approved the sale of the 12 acres off the end of North Street Extension by a vote of 466 to 102 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 2014).

The area's parochial schools also were undergoing changes during this time. In November of 2011, plans were underway to merge Holy Family School in LeRoy with St. Joseph's in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 2011). However, the next month, St. Joseph's opted out of any possible merger (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 December 2011). In August of 2013, *The Daily News* reported the closure of Holy Family School and swelling of enrollment at St. Joseph's School as a result (St. Joseph's School file, newspaper clipping, Genesee County History Department archives).

The Genesee Community College art gallery referred to in the previous chapter had its grand opening on April 15<sup>th</sup> of 2011. Totalling 1,700 sq. ft., the gallery was named in memory of Rosaline "Roz" Steiner, the late wife of Stuart Steiner, G.C.C. President. Roz Steiner had died unexpectedly in 2008. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 March 2011)

Further expansion on the main campus of Genesee Community College was approved by the County Legislature in January of 2015. Two new buildings were planned: a Student Success Center and a Community Wellness and Event Center. Construction was planned to start in the Spring of 2015. The Success Center was to be located in front of the main building entrance and was intended to provide one-stop services to students needing assistance with academic advisement and financial aid. The Wellness and Event Center was to be located near the athletic fields. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 January 2015)

### 13: Religion

In the previous chapter, St. Anthony's and Sacred Heart churches were reported to have consolidated as "Ascension Parish East and West." Mass continued to be held at both churches. However, a decision was later made to permanently close the doors of St. Anthony's after a final mass on June 13, 2013. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 January 2013)

Early 2013 saw the founding of a new church in Batavia, Eagles Fountain Fellowship. Co-pastors Michelle and Jason Norton served the congregation. After meeting for about 18 months in the Y.M.C.A., the congregation moved to City Centre where it spent eight weeks converting space for church purposes. A main worship room, separate children's church room, and a crying room for infants and toddlers were created. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 2014)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

Readers of a certain age may remember when food and drink in a library were both totally unacceptable. However, policies in this regard had changed by this decade. Having noted that patrons probably ate and drank when using library materials at home, librarians began to ask why it would be any different to eat and drink while using the same materials in the library itself. Furthermore, offering refreshments in a library would enhance its attractiveness. (Richmond Memorial Library staff, conversations with the author, multiple occasions) With these thoughts in mind, the Bookworm Café was opened at the Richmond Memorial Library in October of 2011 (Leslie DeLooze, telephone call to the author, 12 February 2015).

In 2013, the Genesee County History Department moved from its City location at 3 West Main Street to County Building 2 on West Main Street Road (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 November 2013).

### 15: Cemeteries

There were no developments in this area.

### 16: Firefighting

There were no particularly significant developments in this area.

### 17: Healthcare

This period saw more changes at United Memorial Medical Center (UMMC). In early 2012, the hospital announced plans to open an Urgent Care Facility in the Spring. Planned for a location in the Jerome Center on Bank Street, the Facility was to provide access to medical assistance for patients who had non-life-threatening health problems and who wanted to avoid a long wait in an emergency room. Plans called for the Urgent Care Facility to be open from 11

a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 January 2012) The next year, 2013, a \$2 million project involved major renovations to the post-partum maternity unit was completed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 2013).

Genesee Memorial Hospital Group (GMHG) was an entity made up of local citizens who, at annual meetings, chose the membership of the UMMC Board of Directors. The Group had been in existence for many decades and, in effect, provided public control, first over Genesee Memorial Hospital, and, later over UMMC. In May of 2013, GMHG voted itself out of existence, thereby leaving a hospital Board of Directors that was self-perpetuating. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 May 2013) In the author's view, this step may have been encouraged by hospital leadership in order to insure that the following development, listed below, would occur without local resistance.

Early in 2014, United Memorial Medical Center announced that it intended to become a part of the Rochester General Health System (RGHS), a five-hospital regional and integrated health care network. The hospital already had long-standing partnership ties with Rochester General hospitals involving pathology, urology, general surgery, and gastrointestinal treatment. The hospital's outpatient Cancer and Infusion Center had been opened in association with Rochester General's Lipson Cancer Center. Under the merger with RGHS, UMMC was to retain its local board and name. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 February 28 2014)

On January 1, 2015, UMMC officially joined Rochester Regional Health System, a newly formed health system that had combined Rochester General and Unity Health systems in July of 2014. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 January 2015)

On February 10, 2015, the hospital announced plans to enhance its cancer treatment center with a \$6.5 million expansion. The center was planned to provide a continuum of care at one location, including diagnosis, treatment and surgery. Plans called for the center to also offer both chemotherapy and radiation services. Construction was planned to begin in the Spring of 2015 and to be completed in 2016. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 February 2015)

Late in 2013, Homecare and Hospice was reported to be moving its offices from 550 East Main Street to 29 Liberty Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 2013). The organization provided services to clients in their own homes.

Two months later, Crossroads House, a hospice facility at 11 Liberty Street, announced plans to add a room, a handicapped bathroom, and other improvements to its building where terminally-ill clients were provided housing on site. A donation of \$15,000 had been received

from the Rotary Club toward the cost of these additions. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 December 2013) Note that Homecare and Hospice was a separate organization from Crossroads House.

In mid-May of 2013, an urgent care facility was opened in City Centre. Operated by Insource Healthcare Solutions, it promised to see patients within 15 minutes of arrival. The facility was to be open seven days a week, 365 days a year. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 April 2013)

Also in 2013, the Center for HOPE was dedicated at the Veterans Administration Medical Center. A \$15 million, 10,000 sq. ft. facility, it was built to serve about 100 women annually. It was designed to be a place for military women to recover from traumas associated with experiences ranging from combat to sexual assault. One of eight such facilities nationwide, Batavia's center provided 12 single-bedroom units, each with private bathrooms. HOPE stood for "Healing Opportunities for Peace and Empowerment." (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 December 2013)

For close to 40 years, Regional Action Phone (RAP) had provided services to area residents needing crisis care. In 2014, a new crisis hotline became operational: "The Care and Crisis Helpline of the Y.W.C.A." Funding was provided by the County Legislature. The Genesee County Mental Health Department awarded the contract. The services provided by the Helpline replaced crisis services previously provided by RAP. The latter, after being taken over by a Buffalo-based operation, had become very diversified in its scope and was no longer serving just its original function. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 December 2014)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

After experiencing years of financial losses, in August of 2014 the County Legislature began soliciting buyers for the Genesee County Nursing Home. The Home, consisting of a 160-bed skilled nursing facility and an 80-bed domiciliary, was earlier designated as "surplus property," a move required by State law in order for the property to be put up for sale. The Home, located on 7.2 acres, was assessed at \$10,940,000. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 August 2014)

### 19: Disasters

Fortunately, the area was free of disasters during this time.

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

The most significant entertainment event within this time period involved the start of activities to celebrate the City's Centennial. New Year's Eve, December 31, 2014, entertainment planned by a centennial committee took place outdoors on a temporary stage north of the Fire Department, indoors at the skating rink, in the basement of St. Mary's Church, and within City Hall. The outdoor entertainment featured vocal and instrumental performers. Activities in the skating rink and basement of St. Mary's were directed primarily at children and families. Fireworks were launched at 10 p.m. Within City Hall, the \$50/person evening included musical entertainment, dancing, and food. At midnight, City Hall celebrants toasted the New Year with champagne.

### 21: War, impact of war

While, during this time period, the United States withdrew most of its forces from Iraq and began to do so in Afghanistan, fighting broke out in Syria between rebels and government forces. Then a new extremist movement, calling itself "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (ISIS) began attacks in both Iraq and Syria, threatening to draw U.S. forces back into fighting in the Middle East. So far, no Batavians had lost their lives in the Middle East conflicts at the time this book was being written.

The war memorial in the front of the former Genesee Memorial Hospital building was removed in the last decade when additions were made to the United Memorial Medical Center on North Street. A new war memorial in memory of the military men and women who had died in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam was dedicated on May 17, 2014. Located in a grassy area on the southeast corner of Bank Street and Washington Avenue, it listed the names of the 283 Americans who perished in those conflicts. (*The Daily News*, 19 May 2014)

### 22: Families, persons of note

William F. Brown, Jr., who died November 29, 2014 at the age of 91, was a leading figure in the community for many decades. A graduate of Batavia High School and Canisius College, he completed graduate studies at Fordham University. Later, Brown served with the Army during World War II. He also served as the head of many community organizations including the Rotary Club, Batavia Club, Notre Dame Sports Boosters, Genesee County Chapter of the



American Red Cross, Batavia Chamber of Commerce, Genesee Economic Development Corporation, and St. Jerome Hospital Board of Directors.

Brown worked as a news reporter for WBTA Radio from 1948 to 1954 and became owner of the station from 1968 to 1986. He began a long-term association with Batavia Downs in 1947, serving eventually as the head publicist. Over the years he wrote many books on local history ranging from a book on Redfield Parkway to one on the Downs to one on St. Jerome Hospital to several on the Mancuso family, just to name a few.

William F. Brown, Jr. was married to Elizabeth Farrell. They had four children.

(The above information was gathered from the Brown file in the family archives of the Genesee County History Department.)

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

In 2011, the City Council contracted with czb LLC, a neighborhood consulting firm that helped community leaders create vibrant neighborhoods and downtowns. Czb, after studying Batavia, concluded that the City's competitiveness was being undermined in part by negativism on the part of many residents. This observation led to the 2012 establishment of a group known as "Vibrant Batavia" and, later, a quarterly publication, "Vibrant Times." The group's main goal was to stimulate both greater pride in Batavia and an enhanced level of civic participation by the City's residents. City Council provided \$45,000 for the first year's operation and in 2013 Leanna DiRisio was hired as a community organizer. (Vibrant Batavia website, accessed on line, 11 February 2015; and Leanna DiRisio, e-mail to the author, 12 February 2015) Many events and activities, especially neighborhood gatherings, were subsequently held. As this book was being written, a request for additional funding for another year's operation was being made to City Council.

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There were no particularly significant developments during this time period. However, as had been the case for many years, there was on-going concern about the presence of registered sex offenders in the community, especially those who moved without notifying authorities about their new location. In early 2015, the Batavia Police Department announced a new initiative to ensure that residents listed on the New York State Sex Offender Registry

were not violating laws. It was designed to do a better job of keeping tabs on Level 1 and 2 offenders, especially. As of February, there were a total of 78 registered sex offenders living in the City. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 February 2015)

### 25: Urban renewal

There were no urban renewal projects.

## Future Decades

This chapter has two purposes. One is to provide some speculations that may interest contemporaries of the author, i.e., those alive in 2015. The other is to share those speculations with readers who may not be born yet and may be reading this book decades, perhaps even two centuries or more, into the future.

Did William Seaver, when he published *A Historical Sketch of the Village of Batavia* in 1849, have any anticipation of the fact that we would be interested in his writings today, 166 years later? He gives no hint of that fact. However, the author of the current book fully anticipates the likelihood that there may be Batavians in the year 2181 who will be reading this publication and find it of interest. In fact, an effort is being made to place this book in places that will increase its chances of survival and discovery by such other persons “down the road.”

If readers 166 years from now peruse the predictions in this chapter, will they find them reasonably accurate, amazingly naïve, a reason for great amusement, or something else? The author’s one major regret is that he cannot be alive and present to see for himself. If you are a reader 166 years from now, you might want to visit the author’s plot in the historic Batavia Cemetery (it’s a little northeast of the Richmond Mausoleum) and share your reactions, although it seems unlikely that such an effort would be successful!

Predicting the future may be a fool’s journey. Could William Seaver, who by all accounts was a highly intelligent, educated, and competent individual, have any sense of what Batavia would be like in 2015? It seems improbable that he would have been so gifted. However, speculations about the future are still fun to attempt; and so they will follow below. May the reader find them interesting, if nothing else.

### A Past Prediction

Before we embark on predictions from the perspective of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Batavian, take note of the fact that a similar effort was made in 1897 by another local man who also sought to make predictions for Batavia and its surroundings. That man was the Rev. Henry R. Fancher who delivered a talk titled, “The Future,” in an address to the Genesee County Pioneer Association on June 8, 1897. (Genesee County Pioneer Association records, Richmond

Memorial Library, Batavia, N.Y.) The following quote is from a newspaper account of Fancher's speech, taken from an unidentified source, and pasted into the Association's records.

"Mr. Fancher said he could imagine driving out of a town like Batavia in the twentieth century over roads that were perfect and alongside which ran car tracks, over which both passengers and farm products were conveyed. He could see beautiful farm homes, set far more closely together than at present and surrounded with fine grounds. No farm would be more than three miles from a village and there would be no schoolhouses in the country. All of them would be located in villages. He imaged stopping at one of these farm homes and finding the farmer and his family just preparing to leave on a little pleasure trip in a flying machine. He would accompany them and on returning would be invited to remain to dinner. The housewife would have the meal prepared within a few minutes and without any of the fret and worry accompanying meal-getting at present. All of the cooking would be done by electricity. After dinner there would be no dish-washing by hand at least. The dishes would be placed in a large receptacle, as is done in the large hotels today, and would be cleansed and dried by machinery.

"If it was desired to take a trip to New York, the traveler might be hypnotized, placed in a pneumatic tube and shot to the metropolis, making the trip in 17 minutes. Or he might make the trip on the Central whizzer, a train that was dawn not by steam or electricity, but propelled 120 miles an hour by the motive power now embodied by Keeley's idea, which by that time, the speaker thought, would be successfully worked out. The visitor would find no such din in the city as at present, noise being almost entirely done away with, and in the big stores he would not have to walk about, but would simply step on a moving platform that would carry him to whatever point he wished to go to. By that time, the speaker expected, all disease caused by germs would be banished, there would be a vast improvement in social conditions. Christianity would have made its way to all parts of the world and wars would have ceased."

In a sense, the Rev. Fancher "set the bar" for judging the author's predictions that follow. He was on the mark in anticipating microwave cooking, home dish-washers, central schools, and paved highways. He wasn't terribly far off in anticipating private aircraft (some local farmers have their own) or moving sidewalks (occasionally found in places such as airport terminals). While unfortunately Fancher was way too optimistic in his expectation that all diseases caused by "germs" would disappear, he did anticipate the great advances stemming from the discovery of antibiotics. On the other hand, being hypnotized and then shot to New York City on a 17-minute trip inside a pneumatic tube has only come true if one forgets the part about hypnosis and accepts a 60-minute ride in a passenger jet as a near-enough substitute. And, of course, contrary to the good reverend's expectations, the din in cities has only gotten worse and wars show no sign of disappearing. Will the author's predictions that follow be any better or worse?

### Scope of the Predictions

Several "futurists" in 2015 have suggested scenarios for the United States as a whole that are so dramatic and catastrophic in nature that they pretty much preclude an ability to predict the specific implications for Batavia. Should they occur, "all bets would be off" as to what might follow for our part of the world. Consequently, this chapter only acknowledges their possibility and then moves on to the hopeful assumption that the general conditions that existed in 1801 and continue to exist in 2015 will be present in 2181 as well.

Among the possible dramatic and catastrophic scenarios which could occur, but the author chooses to set aside, are the following:

1. Climate change occurs to such a degree that life as we know it cannot continue.
2. A nuclear or biological attack, by terrorists or a nation state, results in wide-spread severe and deadly consequences for life in Genesee County.
3. The earth is struck by a large meteor destroying the area of impact and elsewhere dramatically altering the climate, weather patterns, and other aspects of the environment that make survival difficult or nearly impossible.
4. A disease appears against which there are inadequate defenses and a massive loss of life results.

Assuming that none of the above scenarios or anything like them comes to pass, what might life be like for Batavians in 2181? One way of answering this question is to take each of the subject areas in the preceding chapters and attempt to draw conclusions by extrapolating from what has occurred in the last 214 years. In doing this, it will be necessary to take into consideration what has driven those changes and what natural limitations may be imposed on them in the future.

### Overview: Population

The population of Batavia has never reached 20,000. It peaked about 50 years ago before undergoing a slow decline since then. During no period has there been a really dramatic growth. The factors contributing to this over-all pattern appear to be two-fold. One is the absence of a location that encourages major growth such as one being on the Great Lakes (think Buffalo), on the seacoast (think New York City), or on a major navigable river (think Albany). The other factor is that the area's major natural resource is the surrounding agricultural land, a resource that is incompatible with population growth, particularly as the

world-wide demand for food continues to grow. Given these factors, it seems safe to predict that Batavia will continue to be a small community into the foreseeable future.

The make-up of Batavia's population has changed over the last 166 years. It has become somewhat more diverse in both ethnic and racial composition. This change has, in part, been a reflection of greater diversity in the United States as a whole. Given evidence that the national trend will continue, it seems likely that the population make-up of Batavia will also continue to become more diverse. If local trends match national, it is likely that "white" Batavians, who have historically made up the great majority of the residents, will cease to be such a large proportion, and, conceivably, might become a minority eventually.

### Infrastructure

During the last 214 years, the most significant change in the infrastructure of the community has been the development of a municipal water supply, the construction of a sewer system and sewage treatment facility, the illumination of city streets and other public areas, and municipally controlled and mandated collection and disposal of trash and garbage in an environmentally sensitive manner. Since the needs which these developments addressed have largely been met, it seems as if changes in these areas are unlikely beyond refinement of the processes. One such refinement is likely to be greater attention to recycling electronic products as these become increasingly common.

Over the years, streets, once established, have generally remained in place and been modified mainly through widening and paving. From time to time, there has been discussion of constructing a by-pass to relieve congestion in the center of Batavia; and if there are any significant changes in the street system over the next 166 years, that would seem to be the most likely possibility.

When Batavia was a young community, people necessarily walked everywhere; and one of the earliest actions of the village government addressed the construction and maintenance of sidewalks. Following W.W. 2, walking took a "back seat" to travel by motor vehicles; and many of the streets constructed in the next few decades had no sidewalks. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that communities should be "walkable." It seems likely that this current perspective will continue and, in the years ahead, an effort will be made to provide sidewalks where now there is none.

### Transportation

During the last 214 years, there have been dramatic changes in the modes of transportation available to Batavians. Perhaps the most dramatic of these has been travel via aircraft. The next most dramatic, but arguably the one which has had the greatest impact on the average person, has been the development of the motor vehicle. Nearly as dramatic among the advances in travel has been the appearance of railroads. In all three instances, these advances have produced great increases in the speed with which travel is accomplished. However, motor vehicles, in addition to the greater speed of travel which they make possible, have had an especially profound effect through the greater independence and mobility they provide for the average person.

Regarding the matter of speed, there do not seem to be any foreseeable technological advances that could produce further increases in speed of travel that would approach the 20- to 100-fold increases over horse-drawn conveyances that resulted from the invention of motor vehicles, trains, or aircraft. Increases in speed seem likely to be marginal with some sort of high-speed rail the most promising in this regard.

For the average person, despite whimsical notions that appeared more than 60 years ago, travel by personal vehicles that amount to motor vehicle/helicopter hybrids appears unlikely. Given the logistics required to coordinate the movement of aircraft, it seems probable that air travel will remain largely in the realm of mass transportation.

When it comes to transportation by rail, the railroads greatest contribution has been in the transport of raw materials and finished products. There does not appear to be anything imaginable "down the road" that could exceed the energy efficiency of railroads, so it seems likely that they will continue to play a major role.

The appeal of the personal motor vehicle due to the independence and flexibility it provides is likely to be enhanced by technological developments now under development. Currently, there is an effort to design and build automobiles that can drive themselves. If this proves successful, and there seem to be no technological barriers to prevent success, it seems likely that transportation by personal motor vehicles will become even more popular and commonplace. Vehicles that can drive themselves would allow the young, the elderly, and the infirm to travel in ways not now possible. That, in turn, would produce more independence for all persons and, for the elderly, a greater ability to "age in place." So, by 2181, Batavians seem even more likely than now to own and operate motor vehicles.

There is one final thought regarding the future of transportation. At this point, there are limited instances where motor vehicle operators can drive their cars to a railroad station, have their vehicles transported by a train while they ride in a rail passenger car, and then retrieve their personal vehicles at a destination point. Especially with the development of high speed trains and motor vehicles that can drive themselves, it is possible to imagine an expansion of this arrangement to the point that it would offer a viable option to the current practice of flying to a destination and then renting a motor vehicle.

### Housing

There have been several changes in the nature of Batavia's housing during the last 214 years. Most notably among these has been:

1. A shift away from owner-occupied dwellings toward greater numbers of rental properties, the latter often created from single-family homes that have been divided into multiple apartments.
2. The disappearance of mansions.
3. The appearance of structures built specifically as apartment houses.
4. The development of housing specifically designed to serve the elderly and/or low-income residents.
5. In terms of housing for transients, a shift from hotels to motels, both large and small.

These changes appear to be the product of several factors including:

1. A reduction in family size.
2. An increase in the number of elderly residents.
3. A decrease in the number of generations living in the same household.
4. An increase in single-parent households.
5. The dispersal of housing into outlying areas.
6. The disappearance of extremely wealthy families.
7. Social policies that encourage the purchase of rental properties by absentee landlords, the latter often living out of the area.
8. Immigration from the inner-city areas of Buffalo and Rochester.

Many if not most of these factors seem likely to remain in place since they frequently have been driven by developments that are not likely to disappear, e.g., advances in medical care, the advent of effective conception control, the improved status of women, and the availability



of the automobile. So, as Batavia's housing stock ages and/or is replaced, it seems likely that the current conditions will remain descriptive of housing in 2181.

### Energy sources

Between 1801 and 2015, the primary energy sources utilized by Batavians evolved from burning wood and using water power generated by the Tonawanda Creek to electricity produced from a variety of sources, natural gas, and petroleum products such as gasoline, fuel oil, and diesel fuel. Use of petroleum products, and to a lesser extent, natural gas, poses two problems. First, the supply is presumably finite. And, second, a by-product of their combustion is carbon dioxide, a substance that in large amounts has the potential to cause undesirable climate change.

Electricity is most often generated by burning coal or natural gas. Coal, like natural gas, is a finite resource, but more important, the by-products of its combination include not only carbon dioxide, but other substances that are environmentally harmful. So, continued use of electricity as it is most commonly generated also poses a challenge.

It seems likely that over the next 166 years, there will be mounting pressure to shift to energy sources that are both renewable and environmentally benign. At this point, the most likely sources appear to involve electricity generated by water power (probably already maximized), wind power, and solar power. The big stumbling block is a storage system superior to the rather primitive batteries now in existence. Assuming that this obstacle can be surmounted, it appears likely that Batavians in 2181 will use electricity as the dominant energy source for both their homes and their vehicles, particularly since the technology for the application of electricity is already well advanced. In the case of supplying heat and air conditioning for homes, the electricity may be used most efficiently by powering heat pumps tied into a geothermal source, at least one example already having been successfully employed in our area.

### Communication

The changes in the methods of communication during the last 214 years have been nothing short of revolutionary. One need not go back two centuries, but just consider the last 30 years to make the same statement. The invention of the telegraph, telephones, cameras, radios, television, photocopiers, satellites, computers scanners, the internet, and, most recently, a myriad number of "mobile devices" would be absolutely astounding and probably, for the most part, unimaginable, to Batavians alive in 1801. This should give us pause as we try to imagine

the future. However, it is helpful to note that underlying these developments are just two basic outcomes: nearly instantaneous communication at a distance and an expansion of access to information. Note that the latter involves two dimensions—the number of people with access and the amount of information that is accessible.

For example, in 1801, if one wanted to convey to someone in Philadelphia what the Tonawanda Creek looked like at the bend, it was necessary to write a description on a piece of paper, perhaps accompanied by a sketch, and then send it via someone on foot or horseback, in either case a journey of many days at best. In 2015, if one wants to convey the same information, it is only necessary to photograph the location with a cell phone camera and send it via the internet, a process requiring only a few seconds.

In 1801, if one wanted to know who was buried in a particular cemetery in Philadelphia, it would be necessary to find someone who knew the proper individual to contact, not necessarily an easy task in itself, write that person, hope the individual would be disposed to reply, and then wait several weeks for a response. In 2015, the desired information can be obtained by anyone with internet access simply by conducting a web search for a website listing burials at the cemetery in question. The process might take only a few minutes and can readily be expanded to include burials in other cemeteries as well.

Considering the outcomes produced by the revolution in communication, nearly instantaneous communication at a distance and a huge expansion of access to information, what might the future look like in 2181? Perhaps displaying a remarkable poverty of imagination, it is difficult for the author to foresee a future revolution in communication that in 166 years could come close to that which has now occurred.

In regards to speed and distance, it is now possible to communicate nearly instantaneously to any place on earth. How can one improve on that other than by some refinement of the technology?

What about the expansion of access? Among Batavians, the use of the internet and mobile devices has become practically ubiquitous, at least among the upcoming generation of residents. How can access be further expanded within this dimension? Digitizing and posting all kinds of information has been proceeding at an amazing pace so that an ever-growing array of things is now online ranging from old newspapers, to current periodicals, to medical information, to current weather conditions, to satellite views of the earth, to the campsites available at a particular campground, to miscellaneous records of all sorts, just for a starter.

How can access in this second dimension increase other than just by the sheer volume of information that is posted?

This may be an example of where the reader in 2181 will be especially amused, but it seems as if the world of communication will have a form and scope 166 years from now that would not be altogether foreign to someone alive in 2015.

### County, village, city boundaries

Since 1801, the size of the Town of Batavia and the size of Genesee County have both shrunk as new townships and new counties were formed. This process, which was largely driven by population growth and settlement of "undeveloped land," in general ended more than a century ago and no further changes seem likely beyond a possible reconfiguration of the boundaries between the City of Batavia and the Town of Batavia.

In the last 40 years, the locus of retail activity in the area has largely shifted from the center of the City of Batavia to the outlying area immediately west and north of the city in the Town of Batavia. This "bleeding" of the City into the Town has resulted in an arbitrary and pointless political boundary running through the City and Town, a boundary generally ignored by most residents and even unknown to many. A logical course of events would be for the City to annex this area of retail development in the Town.

In the distant past, as the Village, later the City, expanded into the Town, the community's boundaries were enlarged through the process of annexation. This seems to have ended when growth involved the locus of retail activity transitioning out of the center of the City. In fact, the last expansion of City boundaries, incorporating a newly developed retail plaza to the west of the City in the 1970s, occurred only after the Town failed in the legal proceedings it had brought against the annexation. The motivation for the Town's opposition to the annexation of this retail development appears to have stemmed from a desire to keep the tax revenue such property generates.

Over the last several decades, most recently in 2012, there have been multiple occasions when reconfiguring the boundaries between the City and Town has come under discussion. However, such talk has gone nowhere, even when the State of New York has offered financial incentives. This failure appears to be the result of two factors in particular: political forces that resist change and a desire of the Town to maintain inequities in property tax rates. Unfortunately, this has led to an unnecessary duplication of services and/or an illogical assignment of services. For example, the retail development west and north of the City is

served by a volunteer fire department while the City is served by a separate full-time, paid fire department. Law enforcement in the retail development west and north of the City is provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Department while the City receives protection from its full-time, paid police department.

If there should be boundary changes by 2181, they would most likely involve an expansion of the City to include the retail development to the immediate west and north. However, under existing State rules governing annexation, both the City and the Town must approve of the change. That seems unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future, so, although the author wishes it were not so, it appears that the Town and City will remain locked into their current configurations.

### Government/governing structure

Batavia has had several forms of governing structure, especially after it was incorporated. Initially, there were trustees, elected at large, who in turn elected a president. Next there were aldermen (later termed "councilmen"), elected within wards, led by a mayor elected at large. Finally, for the last 57 years, there has been a city council composed of councilmen elected from wards, three councilmen elected at large, a council president chosen by the council from the at-large members, and an appointed city manager. With the advent of aldermen elected from wards, candidates for village or city leadership began running on party tickets.

An effort in the early 1900s to establish a non-partisan city government, combined with an effort to eliminate wards, failed to gain sufficient support. Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the major issue involving city leadership has been whether to have a mayor or to employ a city manager.

Both socially and politically, Batavia has been a relatively conservative community. There do not seem to be any foreseeable events that would change this situation. Therefore, it seems probable that city government will remain largely structured as it is now with the possible exception of a return to a mayor form of government.

### Crime/crime control/law enforcement

During the past 214 years, crime has generally not been a significant concern in Batavia. There have been some relatively brief exceptions to this characterization such as an outbreak of arson by a group of volunteer firemen in the 1860s and some underworld-inspired bombings

and shootings between the world wars, but they are mainly notable because they are exceptions to the rule.

If Batavia remains a relatively small community as predicted, and particularly with a growing number of elderly residents, it seems unlikely that crime will become a major problem. Consequently, crime control efforts and law enforcement are likely to remain unchanged beyond surveillance and detection advances that new technology may provide.

A possible exception to this expectation could be driven by immigration from the inner city areas of Rochester and Buffalo. Those areas of these two cities have long experienced relatively high crime rates, particularly instances of one-on-one violence. As of 2015, there are signs that crime of this sort may be immigrating to Batavia along with the residents of its inner city neighbors.

### Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

It has already been noted that the center of retail activity has shifted from the center of the City to the areas immediately west and north in the Town of Batavia. The construction of the mall in downtown Batavia in the 1970s failed to prevent this shift and in some ways may have perversely encouraged its occurrence. Beyond this development, over the years between 1801 and 2015, the most dramatic changes have been two-fold. First, if we include both the City and the Town, retail establishments have moved from being exclusively locally-owned to commonly being part of national or regional chains. Second, the sheer physical size of each establishment has typically increased greatly.

The changes that have occurred in Batavia are representative of those that have occurred across the country. The economies of scale and the marketing strategy of national and regional businesses have made it difficult for small, locally-owned businesses to compete unless they serve some specific niche market. Presuming that nothing occurs to change these realities, it would appear that what has already happened in Batavia is a picture of the future.

### Factories/industries

Batavia did not begin as an industrial community. It became one during the second half of the 1800s and the early 1900s largely because of the railroads that came to our community. Then, the Great Depression and the movement of industry to the South and overseas helped to end the "golden age" of manufacturing in Batavia.

Manufacturing concerns continue to exist in Batavia. The Harvester Industrial Center has been particularly successful as an “incubator” for start-up companies. But the huge plants that the railroads brought to Batavia are gone and there appears to be no reason for them to reappear. Future manufacturing concerns are likely to be relatively small and probably far different from the “smokestack” companies of the past.

What Batavians may come to see are factories producing new products in novel ways such as through 3-D printing, a process just beginning to appear. Judging from national trends, the companies that seem most likely to be present in Batavia’s future are those that require a well-educated, highly-trained workforce. Batavia’s public schools, Genesee Community College, and the programs of the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (formerly BOCES) seem to be increasingly focused on producing such a workforce; and to the extent they are successful, factories and other industry will probably remain an important part of Batavia’s economy in the year 2181.

### Banking/financial services

In the beginning, Batavia was without a bank or any other financial services for nearly 30 years. When a bank finally did appear, it was locally owned. Eventually other locally-owned banks appeared followed later by branches of larger operations headquartered elsewhere. Finally, credit unions came into existence. Initially, all such institutions were only places where money could be deposited, for safe-keeping and to earn interest, or loans could be obtained for financing various ventures, usually major purchases such as a vehicle, home, or business. More recently, credit and debit cards have also become available through these institutions for purchasing everyday items of lesser cost.

In addition to banks and credit unions, other businesses have appeared in Batavia to serve as brokers for the purchase and sale of stocks and bonds. Nearly always, these operations have been branches of companies of regional or national scope and headquartered elsewhere.

Banks, credit unions, and financial service operations are highly regulated at both the state and federal level. This strongly controls what they can and cannot do. Barring major changes in such regulations, it does not appear that businesses of this sort are likely to undergo significant changes in Batavia beyond refinements such as appeared with the advent of 24-hour automated teller machines, banking by mail, and internet access.

### Education

Batavia's educational practices have been marked by several changes since 1801. One of these was the expanding of the role of public schools to include secondary as well as primary education. Another has been the virtual disappearance of non-sectarian private schools and a fairly recent diminished role of parochial education, the latter peaking in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. A third development, resulting from the founding of Genesee Community College 40-plus years ago, has been the creation of local access to post-secondary higher education. One final development has been the emergence of instruction specifically directed towards preparation for employment, as a successor to apprenticeships, e.g., the courses offered by Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (formerly BOCES). Most of these changes have been a reflection of the increasing levels of education necessary to fully participate in modern society. The need to standardize and accredit instruction and the increasing cost of education have also played roles in these changes.

As with banks, credit unions, and financial service operations, educational institutions are highly regulated by both the federal and state governments. Therefore, as within the financial industry, significant changes are unlikely to appear without extensive deliberation. Such major changes seem to occur both slowly and infrequently.

From all appearances, the educational services provided to Batavians in grades K-12 are likely to remain mainly the providence of the public school system and Genesee Valley Educational Partnership. Given their cost-saving advantage and ease of access, post-secondary offerings through Genesee Community College seem likely to grow, particularly in view of an ever higher level of education being required of employees. To the extent that changes occur, they would seem most likely to be those that will be driven by technological innovations directly affecting the delivery of instruction. A current example is the emergence of "distance learning" made possible by the inventions of the computer and internet. Historically, the field of teaching has been very resistant to substantial change and it would be surprising if instruction is handled a whole lot differently in 2181 than in 2015.

### Religion

Many of the earliest Batavians appear to have been agnostics or atheists. James Brisbane especially comes to mind. There was a library in Batavia before there was a church. However, once churches began to appear, they assumed a significant place in the community. A particularly good example is St. James Episcopal Church which, in the earlier years, seemed to be the church of choice for Batavia's elite.

Initially, religion in Batavia was solely a Protestant enterprise. The appearance of a Catholic church was several decades in coming. Eventually the latter was joined by two Jewish congregations. Over all, diversity of religious belief has not been Batavia's strong suite. For example, the Universalist Church that was established in the early 1900s was short-lived.

In recent years, many of the older, established churches have experienced a decline in membership, both Protestant and Catholic. As noted elsewhere in this chapter, the population is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. Nationally, and Batavia would not seem immune to this trend, increasing numbers of people are choosing "none-of-the-above" when asked to identify their religious association. This latter trend may be partially a result of increasing levels of education combined with greater awareness of other cultures. Therefore, it may be a long term trend. All of these things suggest that by 2181, the religious persuasions of Batavians may be more diverse and perhaps more unconventional than now evident. However, nothing indicates that Batavia will become a hotbed of radical belief.

### Librarians/archives/museums

Batavia has had a library on and off, mostly on, since 1804. The main building of the current library, the Richmond Memorial Library, was erected in 1889. In 1894, the Holland Land Office Museum was established. Then, in 1977, the Genesee County History Department's Research Library came into being. While each of these places has materials relating to the City of Batavia, the community itself has never had its own museum. That is in contrast to other communities in the County such as Bergen, Byron, Elba, Oakfield, Alexander, LeRoy and Stafford, all of which have their own dedicated facility. Perhaps after 380 years, Batavia will finally establish a place to house its own history. However, that will, in part, require residents to recognize that the Holland Land Office Museum is not the City's museum, but instead a museum for all of The Purchase, i.e., most of western New York. Given past experience, such a realization may be difficult to achieve.

### Cemeteries

Residents of Batavia are served by the Batavia, Elmwood, St. Joseph, and Grandview cemeteries. Eventually, these places will run out of space and an additional burial ground will be required. However, that by itself does not seem likely before 2181, particularly if cremation continues to grow in popularity. On the other hand, so-called "green" cemeteries employing "natural burial" are attracting some interest in many communities. Such a facility may appear in the immediate area, adding to local options for interment.



### Firefighting

Fire fighting in Batavia began with bucket brigades that sprang up among residents when a fire broke out. After incorporation as a village, volunteer fire fighters were organized and primitive fire-fighting equipment purchased. Eventually, after incorporation as a city, a fire department originally composed of both volunteers and paid firemen was established. Currently, a fully-paid fire department with several pieces of modern equipment serves Batavia, backed up by a mutual aid arrangement involving surrounding volunteer fire departments. Beginning in 1870, the first fire hydrants appeared. Later, alarm boxes, now no longer in existence, were placed at various locations. With the advent of the 9-1-1 emergency telephone system, contact with the fire department has become possible in literally a matter of seconds.

Looking ahead, two possible developments seem likely given their life-saving and property-preserving potential. One is a mandated sprinkler system in new residential construction. The other is mandated fire detection devices, connected to the fire department, in both new and existing residences. Beyond these two developments, it would seem that fire fighting will continue pretty much unchanged except for further improvements in equipment and technique.

### Healthcare

In the early 1800s, healthcare in Batavia was limited to the primitive ministrations of individual physicians. It wasn't until 1901 that the community had a permanent public hospital. Public hospital facilities then grew from one to two to three and then back to two until, in 1999, they became a single institution, again. The size of Batavia's population has never required more than one hospital; and the existence of more than one was due to political, social, and religious factors, not medical need. A need for just one hospital, given the prediction that Batavia will remain a small community, should remain unchanged. To the extent that hospital care does change, it will likely be in the form of partnerships that Batavia's hospital may establish with other institutions as a means for dealing with increasingly more expensive and complex medical care. Indeed, such partnerships are currently being developed.

The healthcare itself, driven by the increasingly higher costs it requires, seems likely to focus more than now on preventative practices. And, given the increasing number of elderly residents that are expected, more attention may be given to appropriate end-of-life care, particularly to the inappropriateness of current care that attempts to prolong life at all cost.

Unless means of preventing aging and death are discovered in the next 166 years, both of which seem unlikely, given the current focus of medical research the major medical advances by 2181 most likely will be in the area of preventing and/or treating the greatest scourge we now face—cancer in all its various forms.

### Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In early Batavia, the care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young was mainly the responsibility of their families. This was soon supplemented by the work of poor masters and, not long after, the erection of poor houses. Neither proved very satisfactory. Today, we have local, state, and federal programs and services attempting to address these same problems and, again, with mixed results. With smaller families and greater numbers of the elderly, there will probably be even greater pressure to find more satisfactory ways of addressing the needs of the individuals in question.

Perhaps one approach to partially meeting these needs will be the creation of multi-generational households formed among unrelated individuals, something very roughly akin to communes. Whether Batavians, who have historically been politically and socially conservative, might be persuaded to attempt such a thing is an open question. It's a good bet that residents in Batavia in 2181 will still be struggling with the care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young.

### Disasters

Based on the history of Batavia, the most probable future disaster is widespread flooding. Some steps have been taken to mitigate such an event, but it's not clear that enough has been done. By 2181, the answer to that question will likely be known.

Former disasters involving fire seem to have been adequately addressed by modern fire-fighting equipment and mutual aid arrangements. The enactment of modern building codes has helped, as well. It seems unlikely that Batavians will again witness raging fires that destroy significant areas of the community.

The remaining possible disaster would seem to be a direct hit by a tornado. However, past tornadoes, in this part of the nation, have not been of a magnitude that causes great loss of life and property. Therefore, a direct hit by a major tornado that might destroy a significant part of the City seems unlikely in the foreseeable future.

It seems relatively safe to predict that in 2181 Batavia will have come through the previous 166 years relatively unscathed by disaster.

### Entertainment and recreation

The forms of traditional entertainment and recreation, .e.g., sports, music, drama, art, outdoor activities in general, have been enjoyed by humans for eons. While technological advances have produced additional forms of entertainment and recreation in the last 30 years such as video games or geo-caching, the needs that drive all of the preceding activities, such as a need for social activity, stimulation and individual expression, should not change in the next 166 years any more than they have in the past 214. So we should expect to find little change in entertainment and recreational pursuits of future Batavians beyond those which new technologies may introduce.

### War/impact of war

Unable to predict what wars may occur over the next 166 years, it's impossible to predict how they may affect Batavians in 2181.

### Families/persons of note

No doubt, there will continue to be Batavians who are note-worthy, just as there have been in the last two centuries. However, since most may not even be born yet, it's impossible to predict who they will be.

### Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/ non-profit groups providing services

There have been many such groups over the last 214 years. Most of them have appeared and then disappeared, e.g., the Batavia Club, the Ware Class of the Presbyterian Church, and the Elks Club. There is no reason to expect this type of cycle to disappear. It is likely that this pattern will continue to repeat itself since that seems to be an inherent part of human experience.

### Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

Sexual mores show evidence of running in cycles with alternating periods of liberality and conservatism. Batavians saw houses of prostitution emerge in the late 1880s and then

disappear in the mid-1900s. Topless entertainment appeared in the 1970s, but now is gone, at least locally. According to one school of thought, the practice of liberalism sows the seeds for conservatism and vice versa. If this is so, such cycles are likely to continue. Where matters stand in 2181 may be mainly a matter of timing.

### Urban renewal

Batavia's one experience with planned urban renewal on a grand scale was a federally-funded effort that spanned a decade beginning in the mid-1960s. It has almost universally been regarded as a mistake. If later generations benefit from that experience, Batavia is unlikely to again undertake such a venture in the foreseeable future. However, one product of the urban renewal effort of 50 years ago, the failed retail mall in the very center of the city, will have to be addressed eventually if only because it seemingly cannot remain forever under-used and in poor repair. If Batavia is to see major new construction in the downtown area by 2181, this is likely where it will be. Good luck to you all! May you be more successful!

### Summary

It should be quite evident from reading the preceding predictions that the author does not foresee far-reaching, dramatic changes in Batavia in the foreseeable future. Perhaps others, working from the same facts, would predict otherwise. Therefore, it is the author's intentions, once this book is available for circulation, to convene small-group discussions for the purpose of exploring the issue further. Should this come to pass, an addendum with the results of these discussions will be added to future editions.