

History of Wheatfield , New York

FROM LANDMARKS OF NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

EDITED BY: WILLIAM POOL

PUBLISHED BY D. MASON & CO. PUBLISHERS, SYRACUSE, NY 1897

<

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TOWN OF WHEATFIELD.

Wheatfield is the last town organized in Niagara county, and was set off from Niagara May 12. 1836. It lies on the southern boundary of the county, west of the center, and extends farther south than any other town. The Niagara River forms its southwestern boundary and Tonawanda Creek its southern. Its surface is level or gently undulating. The soil is generally a clayey loam, not easy of cultivation, but productive of grains and especially of wheat; this latter fact gave the town its name. Cayuga Creek flows across the northwestern part of the town and empties into the Niagara River, and Sawyer's Creek flows southeasterly across the southeastern part and empties into Tonawanda Creek. The town contains four post offices Martinsville, Bergholtz, St. Johnsburg, and Shawnee, besides the city of North Tonawanda, and the hamlet of Walmore, in the northwestern corner.

The first town meeting was held on the 6th of June, 1836, in the school house of district No. 7, on the north line of the town, and the following were elected as the first officers: Supervisor, N. M. Ward.; town clerk, Edwin Cook; assessors, Isaac H. Smith, James Sweeney, Hiram Parks; justices of the peace, L. B. Warden, John Sweeney; commissioners of highways, Elias Parks, Matthew Gray; collector, Stewart Milliman; Overseer of the poor, William Towsley; constables, Stewart Milliman, Daniel C. Jacobs, Calvin F. Champlin, Seth F. Roberts; commissioners of schools, Isaac L. Young, James Sweeney, Loyal E. Edwards.

These were all esteemed citizens of the town at that comparatively late date.

The following have been supervisors of the town

In 1836, N. M. Ward; 1837, Benjamin McNitt; 1838, N. M. Ward; 1839, William Vandervoort; 1840, John Sweeney; 1842, Isaac L. Young; 1843, N. M. Ward; 1844—45, Lewis S. Payne; 1846, N. M. Ward; 1847—48, L. S. Payne; 1849, Sylvester McNitt; 1850, L. S. Payne; 1851, Seth F. Roberts; 1852, Sylvester McNitt; 1853—54, Peter Greiner; 1855, Joseph Hawbecker; 1856—57, George W. Sherman; 1858, N.M. Ward; 1859—61, L. S. Payne; 1862, Peneuel Schmeck; 1863—66, George W. Sherman; 1867 H. H. Griffin; 1868, James Carney; 1869, H. H. Griffin; 1870, Edward A. Milliman 1871—73, Joseph D. Loveland; 1874—75, Thomas C. Collins; 1876, L. S. Payne; 1877 1878, Christian Fritz; 1879—81, Charles Kandt; 1882, Daniel Sy; 1883, C. F. Goerss

1884-88, Peter Heim; 1889—94, Chauncey Wiebterman; 1895—96, William Tompkins 1897—98, Herman Rosebrook.

Charles Hagen, a veteran of Co. D, 100th N. Y. Vols., has served as town clerk since about 1874.

Since the incorporation of North Tonawanda as a city, Charles Kohler was elected supervisor of the First ward; Conrad J. Winter, Second ward; and John H. Bollier, Third ward.

Although this town was erected so many years later than most of the others in the county, and its settlement in the interior and western parts was so comparatively recent, it still bore a close relation to the important events that took place in early years on the frontier. The banks near the mouth of Cayuga Creek, as the reader has learned, constitute a historical locality and witnessed stirring scenes when this town was a part of Niagara.

The first settlements were made on the Niagara River on and near the site of the city of North Tonawanda. Even in that vicinity progress was slow, except in the direction of improving farm lands, until after the completion of the Erie Canal. There were few settlers within the limits of the town previous to the war of 1812, and when these learned of the destruction of Youngstown and Lewiston, they shared in the general consternation along the frontier, gathered in haste such property as they could carry, and fled eastward beyond immediate danger.

Probably the earliest settler on the site of North Tonawanda was George N. Burger, who came in 1809 and built a log tavern on the river; he remained a resident until about 1825. Joshua Pettit came in 1810 and settled near the Niagara Iron Works, where he opened a tavern. He was the father of Mrs. Daniel C. Jacobs and Mrs. Whitman Jacobs. Stephen Jacobs, a soldier at the battle of Bunker Hill, located on the river two miles below in 1817, where he purchased 196 acres of Augustus Porter, paying eight dollars an acre. He died in Niagara Falls in January, 1840. William Vandervoorte settled here in 1825, occupying a log house which tradition says was the only one then in existence. It was his intention to make a business of purchasing staves and timber for the Boston market, and ultimately to open a mercantile business. In 1828 he finished the first public house in the place, which was called the Niagara; it was burned in 1844. Later he purchased 1,000 acres of land of the Holland Company and sold to Prussian immigrants the largest part of their possessions on Tonawanda Creek and its vicinity. He established the first bank in 1836. As before indicated, little progress of a business nature was made here until the opening of the Erie Canal. The interior of the town was still almost an unbroken wilderness and as late as 1850 a large part of the area of the town was unimproved. The prospects at Tonawanda in 1824, as viewed by interested persons, is indicated in the following advertisement:

VILLAGE OF NIAGARA.

This village is located at the confluence of the Niagara and Tonawanta rivers, where the Erie canal from Buffalo enters the Tonawanta, and where boats pass from the canal into the Niagara river by a lock. At this junction of the rivers and adjoining the village, is a safe and spacious harbor, as well for canal boats as for vessels navigating Lake Erie.

These advantages cannot fail to render the village of Niagara the depot of the products of the West, destined to the city of New York, and of return cargoes of merchandise.

A dam of four or five feet high will be thrown across the Tonawanta, at the village, so as to raise the river to the level of Lake Erie, and the river will be navigated for the distance of eleven miles, and be united with the canal between Niagara and Lockport. The surplus water from the dam will afford an abundant and steady supply for mills and other hydraulic works.

The village is 12 miles from Buffalo, 8 from the falls, 15 from Lewiston, and 16 miles from Lockport. A line of stages passes through from Buffalo to Lewiston daily, and another from Lockport to Buffalo every other day. Travelers to the Falls will leave the canal at this place.

A bare inspection of Vance's or Lay's map of the western part of this State will at once show the advantageous position of the village for trade, market and manufactures.

Building lots are now offered for sale to actual settlers. A map of the village may be seen by application to James Sweeney, at Buffalo, or to George Goundy at the Land Office in Geneva; and the former will enter into contracts of sale.

The title is indisputable, and good warranty deeds will be executed to purchasers.
GEORGE GOUNDY, JAMES SWEENEY, JOHN SWEENEY, Proprietors.
July 5, 1824.

The James Sweeney, whose name appears above, settled first in Buffalo in 1811. He became one of the proprietors of the site of North Tonawanda village, and as such settled there in 1828 and built one of the very early frame dwellings. The land owned by him and his associates was cleared to supply timber for the Buffalo pier and breakwater, and at the same time to prepare the tract for sale in small lots. The sites on which were erected the First M. E. church (1837) and the first school house were donated by Mr. Sweeney, and largely through his energy, activity and generosity the village received its early impetus. He died in January, 1850, aged fifty-seven. John Sweeney was his son and long a prominent citizen; he superintended the building of the first railroad depot and was long the station agent. He caused the building of the first dock on the creek next to the bridge, and subsequently extended it 250 feet. He built the first grist mill, which was burned and not rebuilt, and also the first saw mill.

James Carney settled as early as 1819, with his father, Edward, on Tonawanda Island, which was known for many years as Carney Island. His purpose was to gain pre-emption rights to the island if the boundary settlement should leave it within the United States. In

1854 the State caused a survey to be made and ordered an assessment valuation of \$4 50 per acre. In the next year the island was directed to be sold at auction in Albany and required one-eighth of the purchase money to be paid down. Mr. Carney placed the requisite sum in the hands of Judge Samuel Wilkinson, of Buffalo, to make the purchase. But the spirit of speculation awakened by the operations of Mordecai M. Noah and his associates, on Grand Island, created a spirited contest for this island and it was sold to Samuel Leggate at \$23 an acre. After that Mr. Carney became one of the most active and energetic of the pioneers; engaged extensively in clearing lands; was employed as a teamster by Porter, Barton & Co.; boated salt and other produce up and down the river; and was otherwise a useful member of the young corn munity.

Among other early settlers of the town were Heman A. Barnum, James A. Betts, Wilhelm Dornfeld, Albert Dornfeld, C. F. Goers, Herman F. Stieg, Nelson Zimmerman, John Grey.

In 1824 Harvey Miller came from Rochester and settled on the Lockport and Niagara Falls road, in the north part of the town, where he purchased 100 acres of the Holland Company at \$5 an acre. He was young and energetic, and although without much means, he soon became independent. During the first winter he was in this town he, with the assistance of one young man, cleared twenty-five acres. In that summer he sowed eighteen acres of winter wheat and raised 800 bushels; this he sold to other incoming settlers at seventy-five cents a bushel. He was long a road commissioner and aided in laying out all the first roads in the town. He lived to an old age.

Among the first settlers in the extreme northeastern part, where the post-office of Shawnee is located, were Timothy Shaw (from whom the place is named) and Volney Spalding, who opened a store and established an ashery there in 1828. John Grey settled about a mile south of Shawnee in 1825; he purchased eighty-four acres of the Holland Company at \$5 an acre.

In the course of time certain influences brought into this town a largely preponderant foreign element, mainly of Prussian nativity, who settled at first mostly on small tracts of land, but finally became in many instances large owners. By far the greater portion of the territory of the town was finally occupied by them, and the same is true today of them or their descendants. They developed into excellent farmers, frugal and industrious, and patient in overcoming adverse conditions in their surroundings. They cleared the lands, drained the swamps, and rendered the town one of the most productive in this region. Settlements by this element were about simultaneous in separate localities. In 1843 Carl Sack, Erdman Wurl, and Fred Grosskopf purchased of William Vandervoorte 400 acres at \$15 an acre; the tract was situated on the Tonawanda Creek, in the southeast corner of the town, and the settlement made there was given the name of Martinsville, through the veneration felt by the inhabitants for Martin Luther. The original purchase was subdivided into small tracts of three or more acres, to suit the wishes of purchasers, and about thirty families came in the first season. Ten log houses were completed in the fall, and into these the families moved, three or four in a house, in some cases, until additional buildings could be erected.

Christian Dornfeld settled here in 1843, purchasing six acres of Vaidervoorte, and lived to old age, leaving a family of children. His sons William and Albert became prominent business men in the place. William Dornfeld and Christian Fritz purchased, in 1856 the first saw mill, which had been built by Joseph Hewitt. Mr. Fritz built a saw mill and planing mill in 1860, and established a lumber yard. William Dornfeld also carried on a considerable store, which he opened in 1851. He was associated with Krull Brothers in operating another planing mill and sash and door factory, which was built in 1876, and was also postmaster of the place for some time. The present postmaster is Charles A. Graf, who is also a harnessmaker. Other later and present merchants are William F. Fritz, lumber; Charles Grosskopf and Ernest G. Jaenecke general stores; Ferdinand Ziehl, hardware; and Christ Martin, grocery. John G. Jaenecke is proprietor of the Martinsville Hotel, and Charles Rogge is a blacksmith and cider manufacturer.

Eugene De Kleist began the manufacture of church and other organs in Martinsville in 1892, and in 1893 erected a large factory, in which he employed about fifty hands. He has been eminently successful in this enterprise, and enjoys a trade which extends all over the country.

Martinsville became a part of the city of North Tonawanda on April 24, 1897, but still maintains its own post office.

New Bergholtz (Bergholtz is the name of the post-office) is in the central part of the town and was settled almost exclusively by Prussians. The place is named from one in Germany whence many of the settlers came. In 1843 Frederick Moll, John Williams and John Sy, as trustees, purchased a tract of land for a German Evangelical Lutheran congregation consisting of 120 members. The tract contained 820 acres and was conveyed by deed from the Farmers' Loan and Trust Company; 176½ acres, deeded by William L. Marcy and wife; 118 acres deeded by Washington Hunt; 200 acres deeded by John J. DeGraff (the two latter tracts including the site of the village); 456 acres conveyed by Blandina Dudley; and 349 acres by the Farmers' Loan and Trust Company. These transfers were all made in October, 1843. The whole quantity of land conveyed comprised 2,119½ acres and cost the settlers a little more than \$16,000. A map of the lands was made and 121 village lots laid out, with proper streets and a large public square. By a general deed executed by the trustees October 12, 1843, they conveyed to Augustus Manske and 118 others each a lot of one acre. The first of these corners found temporary quarters in a large barn that had been previously built for some purpose, until houses could be erected. Washington Hunt presented the community with their first ox team to aid in building log houses, and during the first season a building was completed on nearly every one of the lots deeded. With the community came a carpenter, a blacksmith, a mason, a tailor, a shoemaker and a cabinet maker, which enabled them to live almost wholly upon their own resources. Some of them had considerable money, one of the wealthiest being John Salingre, who brought over about \$20,000. His kindness and generosity to his less fortunate neighbors in the new country are gratefully remembered. He died in 1871.

The first dry goods store started at Bergholtz was that of Christian Wolf, one of the pioneers. The first post-office was established in 1850 with John Sy, postmaster, who died in 1861.

These Lutherans left their own country chiefly on account of the determination of the king of Prussia to force a union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. Hundreds of families left their country on that account. Rev. J. An. A. Grabau of Buffalo, preached to these people for about a year from 1843, when their former pastor, Rev. Mr. Ehrenstroem, arrived from Germany. He was succeeded a year later by Rev. Henry von Rohr, formerly a captain in the Prussian army, who remained until his death in 1874. A church was erected in 1848, and was called The Holy Ghost Church. A school was opened and taught by one of the pioneers, and later by G. Renwald. In 1845 the Lutheran Synod was organized in Buffalo and the Bergholtz church became a part of it. In 1866, through dissension, the synod divided into three parts, and in consequence the Bergholtz congregation was divided into two parties, one of which, consisting of fifty-two families, renounced its old pastor, Mr. Von Rohr, and called Rev. W. Weinback. This party had a majority of the members and remained in possession of the church property, consisting of about twelve acres of land, the church parsonage, cemetery, and school buildings. The other party, about thirty-seven families, remained loyal to Mr. Von Rohr, held services in a private house, which was later fitted up for a school house, and soon built a new brick edifice, taking the name of Trinity church. Mr. Von Rohr died in 1874, and about two thirds of the Trinity congregation now wished to join with the Buffalo synod; but as the remainder were not willing, they separated, called another pastor, and in 1875 organized the Lutheran St. Jacob's Congregation. A lot was purchased, and in 1876 a new church, parsonage, and school house were erected.

Bergholtz now contains the stores of Charles W. Kandt and August Lange, the latter being also postmaster, and the store of August Retzlaff.

At Shawnee, in the northeast corner of the town, a Baptist church was organized in July, 1830, but the large influx of Lutherans caused the abandonment of that organization and the substitution of the other. Land for the church was donated by Isaac Carl and the building was erected in 1847.

Shawnee was named from Timothy Shaw, who with Volney Spalding opened a store and ashery there in 1828. In 1863 an M. E. church was erected. Harmon H. Griffin is postmaster and general merchant, and Carl E. Eddy, blacksmith.

St. Johnsburg is an outgrowth of Bergholtz, and lies to the southwest of the latter place on the 820 acres deeded by the Farmers' Loan and Trust Company, before mentioned. It has had very little business interest. A brick church was erected by St. John's German Lutheran Society in 1846, to which was attached a school. A store was opened and a few shops established. William C. Krull is the postmaster and a general merchant, and Lewis Holland is a harness dealer and proprietor of the hotel.

New Walmore, in the northwest corner of the town, was so named from a village in Prussia, whence the settlers came about 1843. A Lutheran church was built there, of brick, in The place is merely a rural hamlet.

North Tonawanda formed one of the wards of Tonawanda from the incorporation of the latter village to 1857, when it withdrew, and for eight years was simply a part of the town of Wheatfield. The village of North Tonawanda was incorporated May 8, 1865, with the following trustees: David Robinson, Jacob Becker, George W. Sherman, Alexander G. Kent, Clark Ransom and J. D. Vandervoort. At that time it contained a population of 440 and an area of 681 acres. The village government was established with its various departments of fire, police, schools, etc., and during the thirty-two succeeding years was brought to its present efficient condition.

The village presidents were as follows:

James Carney, 1868; Franklin Warren, 1869; John M. Rockwell, 1870; A. G. Kent, 1871; Franklin Warren, 1872—73; C. W. Watkins, 1874—75; Franklin Warren, 1876; C. W. Watkins, 1877—78; F. S. Fassett, 1879; Alexander McBain, 1880; John Taylor, 1881—82; William Goinbert, 1883; Conrad Backer, 1884; J. S. Thompson, 1885—87; Fred Sommer, 1888—89; Joseph Pitts, 1890; Benjamin F. Felton, 1891; John E. Oelkers, 1892; James S. Thompson, 1893—94; George Stanley (resigned, and E. C. McDonald installed), 1895; Levant R. Vandervoort, 1896; Albert B. McKeen, 1897.

On April 24, 1897, by a special act of the Legislature, North Tonawanda was incorporated as a city with the following boundaries: All that part of the county of Niagara, in the State of New York, comprised within the following boundaries, to wit: Beginning at the junction of the middle line of the Tonawanda Creek with the Niagara River, the same being on the south bounds of Niagara county; thence running up said Tonawanda Creek, following the middle line thereof, the same being the boundary line between the county of Erie and the county of Niagara, to a point opposite the mouth of the Sawyers Creek, where Sawyers Creek empties into said Tonawanda Creek; thence northerly along and following the middle line of Sawyers Creek, to the junction of the east and west branches of said creek, in farm lot four, lying along Tonawanda Creek; thence northwesterly along the middle line of the westerly branch of said creek, to the intersection of said middle line with the north line of lot 12, in township 13 of range 8 of the Holland purchase (so-called); thence westerly along the north line of said lot 12, and lots 21 and 28 of said township and range, to the northwest corner of lot 28; thence continuing the same course westerly along the projection of said north line of said lot 28 to the point of intersection of said projected line with the north line of lot 73 of the New York State mile reserve; thence northwesterly along the said north line of said lot 73 and along the north line of lots 71 and 70 and 69 of the said mile reserve, to the intersection of the west line of said lot 69 with said north line thereof; thence southerly along the west line of said lot 69 to the easterly shore of the Niagara River; thence at right angles to the shore line of said river at that point, southerly to the middle line of the east channel of Niagara River, being the boundary between Niagara and Erie counties; thence up the said middle line of said east channel of Niagark River and along said boundary line between said Niagara and Erie counties, to the southerly point or angle of said Niagara county, in

the middle of said east channel of said Niagara River: thence easterly and northeasterly in the waters of said river along the boundary line between said Erie county and Niagara county. to the place of beginning; shall be known as the city of North Tonawanda.

The city, by this act, was divided into three wards, and the village officers became and held over as officers of the new city, as follows:

Albert E. McKeen, mayor; Thomas E. Warner (who had been village clerk since 1886), city clerk; John Kaiser, William M. Gillie. Peter D. Hershey, William Nellis. William Ostwald, Frederick F. Wagenschuetz, Leonard Wiedman, and Martin Wurl, aldermen; Hector M. Stocurn, treasurer; James F. Davison, superintendent of public works; Stillmari C. Woodruff, superintendent of water works; Augustus F. Premus, city attorney. John Kaiser was elected the first president of the Common Council.

A special election was held June 8, 1897, for the purpose of electing supervisors, and resulted as follows; First ward, Charles H. Kohier; second ward, Conrad J. Winter; third ward, John H. Bollier.

The city is provided with well organized police, fire, and health departments, the mayor being president of the latter. The police department is under the control of three commissioners, appointed by the mayor, the first (1897) incumbents being Lewis F. Allen (president), George McBean, and John Mahar. The chief is John Ryan, who has under him one sergeant and six patrolmen.

The fire department was organized about twenty years ago, the first company being Columbia Hook & Ladder Co., which is still in existence; there are seven other companies, viz.: Rescue Fire Co. (stationed in Martinsville), Alert Hose Co, Active Hose Co., Hydrant Hose Co., Live Hose Co., Gratwick Hose Co. (in Gratwick), and Sweeney Hose Co. The chief is Louis J Wattengel.

The water system originated with the Tonawanda City Water Works Company, which was incorporated in 1885 with a capital of \$50,000. The works were located on Tonawanda Island, and water was obtained by the Holly system from the Niagara River. The company supplied both Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, but the former finally built a plant of its own. About 1894 the village of North Tonawanda purchased these works at a cost of \$275,000, and the city now operates it through its Board of Public Works.

Public improvements, such as the laying of pavements and sewers, were commenced by the village about 1889, and up to the present time about \$150,000 have been expended for the former and \$161,000 for the latter.

The Standard Gas Company was incorporated August 21, 1888, with a capital of \$25,000, for producing and piping natural gas, which is obtained at Getzville in Erie county. George P. Smith is president.

The Tonawanda Lighting and Power Company was incorporated February 23, 1897, with a capital of \$150,000, and is the successor of the Tonawanda and Wheatfield Electric Light Company, which was organized in 1890 The company supplies both Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, and operates in all about 290 arc and 2,400 incandescent lamps. Frank M. Gordon is local manager.

The Tonawanda Street Railroad Company was incorporated in 1891 with a capital of \$50,000. George P. Smith is president. Besides this the city is connected with Buffalo and Niagara Falls by electric lines, and with Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Lockport by the New York Central and Erie Railroads.

Much of the early history of North Tonawanda has been detailed in preceding pages of this chapter, and the reader has doubtless observed that no marked impetus was inaugurated until about 1875. The Sweeney and Vandervoort families were the first resident owners of land in the old village limits. James Sweeney bought farm lots 81 and 82 June 14, 1824, and later conveyed a one-third interest to his brother, Col. John Sweeney, and one-third to George Goundry, an uncle of the latter's first wife. William Vandervoort, a brother-in-law of James Sweeney, bought farm lot 80 June 7, 1826. These three lots comprise three-fourths of the old corporate limits. As stated, development and settlement were slow until recent years, when an impetus was inaugurated that afforded an unprecedented growth and marked North Tonawanda as one of the most enterprising cities in the State. One of the first to effectually promote the business and shipping interests of the place was Col. Lewis S. Payne, who settled in this town in 1841. In 1845 he engaged in the lumber business and in 1847 erected the first steam saw mill here. He was a lieutenant-colonel in the Rebellion, served as county clerk, assemblyman, and State senator, and was long one of the most enterprising of citizens.

Beginning within a few years after the completion of the Erie Canal and continuing to the present time, North Tonawanda has been one of the most important lumber markets of the great lakes. A great many energetic business men, both resident and non-resident, have been associated in this business, whose names even cannot be mentioned here. The rafting of logs from Canada and other lake points was commenced during the war of the Rebellion by Hon. H. P. Smith, but the great lumber business properly dates from 1873. Since then it has grown to enormous proportions. The following tables have been prepared by the Tonawanda Herald:

LAKE RECIEPTS

Lumber, feet. Lath, pes. Shingles, pcs.

1873 —	104,909,000.....	1,258,000.....	1,112,000
1874 —	144,754,000.....	1,506,000.....	10,822,500
1875 —	155,384,805.....	6,559,200.....	13,088,500
1876 —	207,728,327.....	6,137,700.....	18,007,500
1877 —	221,897,007.....	5,126,000.....	23,249,400
1878 —	206,655,122.....	3,629,300.....	21,435,500
1879 —	250,699,043.....	3,606,400.....	30,022,000
1880 —	323,370,814.....	1,249,600.....	22,920,000

1881 — 415,070,013..... 282,000.... 25,271,000
 1882 — 433,241,000..... 418,000.... 38,312,000
 1883 — 398,871,853.....6,031,850.....55,217,000
 1884 — 493,268,223.....16,367,000.....66,185,000
 1885 — 498,631,400.....7,652,000.....52,004,000
 1886 — 505,425,000.....11,883,000.....52,825,000
 1887 — 501,237,850..... 4,076,000.....53,435,000
 1888 — 569,522,200.....16,617,000.....64,903,000
 1889 — 676,017,200.....11,506,000.....68,712,000
 1890 - 718,650,900.....13,039,600.....52,232,300
 1891 — 505,512,000..... 8,209,800.....52,561,000
 1892 — 498,005,000..... 6,243,245.....42,809,300
 1893 — 430,249,000.....13,232,600.....35,257,400
 1894 — 406,538,000..... 8,495,450.....31,478,700
 1895 — 421,382,500..... 8,547,000.....41,310,650
 1896 — 469,249,500..... 7,195,350.....35,823,200

CANAL SHIPMENTS.

Year. Feet, Lumber.

1873 89,273,285
 1874115,752,111
 1875120,650,742
 1876165,545,742
 1877188,400,335
 1878173,085,467
 1879206,442,542
 1880291,000,000
 1881328,886,395
 1882326,800,681
 1883324,528,266
 1884384,455,535
 1885335,230,391
 1886348,032,813
 1887341,925,473
 1888820,149,423
 1889350,220,300
 1890393,599,620
 1891293,211,898
 1892286,329,300
 1893216,116,532
 1894202,110,900
 1895155,886,000
 1896185,530,352

The following is the official schedule of canal and railroad shipments for 1896:

CANAL SHIPMENTS.

Lumber, feet 185,580,352
Timber, cubic feet 364.600
Wheat, bushels 25,714
Corn, bushels 500
Oats, bushels 5,000
Apples, barrels 252,292
Domestic spirits, gallons 1,208
Pig iron, pounds 49,068,826
All other mdse, pounds 4,312,500
Stone, Lime and Clay pounds 45,538,000
Total clearances issued, 2,062

RAILROAD SHIPMENTS.

1896. Tons.
N. Y. C. & H. R. R. R. Co ... 205,000
N. Y. L. E. & W. R. R. Co ... 270,187
Lehigh Valley R. R. Co ... 55,000

Following are the condensed reports of the custom house at this port for 1896:

MERCHANDISE RECEIVED, 1896.

Lumber, feet ... 304,021,500
Shingles, pieces ... 35,123,200
Lath,
Posts ... 135,687
R. R. Ties ... 43,166
Telegraph Poles ... 2,294
Cross Arms ... 133,000
Staves, pieces ... 530,000
Cord Wood, cds ... 60
Iron Ore, tons ... 134,428
Pig Iron ... 9,097
Stone ... 4,770
Coastwise vessels entered ... 820
Coastwise vessels cleared ... 809
Foreign vessels entered ... 51
Foreign vessels cleared ... 33
Total vessels entered ... 871
Total vessels cleared ... 842
Tonnage, Domestic, entered ... 325,184
Tonnage, Domestic, cleared ... 318,503
Foreign, entered ... 14,135
Foreign, cleared ... 9,150

Among the leading lumber firms of North Tonawanda are the following: Smith, Fassett & Co., Huron Lumber Co., Calkins & Co., Rumbold & Alliger, Kelsey & Gillespie, James B. Huff, F. A. Myrick, A. K. & W. E. Silverthorne, Rumbold & Bellinger. Dodge & Bliss Co., Oille & McKeen, Robinson Brothers & Co. Ltd., Robertson & Doebler, John Godkin, Thompson Hubman & Fisher, J. & T. Charlton, Merriman & Merriman, Export Lumber Co., Willoughby & Hathaway, W. H. Cooper & Co., Skillings, Whitneys & Barnes, Harrison W. Tyler, Wisconsin Lumber Co., A Weston & Co., W. H. Sawyer Lumber Co., David G. Cooper, Fassett & Bellinger, Frost, Rider & Frost, Monroe & McLean, Cornelius Collins, George H. Damon.

Among former lumber concerns were J. S. Bliss & Co., formed in 1886, whose mill, which was burned recently, was built as a grist mill by John and James Sweeney in 1853; The Tonawanda Lumber and Saw Mill Company incorporated in June, 1891, with a capital of \$300,000 which succeeded the Tonawanda Lumber Company, whose predecessor was the New York Lumber and Wood Working Company, which was incorporated by George P. Smith and others in 1885; the Hoilister Brothers Company, Ltd., organized in January, 1889, with a capital of \$450,000, which on September 1, 1890, was increased to \$600,000; the L. A. Kelsey Lumber Company, organized in 1886, which established the first hardwood lumber trade in North Tonawanda; W. E. Marsh & Co., organized about 1888; ; W. H. Kessler & Son, formed in 1887; Plumsteei, Gillespie & Himes, organized in 1890. A. M. Dodge & Co. began business here in 1883, erected a planing mill in 1885, and were succeeded by the Dodge & Bliss

The firm of McGraw & Co., consisting of John McGraw, T. H. McGraw, C. B. Curtis and Ira D. Bennett, was for many years heavy dealers in lumber, their yards and docks covering more than six acres of land, with a main dock 400 feet long and two slips of 600 feet each.

W. H. Gratwick & Co., about two miles below the city, established an immense lumber interest several years ago. Others connected with this company were Robert S. Fryer, in Albany, under the style of Gratwick, Fryer & Co., and Edward Smith, in Michigan, under the firm name of Smith, Gratwick & Co. These companies owned more than 30,000 acres of Michigan pine lands, where their mills were capable of turning out 28,000,000 feet annually. Their docks had a frontage on the river of 2,000 feet, with every facility for handling and shipping lumber economically. William H. Gratwick came here and established a lumber business in 1870. In 1880 the Gratwick, Smith & Fryer Lumber Company was incorporated. P. W. Ledoux built a sash, door and blind factory about 1876 and Mr. Gratwick erected a planing mill in 1879

J. & T. Charlton's wood working mill was built by Charles Williams. John Charlton came here in 1862 and was soon followed by Thomas.

Grand Island was purchased for the white oak timber in 1833 by the East Boston Company for \$16,000. A large mill with gang saws was built and Stephen White, the manager of the company, purchased Tonawanda Island for his home and erected the

mansion there. The company did an extensive business until 1837-38. Later William Wilkeson, of Buffalo, became the owner of the island, and from him Smith, Fassett & Co., who had been in the lumber trade since 1872, purchased it in 1882. The island comprises 85 acres, and is one of the largest lumber centers in the world.

The W. H. Sawyer Lumber Company was organized in January, 1887. Skillings, Whitneys & Barnes succeeded to the plant of Hall & Buell in June, 1890, and have a dockage of about 1,300 feet on Tonawanda Island. Robertson & Doebler began business here in 1888 and erected a large planing mill in 1889.

These and many other lumber concerns have brought the city of North Tonawanda into the front rank of lumber centers of the world during the past quarter century, and it is safe to say that no place in the country has had a more wonderful and sudden development in this respect. With unexcelled harbor facilities, upon which the government has expended thousands of dollars in improvements, and with the great lakes as a feeder and the Erie Canal and numerous railroad lines as outlets, the city has recently forged ahead with an unusual bound, and enjoys extraordinary prospects for the future. Much of the recent prosperity of the place is due to the efforts of the North Tonawanda Business Men's Association, which was organized in May, 1888, and of which Edward Evans is president. While the great lumber business has brought capital and fame to the place, other interests have equally shared in promoting its growth and prosperity, and to the most important of these the reader's attention is now directed.

The Niagara River Iron Company was organized in 1872 with a capital of \$400,000. The company purchased real estate at North Tonawanda to the extent of 165 acres, and in 1873 completed the plant and began operations. The blast furnace was built to turn out fifty tons of pig iron daily, and all of the structures necessary for the business are models of strength and architectural harmony. Early officers of the company were Pascal P. Pratt, president; Josiah Jewett, vice-president; S. S. Jewett, H. H. Glenney, George B. Hays, F. L. Danforth and B. F. Felton, trustees. This company was finally succeeded by the Tonawanda Iron and Steel Company, which tore down the old stack and erected a modern furnace at a cost of \$250,000, and which subsequently doubled the capacity of its plant. William A. Rogers is president of the company.

The Armitage-Herschell Company had its inception in a small brass and iron foundry established by James Armitage and Allan and George C. Herschel! about 1872. Their shop was burned in 1874, rebuilt, and again burned in 1875. Afterward the present site was secured on Oliver street, and the manufacture of engines, boilers, and machinery was conducted on a large scale. In 1887 they added the manufacture of steam riding galleries, or "merry-go-rounds," which has become a leading industry of the Lumber City and the largest of the kind in the country. James Armitage is president; Allan Herschell, vicepresident; and George C. Herschell, treasurer.

The flouring mill of McDonald & Ebersole was started by C. C. Grove and L. D. Ebersole in 1883. The capacity is over 200 barrels per day.

Franklin Getz established his present feed mill in North Tonawanda in 1883, coming here from Getzville, Erie county.

The carriage and wagon works of McIntyre & Miller were started in 1876. The Tonawanda grain elevator, of which Louis Fick is proprietor, was erected in 1882 by L. G Fuller. The Niagara brewery was started by George Zent in 1867, and early in 1883 passed into the possession of the Niagara River Brewing Company, who in June, 1892, were succeeded by the Bush Brewing Company.

The first permanent banking business was founded by Edward Evans on June 1, 1872. He was succeeded May 1, 1877, by the firm of Evans, Schwinger & Co., with James H. De Graff president; Edward Evans, vice-president; William McLaren, cashier. This concern was followed by the State Bank, which was organized May 1, 1883, with a paid up capital of \$100,000, and with James A. De Graff, president; Edward Evans, vice president; Benjamin L. Rand, cashier. The present capital, undivided profits, and surplus is about \$165,000, and the officers are J. H. De Graff, president ; C. Schwinger, vice-president; Benjamin L. Rand, cashier.

The Lumber Exchange Bank was organized May 1, 1886, with a capital of \$100,000; Edward Evans, president; Joshua S. Bliss, vicepresident; James H. Rand, cashier; In 1889 the capital was doubled, and in 1890 Mr. Evans was succeeded as president by James S. Thompson. The bank discontinued business in April, 1897.

George F. Rand started a private banking business in 1890.

James H. Rand established his present private bank in 1894.

Frederick Robertson & Co. began a private banking business in 1897.

The various journalistic enterprises have been so intimately identified with both Tonawanda and North Tonawanda that it seems advisable to mention them briefly here. The first in the field was the Tonawanda Commercial, which was started by S. Hoyt on May 2, 1850, and lived a little more than a year. In September, 1853, S. S. Packard began the publication of the Niagara River Pilot, which was sold by him in 18,, to S. O. Hayward, who started the Niagara Frontier in November, 1857, and, after an absence, the Enterprise, which was continued till about 1891.

The Tonawanda Herald was started July 19, 1875, by Jay Densmore, who a year or two later was succeeded by Warren & O'Regan. On October 14, 1877, Thomas M. Chapman bought out John O'Regan and in 1880 George Warren sold his interest to Thomas E. Warner; since then the firm has been Chapman & Warner. During six months in 1890 a daily edition was published; otherwise the paper has been successfully continued as an able, influential Democratic weekly.

Thomas M. Chapman, of the firm of Chapman & Warner, editors and publishers of the Tonawanda Herald, of North Tonawanda, is the son of Thomas and Margaret Chapman,

and was born in Queenston, Canada, November 17, 1844. His father was a native of Hull, England. Mr. Chapman moved with his parents to St Catharines, Ontario, where he received an academic education under Rev. T. D. Phillips. When sixteen he was apprenticed to the printer's trade, which he learned thoroughly. In 1877 he came to North Tonawanda, and on October 14 of that year purchased the interest of John O'Regan in the Tonawanda Herald, thus becoming a partner with George Warren in the publication of that paper. In 1880 Mr. Warren sold his interest to Thomas E. Warner, and since then the firm has been Chapman & Warner. Mr. Chapman is one of the oldest and ablest editors in Niagara county, and during a successful journalistic career has always stood in the front rank of his profession. He is a terse, ready writer, a good judge of literature, and an enterprising, public spirited citizen. In politics he has always been a prominent Democrat. He was deputy collector of customs four years and clerk of the village of North Tonawanda three years, and is a member of Niagara River Lodge, No. 527, I. O. O. F., and other social and fraternal organizations. January 27, 1870, he married Cecelia J., daughter of the late James Stephenson, of Canandaigua, N. Y., and they have two children, James Alfred and Alice M.

Thomas E. Warner, of the firm of Chapman & Warner, publishers of the Tonawanda Herald, and the first clerk of the city of North Tonawanda, is the son of Hon. Ulysses Warner and Eliza Ann Jones, his wife, and was born in Orleans, Ontario county, N. Y., March 23, 1844. His father was member of assembly in 1858 and 1859, served as justice of the peace for many years, and was a prominent and influential citizen. Mr. Warner was educated in the common schools of his native town. At the age of sixteen he was apprenticed to the printer's trade in the office of the Geneva Gazette, where he remained three years. Afterward he spent some time as a journeyman, principally in Detroit, Chicago and New York, and while in the latter city was one of four or five compositors who put into type the first dispatch that came over the second Atlantic cable. He was also warden of the Jersey City (N. J.) Charity Hospital for four years. In 1880 he came to North Tonawanda and purchased George Warren's interest in the Tonawanda Herald, with which he has since been connected under the firm name of Chapman & Warner. He is an able writer, a man of energy and ability, and one of the most public spirited of citizens. He served as village clerk of North Tonawanda from 1886 until it became a city, when he became the first city clerk, which office he now holds. He is a past master of Tonawanda Lodge, No. 247, F. and A. M., and the present high priest of Tonawanda Chapter, No. 278, R. A. M.

The Daily News, of North Tonawanda, was commenced about 1880 by George S. Hobbie, who had been employed in the office of the Index, which was started in 1875 by J. A. L. Fisher. The News was originally a diminutive two-column sheet. George W. Tong became a partner in 1884, and soon changed it to a weekly, taking the name of the Standard, which was leased to J. W. Works in 1886. In 1887 Mr. Works resumed the publication of the Daily News, having as a partner his brother Arthur. Other owners following them were Hepworth & Lane, George P. Smith, and M. J. Dillon, who sold it on December 4, 1894, to Harlan W. and Walter S. Brush; the News Publishing Company was incorporated in May, 1895, with a capital of \$12,000, and with H. W. Brush,

president, and W. S. Brush, secretary and treasurer. A weekly edition was added April 1, 1897.

Harlan W. Brush, president of the News Publishing Company of North Tonawanda, is a son of James A. and Amelia A. (McCall) Brush, and was born in Nelson, Portage county, O., May 27, 1865. He soon moved with his parents to Alliance, Ohio, where he attended the public schools and Mount Union College, which he left at the age of fifteen on account of his father's death. He spent one year in the office of the Alliance Weekly Standard learning the printer's trade, which he finished with F. W. Lordan, a job printer of that place. In December, 1884, he purchased Mr. Lordan's establishment, and in 1887 also bought the Standard, and combined the two plants. In 1888 he added the Alliance Weekly Review and consolidated the two papers under the names of the Daily Review and Weekly Standard, forming a stock company, of which he was the manager and has since been the principal stockholder. In 1894 he came to North Tonawanda, and with his brother, Walter S., purchased the Daily News. In May, 1895, the News Publishing Company was incorporated with a capital of \$12,000, and Mr. Brush has since been its president. Mr. Brush has always been active in politics, as a Republican, and was president of the first McKinley club ever organized (1887) this was in McKinley's own county (Stark) in Ohio. As a journalist he is progressive and enterprising, and has been eminently successful in this profession. He has made the News one of the liveliest and best dailies in the county.

Walter S. Brush, secretary and treasurer of the News Publishing Company, of North Tonawanda, is a younger son of James A. and Amelia A. (McCall) Brush, and was born in Alliance, Ohio, September 25, 1868. He was educated in the Alliance public schools and Mount Union College, was for two years a clerk for the Solid Steel Company of his native city, and then took a course of short hand in Oswego, N. Y. He became chief clerk in the train master's office of the West Shore Railroad in Syracuse and later bookkeeper and manager of the Minneapolis branch of the Hall Safe and Lock Company. In 1894 he came to North Tonawanda, and with his brother, Harlan W., purchased the Daily News, of which he has since been the secretary and treasurer. Mr. Brush is an efficient business manager, as the prosperous condition of the News shows.

The North Tonawanda Cemetery Association was incorporated in 1868 with Hiram Newell (president), Benjamin J. Felton, Garwood L. Judd, Selden G. Johnson, Franklin Warren, and John Simpson, trustees.

The first bridge over Tonawanda Creek in the village was erected chiefly for military purposes soon after 1800. It was a temporary structure and soon went to ruin. Passage of the stream was then made by ferry until 1824, when a toll bridge was built under a legislative charter, which gave it an existence of twenty-one years. Prior to the expiration of the charter the shares were bought by the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Railroad Company, which rebuilt the bridge to accommodate its tracks. When the charter expired the bridge became a county and town charge. The third structure was built by Niagara and Erie counties and stood until 1875 when the present one was erected. In 1891 another

iron bridge was built across the Tonawanda Creek to connect Delaware and Main streets, and still another was erected over Ellicott Creek on Delaware street.

Within recent years a number of land enterprises have been inaugurated in North Tonawanda, giving the city an impetus commensurate with its business growth and development. The Ironton addition was replatted and placed on the market in 1890; the North Tonawanda Land Company was incorporated in June, 1891, with a capital of \$100,000. One of the moving spirits in each of these incorporations was George P. Smith.

At this point mention should be made of a number of business men and residents of North Tonawanda, past and present, who have been instrumental in developing the resources of the city and imparting to it that degree of prosperity which has brought it into prominence throughout the country. Among these are:

John Schuimeister, Lehon & Warren, A. & B. M. Krauss, L. G. Stanley, Dr. C. C. Smith, Nice & Hmkey, William J. Kage, M. F. and G. F. Myers, (who succeeded G. L. Faulkner in the coal business in 1890), John O. Ball, John T. and William Bush, W. W. Tlaayer (afterward governor of Oregon), B. H. Long, Hon. Garwood L. Judd, Lewis T. Payne, Frederick Sommer, Dr. R. G. Wright, Dr. W. L. Allen, Dr. W. V. R. Blighton, Levant R. Vandervoort, George P. Smith, A. F. Premus, James S. Thompson, J. H. De Graff, James Sweeney, jr., Frank Batt, Benjamin F. Felton, William Tompkins, Albert Dornfeld (postmaster), George O. Miller, Henry Homeyer, C. F. Goerss, Thomas H. Tulley, John T. Hepworth, Edward C. Praker, August M. Wendt, James H. Rand, Albert E. McKeen, Fred F. Wagenschuetz & Co., Mundie & McCoy, Charles Hagen. William Allen, Edward Evans, Hon. Henry F. Warner. John E. Oelkers, John P. Christgau, Batt, Kopp & Co. (manufacturers of church and school furniture). John H. Bollier, L. G. Fuller, Gillie Godard & Co. (manufacturers of steam riding galleries), August H. Miller, C. F. Oelkers, Christian Schulmeister.

Among other prominent citizens of the town of Wheatfield may be mentioned:

Edward A. Milliman, William Krull, Frederick and Martin Kopp, William Boening, William Fritz, Frederick Wurl, William Mauth, Gottlieb Walck, William Beutel, James Briggs, L. B. Bullard, John Chadrick, William Deglow, William Devantier, Frederick Geutz, F. D. and B. A. Habecker, Henry Hall, Peter Heim. Dennis G. Hoover. Martin Klemer, Ferdinand Lang, William Lehon, William Mavis, Oliver and John Miller, \William Pfuhl, Christ Radlaff, Charles Rogge, George Schenek, Joseph Schenek, William Schmidt, John H. and William Schnell, Henry Treichier, William Vandervoort, Henry F. Wagner, Albert and August Walk, Christopher Walk, Gottlieb Walk, William Watt, Fred Weinheimer, William Wench, August and Charles Werth, Chauncey Wichterman, August and Gustav H. Williams, William Williams, George M. Warren, Christian George Krull, J. D. Loveland, Daniel Sy, William Clark, Martin Reisterer, Calvin Jacobs, J. S. Tompkins, Thomas Collins, Daniel Treichler, Harvey Miller.

More extended notices of some of these and many others appear in Part III of this volume.

Schools and religious services were among the first institutions to be inaugurated by the early settlers. The history of the beginnings of the former, however, is meagre. The first school in the north part of the town was taught by Ira Benedict in 1826, while the pioneers in the south part evidently sent their children over into Erie county, a school having been started there, near the creek, as early as 1816. In 1836, soon after the formation of the town, Wheatfield was conveniently divided into school districts, which in 1860 numbered seven; the present number is eight. In 1866 a portion of the Union School building in North Tonawanda was erected; this is a fine brick structure, known as the Goundry Street school, and was rebuilt in 1882, bonds to the amount of \$14,500 being issued for the purpose. There are three other substantial brick school houses in the city, viz., the Ironton School, erected in 1889, and the Pine Woods and Gratwick Schools, built in 1892; the former cost \$15,000 and the latter two \$20,000 each. One of the most successful teachers and superintendents was Prof. Alexander D. Filer, who came to North Tonawanda from Middleport in 1881 and remained until his death, about 1891, being succeeded by Prof. Clinton S. Marsh, the present incumbent. The principal of the High School is F. J. Beardsley. Benjamin F. Felton has been connected with the Board of Education since 1876 and has served as its president since 1877; James H. Rand has officiated as clerk since 1882.

Religious services were held in this section as early as 1816-20, when Rev. John Foster was a preacher on the Tonawanda circuit, but no church was organized until many years later. Some of the earlier churches of the town have already been mentioned. The inhabitants of Tonawanda worshiped for some time in a union church which was erected about 1830, on a lot on South Canal street donated by A. H. Tracy.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church of North Tonawanda was built in 1842, on the corner of Main and Tremont streets. One of the prime movers in this as well as in the original movement was John Simson, who on July 4, 1867, presented the lot, edifice, etc., to the society free of debt. The present church was completed in 1882.

A Baptist church was organized about 1852, but a few years later succumbed for lack of support. The First Baptist church of North Tonawanda was organized September 6, 1885, with eighteen members, and in 1887-88 an edifice was erected on Van dervoort street at a cost of about \$8,000.

St. Mark's Episcopal church, organized February 17, 1869, is noticed in the chapter devoted to Lockport.

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran church, of North Tonawanda, was organized October 31, 1887, by Rev. H. Kaufman, who also instituted a parochial school in connection therewith. The church was built about 1888.

The Church of Christ of North Tonawanda was organized in 1888, and the next year an edifice was built on the corner of Christiana street and Payne's avenue; with the lot it cost about \$12,000.

The Church of the Ascension (Roman Catholic), of North Tonawanda, was organized by Rev. Father Bustin in 1888, and a church and parsonage were erected soon afterward. The present pastor is Rev. Patrick Cronin.

St. Matthew's German Evangelical Lutheran church, on the corner of Wheatfield and Bryan streets, was built in 1888-90, the church organization being effected in January, 1890. The first pastor was Rev. W. C. Koch. Connected with the church is a flourishing parochial school.

The Evangelical Frieden's church was organized by Rev. Paul Dittman in 1889, and an edifice was built the same year on the corner of Scherick and Vandervoort streets at a cost of \$8,000.

The North Presbyterian church was organized April 30, 1891, with seventy- five members, and purchased the building erected by the German Methodists in 1887.

The Central Methodist church on Oliver street near Fifth avenue, North Tonawanda, was built about 1893.

The Young Men's Christian Association of North Tonawanda was organized largely through the influence of the late Rev. I. P. Smith in December, 1886. In 1892 a handsome brick building was erected on the corner of Main and Tremont streets. One of the principals in fostering this institution was Dr. F. M. Hayes, the first president.

There are two churches of the Lutheran faith in Martinsville, viz., St. Martin's, erected in 1846, and St. Paul's, built in 1861. Connected with each church is a flourishing parochial school.