

THE FIRST CENTURY

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of the

VILLAGE OF WARSAW

*A Brief Sketch of the*

INCORPORATED  
VILLAGE

*from*

*May 16, 1843*

Prepared for Centennial Celebration

July 3, 1946

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# THE FIRST CENTURY

## *A Brief History of the Incorporated Village of Warsaw, New York*

By Lewis H. Bishop, Village Clerk  
June, 1946

### GENERAL VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

#### First Charter Election

The Village of Warsaw was incorporated by special act of the New York State legislature in the year 1843. The bill incorporating the village passed the legislature April 17, 1843 and the first village election was held at the home of John Wisner, May 16th pursuant to the following notice published in the Western New-Yorker for three weeks and posted in four public places.

#### NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the first meeting of the inhabitants of the Village of Warsaw will be held on the third Tuesday of May next, at ten o'clock A. M. at the house of John Wisner, in said village for the purpose of electing five Trustees, three Assessors, one Clerk, one Collector, one Treasurer, and three Fire Wardens for said village; and for the purpose of organizing under and by virtue of the act entitled, "An Act to incorporate the Village of Warsaw."

Done by virtue of said act the 26th day of April, 1843.

W. K. Crooks, Justice of Peace  
residing in said village.

At the organization meeting at which Mr. Crooks presided, and Andrew W. Young, acted as clerk pro tem, the following officers were elected.

Trustees—James R. Doolittle, John Wilder, Allen Fargo, Joshua H. Darling, Chester Hurd.

Clerk—Linus W. Thayer.

Assessors—William Walker, Alanson Holly, John A. McElwain.  
Treasurer—William Bingham.  
Collector—Ethel V. Bronson.  
Fire Wardens—Lindorf Potter, Augustus Frank, Peter Caner.

A motion was carried that the trustees be authorized to raise \$200.00 to improve the village.

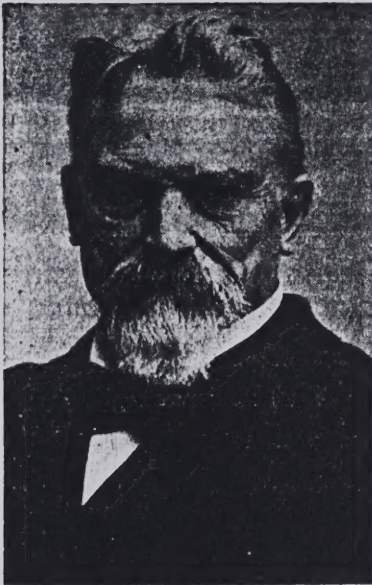
The original limits of the village were a rectangle one and a half miles long north and south and three-quarters of a mile east and west.

The charter provided that the trustees appoint one of their number as president and James R. Doolittle was chosen. The sum of \$200.00 was the maximum which could be raised by tax. The powers of the village board were quite limited.

#### Warsaw in 1843

At the time of incorporation the streets of the village were very dusty in dry weather and quagmires during wet times and almost impassable to horse-drawn vehicles. The sidewalks were no better except for a few rods here and there where gravel or tan bark had been put down. There were no street lights, few if any shade trees and no storm sewers. The community was still served by stage coaches and Morse had not yet invented the telegraph. The nearest banks were in Geneseo and Batavia. The public school did not go beyond the grammar school grades. Warsaw did have a post office, a band, a newspaper, the Western New-Yorker, a town clock, a fire department, but no water system. Public buildings included the Baptist, Congrega-





**JAMES R. DOOLITTLE**

First President of Village 1843-44

Removed to Wisconsin, was U. S. Senator from that state 1857 to 1869 and greatest orator in Senate of his time.

(Photograph taken in 1895)

tional, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and the county buildings. Turner in his history of the Holland Purchase says of Warsaw of a hundred years ago, "one will seldom see a more pleasant rural village or one which gives better indications of the thrift and prosperity of the country that surrounds it. The public edifices are neat and substantial; the private dwellings have about them the indication of comfort, convenience and good taste." The population could not have exceeded 600 and the community stood perhaps fifth in the county in size.

#### **Early Ordinances**

The first ordinance enacted established a pound where stray

horses, swine, cows or other animals running at large could be driven and kept until claimed by the owner. Twenty-five cents a day was charged for the keep of the animal. If not claimed within five days the animal could be sold following the posting of a notice for two days in three public places. William Bingham was the first pound master.

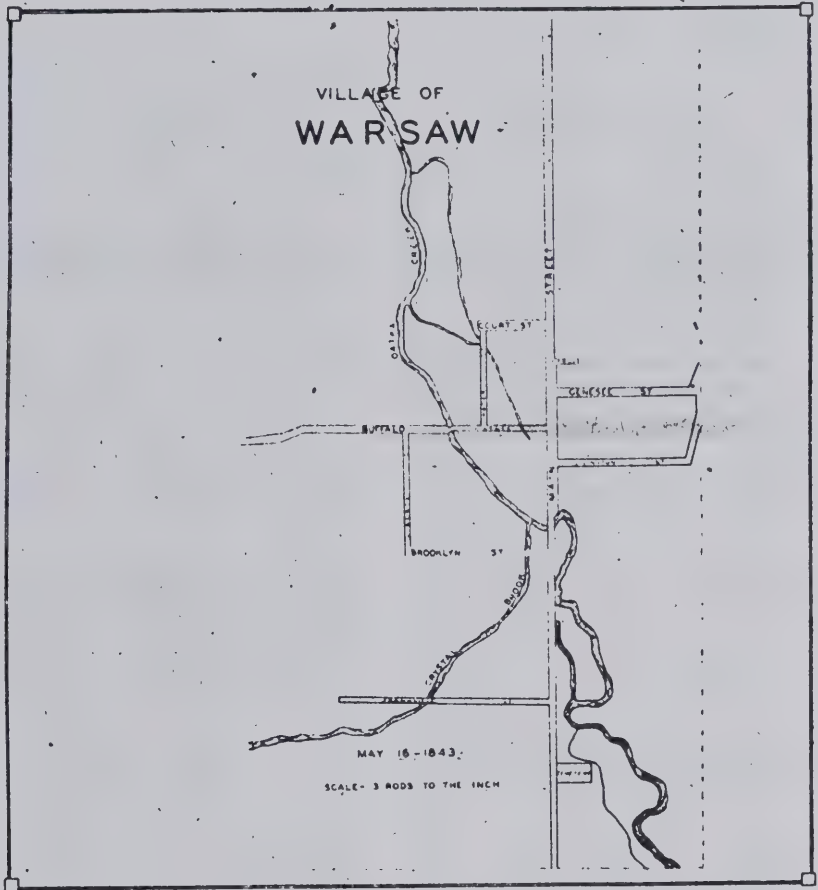
The second ordinance prohibited anyone from riding or driving a horse on the sidewalk, or otherwise obstructing it. The penalty was a fine of \$1.00.

The third ordinance placed a fine of fifty cents on the owner each and every time his cattle, horses, sweep or swine were found on the streets. Another early ordinance imposed a fine of \$1.00 for cutting, barking, or otherwise injuring any shade trees within a street or within the court house park or for hitching any animal so near to any shade trees as to endanger the same.

#### **The Charter of 1860**

For many years almost all of the money raised by tax was expended on sidewalks. From the first the board of trustees had difficulty in enforcing their orders to build sidewalks and to collect the fifty percent of the cost of the sidewalks assessed to the property owner. This lack of power was most keenly felt. The board petitioned the legislature for more authority but to no avail.

This resulted in the year 1856 in the village officials failing to call an election or levy a tax. The village government functioned again in the year 1857 but in the year 1858 the persons elected did not assume office. Finally using the charter of the Village of Batavia which had proved satisfactory, as a basis a new charter was drawn up reincorporating the village and passed the legislature in the year 1860. The new charter gave the village board the authority it needed. It also increased the number of trustees from five to six and their terms were in-



creased to three years. The office of fire wardens was abolished and that of police constable created. The amount which could be expended annually was increased to \$300.00 with the right to expend an additional \$200.00 if approved by vote of the taxpayers.

New ordinances were enacted including one affecting public health and sanitation and others prohibiting billiard tables, bowling alleys and pistol or shooting galleries.

From 1860 until 1871 when the state took away the licensing of

pool and billiard rooms, a controversy raged between the village authorities and owners of pool and billiard tables and caused considerable litigation.

#### Town Clock 5

Following the completion of the present Presbyterian church edifice in 1866, the question of a new town clock came up. The original town clock was bought by Dr. Augustus Frank and others about the year 1835 or 1836 and placed in the tower of the old Presbyterian church. It kept good time and continued in use until the new

church was built. The town board appropriated the sum of \$500.00 toward the purchase of a new clock and the village \$200.00 and \$80.00 toward having it put in place. The church agreed to permit its being placed in the church tower and the village to wind it and keep it in running order. It continued to give good service with occasional repairs until the year 1925 when it had become so worn it seemed beyond repair. Lucius Benham, a skilled mechanic made the extensive repairs required and it has run with little interruption ever since.

#### Excise Commissioners

In the year 1870, a new Excise Law was enacted which provided that a Board of Commissioners of Excise be appointed in each city, town and incorporated village of the state. In villages the members of the commission were to be appointed by the village board from members of that board. The commissioners could withhold all licenses or grant licenses to sell intoxicating liquors at retail to persons of good moral character. In September 1871 two hotels, three drug stores and three saloons were granted licenses.

Heretofore there had been no contest for office in any village elections. There had always been a fairly large vote cast, due no doubt to the fact that there were usually propositions to be voted upon. With the injection of the excise question into village elections, heated contests occurred each year until 1875 when the offices of village excise commissioners was abolished. In the year 1871, there were 310 votes cast, the largest vote at any village election up to that time. David McWithey was elected without opposition but Samuel Fisher, 2nd and Henry Garretsee, who ran on opposing tickets, each received 154 votes. There was no one elected to succeed Frank Miller, so he continued in office until he resigned in November. The succeeding elections were won by the wets

until 1874 when the drys were elected and no licenses were granted that year.

#### Expanding Services

Expanding functions of the village in the year 1870 required the expenditure of more money than could legally be raised by tax. The water works has just been built by the Warsaw Water Works Company, the organization of a fire department had just been effected, there was need for fire fighting equipment, and money to maintain a fire department and the installation of street lights was in the about to be made. An amendment to the charter was secured increasing the amount which could be raised by tax from \$300.00 to \$1,000.00 a year, with authority to expend an additional \$1,000.00 if approved by a vote of the taxpayers.

Soon afterwards a further amendment gave authority to expend the sum of \$2,500 for hose, a hose cart, buckets, hooks and ladders and to erect a fire house. In the year 1872 the village obtained authority from the legislature to increase the boundaries to their present size except that part of the west boundary only went to the west line of the Erie Railroad tracks.

In the year 1877, the village board granted permission for the location of the Soldiers and Sailors monument at the intersection of Main and Court streets.

A general revision of the village ordinances was made in the year 1881 and in the year 1882 authority was granted by amendment to the charter to levy a poll tax on each male inhabitant over twenty-one for maintenance of streets and highways.

In the year 1884, the board of trustees balloted thirty times before Dr. Z. J. Lusk was finally appointed, president of the village. Similar trouble again arose in the year 1889 when the board was composed of three Republicans and three Democrats and it was impossible to name a president. One



of the board was named at each meeting as presiding officer. Standing committees were named by vote of the board.

#### Lawsuits

Cyrus Jefferson who is reputed to have been the wealthiest man who ever lived in Warsaw, brought suit against the village to have the assessment against his personal property in the year 1880 cancelled and to have the tax on it refunded him. The village assessors had decided that they had a right to assess mortgages on property in other states owned by residents of the village. He was assessed the sum of \$250,000. The case was a famous one. He carried it to the Court of Appeals but before it was settled in his favor, he died. His estate was awarded a verdict of \$411.43, the amount of taxes he paid plus interest, the assessment having been declared illegal and void.

Horatio Graves' team becoming frightened one day in the year 1885 ran away went over an embankment on Center street, tipped the wagon over on which he was riding, breaking his leg. He asked \$5,000 damages because the embankment was not guarded or insufficiently guarded. Before settlement was finally made in the year 1888, Mr. Graves died. His estate was given an award of \$1321.00 including costs.

Louise Fox fell on a sidewalk on Mechanic street in the year 1891 and sued the village for \$5000.00 on account of her injuries. Settlement was finally made for \$1600.00.

By the year 1890, the growth of the village west of the Erie Railroad, caused the village to extend corporation limits for the last time, making the boundaries two and one-half miles north and south and a mile and six-tenths east and west.

During the year 1890 the Warsaw Electric Light and Power Co. built an electric light plant and was given a franchise. Four

years later E. B. Monroe was granted a franchise to run a telephone exchange. The town and village built the town hall on East Buffalo street in the year 1893 at a cost of nearly \$8,000.00.

#### Reincorporation

January 11, 1898 a special election was held at which the electors voted to reincorporate the village under the general village law. At the time of incorporation and for many years thereafter all villages were incorporated by special act of the legislature and amendments to the charter could only be made by act of the legislature. Eleven amendments had been made to the charter and it was becoming difficult to interpret it and a nuisance to have to go to the legislature every time authority was needed to meet changes in conditions. The general village law gave the village board much broader powers. At a special election in 1900, the poll tax was rescinded.

#### The Frank Case

Philip Coloross' gasoline peanut roasting machine which stood on the sidewalk in front of his store on the east side of Main street, (where Bush's jewelry store is now located) exploded one day in the summer of 1904. John Frank who was walking by the store at the time, received the force of the explosion and lost his eyesight as a result. He brought suit against the village for permitting the roasting machine on the sidewalk. The case was taken to higher courts where Mr. Frank was awarded the sum of \$9,900.00, but it was the year 1910 before the final decision was made. The total cost to the village including the verdict and court expense amounted to more than \$13,500.00.

#### The Farman Theatre

The village bought the Farman Theatre in the year 1911 for the sum of \$8,000.00. It was built in

the year 1903 as a community enterprise. The amount subscribed to erect it did not meet the cost of construction, so a mortgage was floated to make up the deficiency. The theatre was a financial failure and after a few years was taken over by the mortgagor. He sold it to the village. The village leased it to private interests for a short time. Later a committee of citizens took over the management with the purpose of giving Warsaw the best entertainment which could be afforded. Still later the owner of the Oatka theatre leased it to keep competitors out. He occasionally ran movies there. Gradually movies were shown there more and more, until it was used as a regular moving picture house and the Oatka theatre was closed much of the time.

In the year 1909, the Pavilion Natural Gas Co. was given a franchise to supply the community with gas. After the natural gas supply became almost exhausted, the company erected an artificial gas plant at Pavilion, but for several years recently the company has been buying natural gas of the Cabot Gas Company.

With the paving of Main street in 1914 the telephone poles were removed from the business section and the wires put in cables underground.

#### Village Dump

The Ernst property in the extreme northeast corner of the village which was acquired by the village at tax sale in 1915, was opened as a village dump two years later. Cleanup week was also instituted that year and continued until the year 1940 when Willard Barlow who lives on the farm adjoining the dump brought action against the village to close it on account of the rats, the stench and the smoke from the fires which burned there perpetually. With the closing of the dump there was no place readily available to put trash and cleanup week was discontinued.

The year 1918 saws the numbering of the houses and business places and the establishment of city delivery of mail.

#### Employees Benefits

The year 1918 also marked the beginning of employee benefits. The first compensation insurance was taken out then. In 1941 the village joined the Wyoming County Compensation Insurance plan at a great saving in premiums paid. On July 1, 1943 Civil Service was extended to village employees and the police force were compelled to join the state retirement fund. November 15th of that year, retirement benefits were given the other employees. Vacations are now also given employees with pay to those who have worked for the village five years or more.

#### Bus Lines

A bus line franchise was given in 1922 to carry passengers between Batavia and Warsaw but the line discontinued operations after a few years. The Genesee Bus Lines, Inc., running between Wellsville and Buffalo were granted a franchise in 1931 as well as the Greyhounds Lines of New York. The latter only operated through here a short time.

#### Rest Room

For the convenience of the public, a Rest Room was opened in the year 1924 on the ground floor of the Farman theatre building and the village board which had met there several years fitted up a room on the second floor. Finally the Rest Room became so troublesome a thing to keep clean and there was no longer any great need of one, that it was closed in the year 1938. The space was also wanted so the village clerk's office could be moved to the first floor.

#### New Code of Ordinances

Ordinances have been enacted and revised to meet changing conditions from time to time ever since the village was incorporated. The first zoning ordinance was

adopted in 1928, followed by a modern traffic ordinance the next year. At the time water meters were installed, a comprehensive water ordinance was passed. An ordinance permitting the showing of moving pictures on Sundays after two o'clock in the afternoon was put into effect after a special election in the year 1929 when a majority favored it. The Sunday baseball ordinance followed in 1930 and the Sunday bowling in 1939. Public dances on Sunday were however prohibited by ordinance in 1932. Daylight saving was put into effect in 1939. For many years there had been a need for a general revision of the ordinances as the last general revision had been made in the year 1881. After a great deal of time and thought a new code of ordinances was drawn up and was finally adopted October 1, 1945.

In the new ordinances all of the ordinances mentioned in the paragraph above were retained with little revision. The principal changes made were the creation of five special boards as follows: A Board of Plumbing and Sanitation charged with the duties of adopting a plumbing code and licensing plumbers; a Board of Buildings and Structures who are to adopt a Building code and enforce its provisions by requiring permits for construction work; a Planning Board set up to regulate opening of subdivisions and with authority to adopt a village plan; a Park Commission to have general supervision of the park; and a Fire Prevention Bureau.

#### **Increased Efficiency**

For many years local municipal government has been becoming more and more efficient, and Warsaw has been making real progress in this respect. In the year 1925, the village board of assessors was abolished to save money and duplication of effort. The town roll has been used since that time. A Village office was opened in 1928 with a full time clerk. Adequate files and office equipment has been purchased, the records have been

collected and filed systematically and useless records discarded. The minutes have been indexed and an up-to-date book keeping system set up. The office of clerk, treasurer, assessor and registrar of vital statistics have been combined for efficiency. All village collections are now made at the clerk's office. The office was at first located on the second floor of the Farman Theatre but in 1938 it was moved to the first floor.

The village joined the Mayors' Conference in 1934 and the village officers have derived a great deal of practical value from it. The officials are told of proposed legislation, kept informed of the latest developments in the field of municipal government partly through new bulletins and partly through conferences. Village officials have also been sent to schools conducted by the conference. An engineer was appointed as superintendent of public works in the year 1938 and he has been provided with an office. He has demonstrated the wisdom of that step very decidedly.

Mayor John H. Moore was responsible for the formation of the Wyoming County Village Association in the year 1936. The meetings of the association which includes all village officials in the county have been of great value.

#### **Work Relief Projects**

The financial depression of the thirties threw many people in Warsaw out of work. The community for two years provided its own work relief program and raised \$10,000 to run it. The situation then got beyond the ability of the community to handle alone and application was made for state and federal aid. In all the village put into operation about 75 work relief projects. The sewer system was completed, streets were improved, the park developed, water lines laid, a reservoir and many storm ditches and streams were cleaned out and work was done to help put village records in better shape. The above projects were handled by the village direct, with



a village foreman in charge of the work.

In addition to the program of work mentioned above contracts were let under the supervision of the Public Works Administration for the construction of the Filter plant at Rock Glen, the Sewage Treatment plant and the Swimming Pool. Forty-five percent of the cost of this construction or \$80,000.00 was received in grants from the Federal Government. The work projects are described in more detail elsewhere in this history. Nearly 100 men from Warsaw were on the work relief payrolls at a time. With the assistance of the work program great municipal progress was made in spite of the depression.

The expenditures of the village were also greatly reduced in this emergency. In 1931 the tax rate was \$13.12, in 1932 \$10.97 and in 1933 \$8.35. Some of the reduction in rate was due however to a considerable general increase in assessed valuations. In spite of the reductions in tax rate tax collections were the poorest in the history of the village. The collector returned uncollected taxes totaling \$7,333.00 on November 30, 1932 out of a levy of \$51,486.00. Contrast this with a return of \$45.94 made last February out of a levy of \$54,696.

#### More Lawsuits

Two actions were brought against the village in the year 1940. That of Willard Barlow was mentioned elsewhere. The other was that of Montgomery Bros., who brought suit because the sewage dumped into the Oatka Creek had damaged their farm crops. Besides asking for reimbursement for past damages, the firm asked that the village pay them \$3,000.00 annually until the dumping of sewage was discontinued. The jury awarded them a verdict of \$445.00 for damage to their crops but the court disallowed the yearly claim for damages as the village had already built the sewage treatment plant and put it into operation.

Besides the lawsuits already mentioned in this history, there have been numerous other claims and actions. Injuries from falling on defective sidewalks have been the most common cause for suit. Horses going over unprotected embankments or poorly guarded embankments have been another cause. At least one accident occurred when a steam roller frightened a horse, causing it to run away. Rock from blasting operations in the gulf road injured people in a buggy on Summit Ave. and was the cause for another law suit. To prevent the spread of a fire one house was torn down or partly torn down. Remuneration was made. There have been actions to reduce assessments on personal property and real estate and on paving and sewer assessments. Some claims were not pressed. Others were settled without going to court but a few were carried to the Court of Appeals. The village successfully defended some and lost others.

#### Civil Defense

Warsaw was thoroughly organized for Civil Defense during World War II with more than 700 people enrolled in the defense organization, including Red Cross workers. All were given thorough instruction in their duties. The fourteen Blackouts were strictly enforced, imaginary incidents were carried out, air raid warning stations were manned and cooperation with other communities was organized to handle any disaster which was likely to occur. The Red Cross cooperated by training nurses for disaster work and the water, fire and police facilities of this and neighboring communities were coordinated.

#### New Office Building

In the fall of 1944 Farman Theatres, Inc., offered to buy the Farman Theatre for the equivalent of \$26,000.00. The village board passed a permissive referendum resolution, published and posted it and waited the necessary 30 days.

No petition containing the signatures of more than 20% of the tax payers was filed asking for a vote on the proposition and the sale was consummated. Part of the proceeds were used to provide offices in the Hain building which was deeded the village as part of the payment for the theatre. Last October, the offices were nearly completed and the village moved in. Located on the first floor are the offices of the clerk and superintendent of public works, and a vault for the safe storage of village records. In the basement are the heating plant, shop for repairing and testing meters and storage space for pipe and fittings. The second floor is occupied by a conference room and the village board room. Part of the proceeds of the sale have been set aside to help build a municipal incinerator.

#### Surplus Revenues

On account of the largely increased state shared revenues due to the large war profits of Warsaw's factories, the village received the largest amount of money from this source in its history. With both labor and material scarce during the war, the village received more revenue than it could readily use. With nearly everyone finding it comparatively easy to pay his taxes it seemed unwise to reduce taxes. By keeping them at normal level now it would be easier to reduce them in bad times. This surplus was handled in two ways. Several pieces of much needed machinery were purchased, as follows: a new hook and ladder fire truck, a power street sweeper, a good used power grader, a police car, a five ton truck, two tractors, and a 1½ ton dump truck, a pick-up truck and power paint sprayer. The rest of the surplus has been set aside in capital reserve funds for future improvements and for purchase of more machinery. Again permissive referendums which were described in the sale of the theatre, were used. The capital reserve funds

can only be used for the purpose for which they were set up. The money now set aside in capital reserve funds totals approximately \$38,000 of which \$15,000 is earmarked for the incinerator plant. Lesser amounts have been put in reserve funds toward the construction of a building to house the machinery and equipment of the department of public works, to make major repairs to the filter plant and buy equipment for the water department, to make major repairs to the sewage treatment plant, to buy a fire truck, for a police car and toward the improvement of streets.

#### Post War Plans

To encourage the preparation of plans for post war construction, the state several years ago started paying one-half of the cost of plans on approved construction work to be undertaken by the subdivisions of the state. Warsaw has completed plans for the improving of four and a half miles of streets, including curbs, roadway and reconstruction of sidewalks where necessary; for the erection of a municipal incinerator to be built adjacent to the sewage treatment plant; and for the public works building to house the equipment of that department. The preliminary plans have been approved for flood control of the small streams in the village.

#### Veterans Housing

The village has also signed a contract with the Federal Government for ten two-family temporary houses for veterans of World War II. The government erects the houses and the village furnishes and prepares the site and looks after the operation of the houses, collecting the rent, making repairs, etc.

This brings this part of the history down to date. The history of the other functions of the village follows.

## STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

### Town Maintained Streets

At the time the village was incorporated, the Town of Warsaw was divided into 52 road districts with a path master in charge of each district. Over the path masters were three highway commissioners who had general supervision of the roads in the town. The corporate limits of the village included three or parts of three road districts. The charter gave the village board jurisdiction over the sidewalks and authority to remove obstructions from the streets but the town continued to maintain the streets in the village and levy and collect highway taxes. Property owners were required to work out the road tax or hire it done at the number of days per hundred of assessed valuation determined by the town at the first of the year. Some years it required one day for every \$250.00 in valuation or perhaps in others as little as one day for every \$600.00. Each pathmaster used the help furnished him to maintain the roads of his district. The cost of material, the repair and construction of bridges, repairs after floods and other unusual expenditures were met by a general town highway tax.

### Village Takes Over Streets

As a result of agitation by the citizens of the community, an amendment to the charter was made in 1858 making the corporate limits one road district and giving the trustees the authority to appoint a superintendent of streets and to decide how the highway tax should be spent in the village. The town highway commissioners however continued to levy and collect the highway tax. The next year the village bought a gravel pit.

With the new village charter granted in the year 1860, the village board was empowered to levy and collect highway tax for the

streets in the village, but the town could still levy and continues to levy to this day, highway taxes in the village for the repair and building of bridges, for damage done by floods and for maintenance of roads in the town outside the village.

The following article in relation to roads appeared in the Wyoming County Mirror on April 26, 1859, "Road Commissioner Miller says he has placed 200 cords of stone on the roads in the village the past year; most of it on north and south Main street. He has abandoned the use of gravel for road purposes, except as a top dressing on the stone, and feels confident that his present plan is the only practicable one for the peculiar soil of our village." This is the first record of stone being used on the streets.

An amendment to the charter in the year 1869, gave the village board power to open up streets. Heretofore, the streets had been opened by the town highway commissioners. The policy of the town in opening a street or road was to charge the property through which the street or road passed, the expense of opening the street. The village continued the same policy for many years.

### Macadam Streets

Although waterbound macadam streets had been advocated as early as 1858, none was built until the year 1878. That year the village bought a stone crusher. A plentiful supply of stones was available in the farmers' fields. The same year the village also purchased fifty carloads of crushed stone from LeRoy. While this seems like a large quantity of stone, it must be understood the freight cars were much smaller seventy years ago. Stone continued to be crushed here for a part of the local needs until the year 1910, when suitable stone for crushing had been exhausted. Since then LeRoy crushed stone has been used.



### Street Sprinkling

As soon as the water system was completed in the year 1870, the citizenry started to demand that the streets be sprinkled. From the Western New-Yorker of June 12, 1873, we learn that D. C. Munger bought "a first class street sprinkler of about forty barrel capacity with a sprinkling attachment of 25 feet spread." It is assumed street sprinkling started with this purchase. Some years later the village bought a sprinkler and eventually owned two. Street sprinkling was finally discontinued in the year 1931. By that time much paving had been laid and oil which was a better dust layer, had come into use.

In the year 1888, a six ton roller for street work was bought for the sum of \$425.00. This was replaced with a steam roller in 1897 at a cost of \$3400. That roller wore and a new one was purchased which is still in use. Last year that was changed over to a gasoline propelled roller. It was not until the first World War that the first piece of automotive equipment was acquired.

The paving of Main street in the year 1914 necessitated street sweeping and a horse - drawn sweeper was bought. As the number of paved streets increased, the need for a modern sweeper was apparent. Finally in the year 1944, the village purchased a modern Austin-Western Patrol sweeper.

### Paved Streets

The paving of Main street also created a demand for other paved streets. At first brick was the paving material. Concrete soon replaced brick because it was less expensive. However until the improvement of Wyoming street in the year 1919, little or no bituminous bound macadam type of street improvement had been used. That is now the type of construction generally desired whether the improvement is to be with or without curb and gutter.

The state built Main, West Buffalo and East Buffalo streets with the village paying for the extra width over sixteen feet. Wyoming County built Liberty street charging the village for the expense of a concrete street over the cost of macadam construction and for extra width. Including the village's share in the cost of the above streets, the cost of improving Wyoming street and the expense of improving the streets with curbs and gutters, Warsaw has expended more than \$300,000.00 on street construction since 1913. Half of this expense was financed with bond issues and half out of current revenues and out of charging a portion to abutting property owners. All the street bonds are now paid.

The usual practice in paving streets was to charge the abutting property owners on a 24 foot street with curb and gutter 60 percent of the cost of the improvement and the village at large 40 percent. Many other streets have been improved with bituminous macadam without curb and gutter, some full width. Nearly all of the remaining streets have been improved sufficiently to take them out of the class of purely dirt streets.

These street improvements presented no unusual construction problems except West Buffalo through the gulf and East Buffalo street east of Prospect. In the gulf the plans called for straightening the roadway and evening up the grade. This necessitated considerable rock excavation. Blasting to loosen the rock continued all one summer. The relocation of most of the four foot concrete conduit carrying the stream through the gulf complicated the work. On East Buffalo street, the road followed a new right of way east of Prospect street up the hill to a point beyond the corporation line. It was necessary for the B. R. & P. Railway to build a new viaduct over the highway and a

large retaining wall. The new location of the highway required much excavation and the filling of several ravines.

The village used work relief labor to widen South Main street and in improving, Livingston, Oak and Short streets and parts of Brooklyn and Genesee streets as well as other streets.

#### Streets Abandoned

A few streets or portions of streets have been abandoned. Included among these are the Old Buffalo road east of Main street, and Frank street east of Park street, many years ago. When East Buffalo street was opened up the hill, Miner street was closed east of the railroad and a road opened from East Buffalo street above the peach orchard to Miner street at the old Catholic cemetery. Genesee street from a point just below the railroad was closed to the village line in 1923 and the upper end of Livingston street was cut off. In 1913 Mt. View Ave. was partly relocated to give it an easier grade. The street to the Hawley Salt Works, near the Erie Railroad tracks was closed after that plant was torn down.

#### Accidents on Hill Streets

On account of the long, steep grades and curves on the highways east and west out of Warsaw, there have been many bad accidents. The drivers in almost every instance were unfamiliar with the highways and had heavily loaded trucks or cars which got out of control because the driver failed to shift into lower gear at the top of the hill or attempted to do so too late. The worst accident occurred in the fall of 1943 when a heavily loaded truck coming down the East Hill failed to make the turn in the road just above Prospect street and ran over the property of Gerard Miller on the southwest corner of East Buffalo and Prospect streets, killing his infant son, Gordon and demolishing his house. Several persons have also been badly injured in

accidents on these hills and trucks and cars have been wrecked. The Holly house so called, across the street from the Miller's has been hit several times and once the kitchen was torn off. To lessen the possibility of accidents both hills have been well posted with warning signs. These accidents were a contributing factor in Route 20 being moved farther north where the hills were much lower and the designating this route

#### Sidewalks

As mentioned before the only excuse for sidewalks prior to the incorporation of the village were gravel paths and a few rods of tan bark. The first problem attacked by the village board and its chief concern for several decades was the construction of wooden sidewalks though until a greater grant of power was given the board by the charter of 1860, there was considerable difficulty in making the property owners build them.

As early as the year 1859 some of the more enterprising and well to do citizens had started laying stone sidewalks. The Western New-Yorker said stone walks were too expensive for the general public to build. Albert Purdy used white marble slabs from Vermont. Brown flagging was obtained from Sages' quarry at Attica at an expense of twenty to twenty-five cents a surface foot. Some years later several quarries were opened at South Warsaw bringing the price of stone down. One of them was located on the farm of Philander Truesdell where his great grandson, Charles Humphrey now resides.

In the year 1860 the village ordered property owners on the south side of Brooklyn street to lay stone sidewalks. They were to be of two strips, not less than fifteen inches wide and three inches thick. The foundation was to be gravel spread over a base of cobblestones.

During the year 1869 the village built the first sidewalk through the gulch to the Erie station. That

same year stone was used for cross walks for the first time.

Frank Miller in the year 1871 was granted permission to lay a cement wall probably the first one to be built in the community. For several decades though stone and cement walks were laid from time to time, the great portion of the sidewalks continued to be made of wood. From the minutes of the village board and the annual reports, it is plain that much of the time of the village officials was taken up in examining wooden walks needing repair or relaying, sending out notices for their repairs made and in seeing that the orders were carried out.

To hasten the construction of cement walks, the board of trustees in the year 1904 started the practice of paying property owners twenty-five percent of the cost of the walk where one had never been laid. They had to be laid to village specifications and at the grade furnished by the superintendent of streets. From 1904 until 1916 approximately \$9,000.00 in sidewalk rebates were paid property owners and wooden walks had all but disappeared. The largest amount in rebates paid out in one year was in 1910 when \$1,500.00 was expended.

As early as the 1860's the village started to require the occupants of premises to clean the snow off their walks. For a number of decades the village has sent plows around after each snow fall, usually early in the morning, to open up the sidewalks for people going to work and for the school children. Until the year 1944 horse drawn plows were used, but in that year tractors were purchased for the purpose.

#### Shade Trees

Before the incorporation of the village few trees had been planted along the streets. The act of incorporation seemed to stimulate a pride in the appearance of the village and among other things property owners started setting out trees. To prevent the young

saplings from being barked and horses from browsing on them, an ordinance was enacted forbidding the hitching of horses to the trees or near them. A few years after the county buildings were erected the village paid \$19.00 to have the elms set out in the court house park as it was called.

By the time street lighting was introduced in 1871, the trees had become so large, it was necessary to trim them to make the most of the new lighting. Trimming has been done from time to time ever since. Both telephone and power companies have assisted in this work to prevent interference with their wires, and along with the village have employed tree surgeons to do the trimming.

The elm leaf beetle made its appearance in 1936 and to save the elms, the board of trustees hired them sprayed and has done so annually ever since. As it is believed the village can do the work more advantageously, a spraying outfit has been ordered. Nothing else which the early residents did has contributed so much to Warsaw's beauty, as the trees they planted.

#### Street Lights

The first street lights were installed following the erection of an artificial gas plant in the year 1871. To start with there were only 8 street lamps but in succeeding years many more were added. The lamp lighter with his little ladder over his shoulder became a familiar sight as he went about the streets. These lights were considered very bright. Demands for street lights out ran the extension of gas mains in the streets, so oil lamps were erected where gas was not available. Even at that many streets had no lights. Warsaw continued to be served with gas and kerosene street lights until the fall of 1891 when the first electric street lights were turned on.

A contract was entered into with the Warsaw Electric Light and Power Co. to furnish 32 arc lights



of 2,000 candle power at a cost of \$2100 per year, the same to be extinguished at midnight and on moon light nights. A few years later incandescent lights of smaller candle power were placed on less important streets. Arc lights tho using less current per candle power, than incandescent lamps, are so much more expensive to maintain that the latter have replaced them.

In the year 1917 all of the arc lights were replaced with incandescent lamps and all night service was inaugurated every night in the year. Bouvelard lights were installed in the business section of Main and Buffalo streets in 1914 and later on Buffalo street bridge, Cottage Court, Perry Avenue and West Court Street. With the exception of a few outlying streets, all the streets are now lighted. What a contrast the present lighting system of 234 lights presents, with the eight feeble gas lights which illuminated the street in the year 1871.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

### Primitive Fire Company

The history of the Warsaw Fire Department starts about the year 1834 when the citizens of Warsaw which was a hamlet of sixty houses, bought a fire engine and hose. The town appropriated \$50 to build a fire house on the south side of Genesee street just east of the tavern on the corner of Main and Genesee streets. A fire company was organized including many of the prominent men in the community. At a public meeting in 1848, it was urged that the village examine all chimneys immediately and that everyone owning a building furnish a ladder for the same. In 1864 the village board ordered the examination of all business places for fire hazards. The fire hose at this time was leather as the buckets were no doubt.

### Early Fires

The first fire of any size in the village occurred in the year 1859 when Gates and Hurds Planning mill burned with a loss of \$10,000 and Buxton's Wagon Shop nearby was damaged to the extent of about \$2,500. The planning mill again burned six years later.

In 1867 a conflagration destroyed all the buildings on the west side of Main street between Buffalo street and a point opposite Genesee street at an estimated loss of \$150,000.00. Fire again in October 1868 burned three stores which had replaced part of those destroyed the year before.

### Department Organized

These two fires so alarmed and aroused the citizens that they organized a water company in the year 1870 and installed a water system and organized a fire department. The village charter was amended in the year 1871 permitting the village to raise sufficient money to buy fire hose, hose carriage, buckets, hooks, ladders, etc., following an affirmative vote by the taxpayers. The proposition carried 73 to 71. That same year the present fire department was organized. The next year a fire house was constructed on East Buffalo street.

Another result of the great fire in 1867 was the formation of a fire district in the central or congested part of the village where wooden buildings could not be built except by permission of the board of trustees. The boundaries of the district have not changed materially since.

Except for the loss of the Perry hotel at the corner of Main and Frank streets in 1870 and the planning mill of the Warsaw Manufacturing Co. on Center street in 1871 there were no fires of much consequence between the years 1868 and 1880.

### Companies Formed

The Cataract Hose Co., formed in 1871, was the first company in the new fire department. The sec-

ond company was the Warsaw Hook and Ladder Company organized in 1877. The latter was disbanded after twelve years. The Cataract Hose Co. was made a Protective Fire Company in the year 1895 but disbanded soon there after. The third company was the McNair Hose Company which started in 1887 and continued in existence until the year 1928. The Crystal Hook and Ladder Company was organized in the year 1893, the Rescue Hose Co., in 1894 and the Empire, Hawley and Gouinlock Hose Company in 1896 following the laying of water mains in the part of the village at the Erie station. The last named company is now known as the Erie Hose Company.

The old fire hall on East Buffalo street having served its usefulness, the Town and Village, erected the town and village hall in the year 1893 at a cost of about \$8,000.00. Three years later the fire house near the Erie station was put up for \$450.00.

The taxpayers in the year 1896 voted to allow all active firemen a \$500.00 exemption on the village assessment roll.

#### Fire Trucks

For a great many years the hose carts and carriages were hand drawn, though horses were sometimes pressed into service and the firemen were often pretty well winded when they reached the fire. In 1908 the sum of \$3,000 was expended to buy a horse drawn fire truck, a fire team and for an addition to the rear of the fire hall for a stable. It was a thrilling sight to see the fire horses making a run to a fire. By the year 1920, motor fire apparatus had come into general use and the village bought the first such equipment.

#### Fire Alarm

Until the erection of the new fire hall on East Buffalo street and the purchase of a fire bell, the Congregational church bell was used to sound the alarm. The rope hung outside of the belfry window. As

firemen had difficulty hearing the fire bell, a steam whistle with mocking bird attachment was bought and placed in the electric light plant. To facilitate sending in alarms, a fire alarm system was installed. In 1904 it was rebuilt and extended. It received a general overhauling in the year 1928 and in 1936 an extension was made to fire hall No. 2 on West Buffalo street. After the electric light plant was abandoned the whistle was placed on one of the factories, but there came a time when no plant kept up steam all night. To provide an adequate way of sounding alarms, three electric sirens were placed in different parts of the village and later one was attached to fire hall No. 2. This fire hall was remodeled in 1936, and a cement approach laid.

#### Calls Out of Town

With the use of motor vehicle equipment, the department started to receive calls to rural fires. For a number of years no charge was made for this service. After a time the village began to realize that these calls were wearing out the equipment several times faster than calls within the village. Finally the board decided the fire department could not answer any more rural alarms without reimbursement. The Village reached an agreement in the year 1935 with the Town of Warsaw, whereby the village would buy a small fire truck to answer farm fires in the town, if the Town would form a fire protective district in the area outside of the village and pay the sum of \$500.00 annually for such service. The truck was placed in fire hall No. 2 in 1936.

#### Most Serious Fires

A list of some of the larger fires since the year 1880 with their approximate dates follow:

Factories burned were: Warsaw Salt Works in 1887; Gouinlock & Humphrey Salt plant on the Erie R. R. in 1887, partly burned, J. E. Ketchum and Son's

# VILLAGE OF WARSAW

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DRAWN BY  
G.F. SHEPHERD  
Supt. Public Works  
6/8/42





Planning mill on Center street in 1895, Empire Salt plant on the Erie R. R. about 1901, Warsaw Wilkinson plant in two fires about the time of World War I.

The Warsaw Sanitarium burned in 1895.

Business Buildings which have burned include the Bingham hotel and all the stores between Genesee street and Frank streets in 1887, the four story Lincoln block and Parks block at the corner of W. Buffalo and S. Main streets in 1894, United States Hotel where the Gridley now stands in 1900 or 1901, Munger's Livery Stable on Frank street in 1910, Ballintine's Hardware where Snow's store now is in 1916, serious damage to Garret Moody's building and building adjacent in 1916, destruction of Wiggins Livery Stable and Vege-Lene Co's. proprietary establishment and a considerable loss to Main street stores during World War I. Wright's laundry in 1923, Smither's Studio, office of the electric company and Rosen's store badly damaged in 1926, old Thomas O'Brien hotel at Erie station in 1930, Theron Main's building, entire stock of Vege-Lene Co., and Week's Funeral Home in 1935 and lumber yard of Wyoming Valley Lumber & Supply Co. and much damage to Masonic Temple and Better Building Co's. shop in 1944.

The burning of the Lincoln block where water barely trickled out of the hose at the second story, gave added proof of the necessity of providing an ample water supply for fire protection at once. Not only was the water supply at that time inadequate the water mains of the Warsaw Water Company were too small to give sufficient flow.

The members of the Crystal Hook and Ladder Company and the Rescue Hose Company in 1938, formed a company known as Cry-Res Co., Inc. The company bought the former Raupp garage building next to the library and installed eight bowling alleys. They have

proved to be very popular and are now all paid for out of the profits from their operation.

To increase their efficiency as fire fighters, many Warsaw firemen have attended several schools for firemen held in the county in the past few years. The courses of instruction were given by experienced city firemen.

The Warsaw Fire Department has answered calls from neighboring villages and have in turn on two or three occasions called for help from other communities. The present authorized membership of the department is 110.

The department has three fire trucks, two pumpers and a hook and ladder truck fully equipped, and a squad car which the department presented the village. This equipment together with a fire alarm system, an ample water supply under high pressure and an active and efficient fire department, provides Warsaw excellent fire protection. This is recognized by the Fire Board of Underwriters who give the village a grade B rating.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

As the original village charter made no provision for police officers the town constables were the law enforcement officers for some years. Enforcement of ordinances and elimination of nuisances were the principal things claiming their attention.

The revised charter of 1860 created the office of police constable with all the powers of constables of the county of Wyoming, and other powers conferred by the charter. The members of the village board were likewise empowered to make arrests, a power they still retain. In the same year the second charter was adopted, the board passed an ordinance suppressing all disorderly, drinking, tipping and gaming houses under fine of \$25.00.

The first nightwatch was Michael Harty who was appointed in the year 1879 but whom the merchants or other persons paid. Four years later the village assumed his salary and added to it the job of lamp lighter.

#### Care of Transients

With the reincorporation under the general village law in 1898, the office of police constable was abolished and that of policeman created. Up until the year 1915 the only full time policeman had been employed at night. During that year the first full time day policeman was hired, the first traffic ordinance was passed, the lockup was established and the office of police justice constituted. For some years prior to that time, all the tramps and other transients applying for a night's lodging had been committed to the jail he was where they had a bed and were well fed. This caused an influx of transients. The trouble with this arrangement was the expense involved. Before a person could be committed to the jail he was taken before a Justice of Peace who made out the commitment papers. The justice was entitled to a fee and the county to compensation for lodging and feeding them. It would have been cheaper to have given them a room in the hotel. With as high as 200 transients cared for in a year the expense ran between \$1,000 and \$2,000 annually. The state prison inspectors also complained about keeping tramps in the jail. To correct the situation, the village established a lockup in the basement of the Farman Theatre where tramps as well as persons arrested could be kept and appointed a police justice, who was paid a salary and not fees. The arrangement effected a substantial saving in expense. Wooden benches were provided in place of beds and with blankets and sanitary facilities the men were housed in the lockup with some degree of comfort.

Soon after the lockup was established the state prison inspector started to object to the prisoners being kept in a basement and finally in the year 1927, the lockup was condemned and no more prisoners were kept there. It continued to be used by transients.

During the depression large numbers of men out of work wandered about the country. This caused a large increase in the number staying in the lockup or room for lodgers. Because almost all of these were not really tramps, the village started providing a light breakfast of day-old rolls, fried cakes or doughnuts and coffee with sugar and condensed milk. The meals cost about seven cents apiece. The policeman on duty prepared the breakfast. One year nearly 1500 men were kept over night and 18 in one night.

A finger printing outfit was obtained from the F. B. I. in the late thirties and finger prints were taken of all those staying overnight. That fact and the growing employment finally cut down the number of transients. When the breakfasts were discontinued, the number fell still more. Some months in the last few years there have been no transients applying for lodging and never more than four or five.

While on duty one night in November 1922, Robert James Shererd, a member of the village police force (accidentally shot and killed himself. He is believed to be the only village employee in its long history who lost his life while on duty for the village. Fortunately the village had compensation insurance which cared for his wife and two children.

With the increase in the numbers of cars, the need for some adequate method of controlling traffic became necessary. In 1922 a motor cycle was purchased. It did not meet the needs of the situation and in 1931 it was replaced with a car. To control traffic at the intersection of Main and Buffalo streets a stop and go light was

erected in 1926. Twelve years later the state took over the light and replaced it with an overhead signal. Warning signs were put up near the school in 1939 to safeguard the children crossing the street.

In the year 1929 three full time men were employed on the force for the first time. During the depression, the force was cut to two with a relief man working two days a week. The full three-man force was restored last August.

To facilitate calling the policeman on duty, a police signal was placed on the telephone exchange in 1928. A few years ago the village bought a punch clock and several stations were installed by local concerns. These are visited and punched several times each night as a deterrent to would-be burglars. The village bought a two way radio for the police car in the year 1944, using the sheriff's broadcasting station as the central office and working with the sheriff's patrol cars.

## WATER SYSTEM

### First Water System

No serious consideration was given to the establishment of a water system until the year 1869, following the two disastrous fires of 1867 and 1868. Thus awakened to the need of water for fire protection, the Warsaw Water Works Company was formed in the year 1869 with a capital stock of \$20,000.00. The village subscribed to \$3,000.00 of the stock. During the summer and fall of 1870 a water system was installed with a reservoir on the East Hill at an elevation of about 265 feet above Main street, fed by numerous springs. Water was turned into the pipes on November 26, 1870.

Though the system was intended primarily for fire protection, so many people came to use it for domestic and other purposes, that in the year 1878, it was necessary to increase the supply. The Truesdell reservoir was built that year

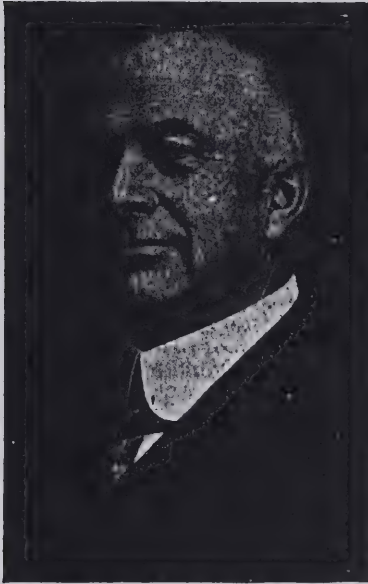
two miles southwest of the village at an elevation of 320 feet. The reservoir had a capacity many times the one on the East Hill and had a much larger source of supply. The expense of construction was defrayed from the income of the company. There were four miles of pipe line in the streets at that time.

From the year 1880 to the year 1894, the establishment and growth of Warsaw's large salt refining industry, caused such a growth in population that it put a severe strain on the water supply. In addition, salt seeping through the rock strata ruined the wells in the village, causing many to connect with the water system who otherwise would not have done so.

### Municipal System

The shortage became so acute and the water company took no steps to provide an adequate supply, that the village board had plans drawn for a village water supply. At a special election in 1894 the proposition to expend \$60,000.00 for a municipal water system carried 513 to 55. Contracts were let for a water system to be supplied from the Cotton and Burke streams in the Town of Gainesville with 15,000,000 gallon reservoir at Rock Glen at an elevation of 320 above Main St. The plans called for the laying of 104,911 feet of mains varying in diameter from four to twelve inches. Later it was necessary to issue \$15,000 additional in bonds to complete the system. By condemnation proceedings, the village obtained the right to take not to exceed 500,000 gallons of water daily from the Burke and Cotton streams. Fifty-nine acres of land were bought at the headwaters to protect the supply. Subsequent purchases have enlarged the holdings to about 350 acres. The entire area not having a natural growth of trees has been reforested largely with white, red and scotch pine and spruce. The first plantings were made in the year 1913.





**N. S. BEARDSLEE**

President of Village 1894 and  
1910 to 1914

Father of Municipal Water System—His generosity made possible the Swimming Pool.

In order to make sure of obtaining a majority in favor of building a municipal water system, the village officials promised the residents of the village residing near the Erie station, that they could have village water. As this part of the village could not be supplied from the Rock Glen reservoir because it is at too great an elevation, a reservoir with a capacity of 4,000,000 gallons was built near the residence of Peter Duschen on the Blackhouse road and an agreement was entered into with the Erie Railroad to use the surplus water from its supply.

#### **Additional Supply**

The Warsaw Water Works Company continued in business after the municipal system was put in

but eventually it went through bankruptcy. Royal Lamberson, a former citizen of Warsaw, bought the assets of the company and sold the system to the village in May 1912, for \$12,000. This added 180 patrons to the municipal system and the Truesdell reservoir as a source of supply valuable for use in emergencies. In a few years the old system was abandoned except the line from the Truesdell reservoir.

Also in 1912 the village bought the Wethersfield Springs pond of ten acres. It is being held for use in case the village out grows its present supply.

From 1895 to 1912 the earnings of the water system were insufficient to pay the cost of operation and meet the bonds and interest as they became due. The deficit was made up through taxation. Between 1920 and 1938 \$162,000 in profits from the system were used to help meet the general village expenditures including highways, fire, police and park.

#### **The Filter Plant**

In the year 1917, the state health department started making bacteria tests of the water from the various reservoirs supplying the village. The test showed that the water was not always of safe sanitary quality for human consumption and urged that it be chlorinated. As there had never been any illness traceable to the water supply and believing that purchase of additional land at the headwaters would be sufficient safeguard, the recommendations of the health department were ignored. The state became more insistent. Propositions to build a filter plant were successively defeated in 1933 and 1935. Finally in December 1937, the State Health Department served notice on the Village Board to appear at a hearing in Buffalo to show cause why the water supply should not be protected. After the hearing, the State Health Department ordered the village to install a filter plant at Rock Glen by January 1939.

In spite of this order, the taxpayers again voted it down in March 1938 believing other measures less expensive would solve the problem. The health department thereupon stated it would be satisfied with chlorination only.

However a committee of citizens appointed for the purpose, finding that the suggestions made for improving the water system in lieu of a filter plant, would cost more than the filter plant and would not be effective in purifying the water, decided the construction of a filter plant should be made. The proposition carried at the election July 15, 1938. The Federal Government agreed to pay 45 per cent of the cost of the plant under a Public Works Administration project or about \$30,000.00, the village to pay the remainder of the expense or \$37,000.00. Construction started in the fall of 1938 and was completed so that the plant was put in operation early in the summer of 1939. It has a capacity of 650,000 gallons daily. It was soon discovered that the village was using much more than the 650,000 gallons.

In the year 1940, meters were installed at a cost of \$13,000.00. Since then the consumption of water has been cut in half by the elimination of leaks and wasteful practices.

#### **Summit Ave. Pump**

The Duschen reservoir went dry in the summer of 1933 and it was necessary to use the pumper on the fire truck to supply water through the Summit avenue water main for the users in the west part of the village, until the permanent pump was installed. This pump was used during dry seasons for a number of years.

The order from the state health department in regard to purifying the water supply included the water supplied to the residents near the Erie station. As it was impracticable to build either a filter plant or install a chlorinator at the Duschen reservoir, it was decided

to pump the water from the Rock Glen supply, into two concrete tanks of 50,000 gallons capacity adjacent to the reservoir and turn the Duschen supply back to the Erie railroad. Accordingly a new pump house was erected on Summit avenue (the old one was not much more than a hole in the ground) and a new and more adequate pump installed. The old pump has been retained for emergency use.

As a part of the work relief program the four inch water main to the Truesdell reservoir was replaced with a 6 in. and as much of the old pipe as possible was used to extend the water line down Wyoming street to the corporation line. The concrete tanks at the Duschen reservoir referred to above were also built with relief labor and the Tuesdell reservoir was cleaned.

Following the installation of meters, a meter repair and testing shop has been fitted up. Considerable amounts of money have been realized in the past ten years or more from the sale of Christmas trees at the headwaters and from cordwood and logging operations. The only indebtedness on the system is \$23,000.00 due on the filter plant.

The system is now in excellent condition, furnishing the community with an abundance of water of safe sanitary quality and under high pressure.

## **WATERWAYS AND SEWERS**

### **Large Streams and Floods**

Warsaw's location in a deep valley between steep hills has made the control of its streams a big problem. The community has been visited by floods from time to time. Probably the worst one occurred in July 1902, and bad ones in April and May 1916 and in June 1928, not to mention others before those dates. To lessen the danger of overflow, the channels of the streams have been

dredged from time to time. Oatka creek upstream from the bend east of the Main street bridge has also been straightened for many hundred feet. In the sixties the mouth of Crystal brook was moved west so that the stream would not wash the abutment of the Main street bridge. So much trouble had been experienced in Crystal Brook at Brooklyn street with ice jams and debris lodging there that Wyoming County finally replaced the old bridge with a new one of much wider span in 1939 and widened the channel of the brook. Some piling and concrete retaining walls have likewise been placed along the banks of both streams.

#### **Storm Sewers and Conduits**

A number of storm sewers have been installed by the village and others by property owners to confine the small streams flowing down off the hills. Included among those laid by the village are the ones on the south side of Allen street, from the park to Brooklyn and Liberty streets and across Center street to the creek, and along West Buffalo street to carry water from streams crossing Oak and South Maple streets. Much storm water drainage has likewise been installed as streets have been paved. The most extensive street drainage is the one that starts on East Buffalo street above the viaduct and runs along East Buffalo street, Prospect, Livingston and Fargo streets to the creek.

The third largest stream in the village and one that has caused a great deal of trouble, is the one flowing through the gulf section of West Buffalo street. Since the four foot concrete conduit was built from the head of the gulf to the east side of Wyoming street between 1910 and 1917, the damage caused by this brook has been very much less. It has carried several floods without trouble. The conduit is about 2400 feet long and in that distance there is a drop of 225 feet.

Eighty-five years ago the village dug a corporation ditch east of the upper part of Livingston street. It started at a point opposite the line of East Buffalo street and extended in a southerly direction to the vicinity of what is now Washington street, and thence to Oatka creek. After Washington street was opened up the stream was carried under the sidewalk on the north side of the street. In the year 1911 a concrete conduit was constructed in place of old wood flume and a cement walk was built on top of it. It is a 1000 feet long and cost \$2100.00. Part of the ditch above Prospect street has been replaced with tile.

#### **Combination Sewers**

The first record of the installation of a sewer in Warsaw was in the year 1864 when one was laid between N. J. Perry's hotel on the north side of Frank street and the livery stable. In the year 1871 a twelve inch sewer was laid from the Congregational church west across Main street and Buffalo street and thence north back of the stores on Main street, and northwesterly to the tail race of the mill on Court street. Finally in the year 1887 a combination storm water and sanitary brick sewer three feet in diameter was laid from the raceway on Court street to Main street. In succeeding years this was continued up the center of Main street to Livingston street and a two-foot brick sewer was laid on Livingston street. By the year 1902 combination sewers emptying into the one on Main street, had been laid in East Buffalo, Genesee, Frank and East Court streets. A combination sewer was laid in the year 1895 from the corporation ditch near A. G. Vosburgh's east property line to Main street. It ran north to North street and west to Oatka creek. Sewers connecting with this were laid the same year on Park, Elm and State streets. The Rochester street sewer was laid and connected in a few years later.



When the village submitted its plans for a sewer system to the state health department for approval in the year 1901, the combination storm and sanitary sewers were approved, but no more combination sewers were permitted.

#### Sanitary Sewers

Few sanitary sewers were laid from the year 1902 until 1920. Then there was a demand for paving a number of streets without sewers and it became necessary to start a program of sewer installation. Between the years 1920 and 1931 sewers were laid in thirteen streets or parts of streets.

Installation of sewers was one of the kinds of work, best suited for the work relief program during the depression. The improvement was needed, it required lots of labor and could be continued through the winter. Warsaw finished its sewer system with relief labor. In all sewers on seventeen streets were installed under the program. They included sewers on North Main street from Mill street north to the bend in the street and adjoining streets, and on Summit Ave. and the streets near the Erie railroad station. But for the relief labor, it would have been years before the village would have laid sewers in the extreme west part of the village. Also installed under work relief was a concrete conduit continuing the three foot brick sewer to the Oatka Creek and the North street sewer to meet it. This was necessary because the channel of the creek had shifted since the sewer was first built. The main trunk sewer down Linwood and Purdy Avenues to the creek, was likewise a work relief project.

#### Sewage Treatment Plant

Ever since the state approved plans for the sewer system in 1901, the health department had from time to time urged the erection of a sewage treatment plant. Finally the village was given an order to prepare the plans and proceed with the work. Twice the taxpay-

ers voted the proposition down but at the election held August 12, 1938 the proposition carried. The plant was built during the winter of 1938 and spring of 1939 at a cost of \$80,000 of which the federal government through the Public Works Administration paid \$35,000.00 and the village \$45,000.00. The plant is designed for the primary treatment of sewage only. At a later date complete treatment may be required. Since putting it into operation the filthy condition of Oatka creek has cleared up.

After the plant started operation holes were cut in the three foot brick sewer on West Court street, and the North street sewer where they pass over the trunk sewer so that the solid matter will drop into the sanitary sewer.

Whether or not Warsaw's method of installing sewers little by little over a period of fifty years, is the best, it had the advantage of not requiring a bond issue to build the system. The village did however follow the sewer plan of 1901. The cost of sewers was charged back to the property benefitted, except that the village at large stood the extra cost of sewers over six inches in diameter. The only money borrowed to finance their construction was the sum of \$7,000 on notes. There are now outstanding bonds of \$24,000.00 on the sewage treatment plant.

### HEALTH

Matters pertaining to the health of the community were handled by the board of trustees until the year 1886, when a law was enacted requiring the appointment of a health officer and a board of health. The separate board of health continued to function until the year 1913 when it was abolished and the village board was again given the duties of the board of health. The health officer was retained as executive officer of the board. Warsaw's health problems have been those to be found in most communities of three to four,

thousand. There have been epidemics of scarlet fever, diphtheria, smallpox, influenza, infantile paralysis, measles, and other diseases which required quarantine restrictions and in some cases the closing the school, churches and places of amusements. The influenza epidemic during World War I was undoubtedly the most severe in the community's history and caused a number of deaths. During the smallpox epidemic of 1911 and 1912 a pest house was built on property of the Warsaw Improvement Company where those having the disease were isolated. Several times dogs have become infected with rabies and dog quarantines have been imposed. Formerly muzzling dogs met the requirements of the quarantine.

The village board started to improve the purity of the milk required all dairies supplying the community to be tested for tuberculosis. Physical examination of the herds followed in a few years as well as testing of milk samples periodically at the county laboratory for bacteria. Pasteurization of all milk unless meeting a minimum number of bacteria counts became effective in 1932.

To help sufferers from hay fever, property owners are required to cut all grass and weeds at least once or twice during the summer, and if this is not done the village does the work and charges the expense to the property.

On June 1, 1901 the Town of Warsaw turned over the registration of births and deaths in the village, to the village to record. From June 1, 1901 to December 31, 1907, the village clerk issued marriage licenses. After the location of the hospital here the number of births and deaths in the village increased greatly as patients are brought to the Wyoming County Community Hospital from all parts of Wyoming and Livingston counties. Births here total nearly 500 annually and deaths from 150 to 175.



JOHN H. MOORE

Trustee 1928 - 1931, 1933  
Mayor 1934 to Date

Sponsored Municipal Improvements, many under Work Relief, organized Warsaw's Civil Defense, always forward looking.

The purification of the water supply and the installation of the sewer system and sewage treatment plant are discussed elsewhere in this history.

## PARK

The idea of establishing a village park came from the desire of the Wyoming County Agricultural Society in 1925 to sell its grounds on Liberty St. The society offered the grounds to the village for \$21,000.00, the amount of its indebtedness. The proposition was put to a vote of the people and carried by a large majority.

**1931**

No effort was made to develop the grounds as a park until 1931 though the board in 1929 had a landscape architect draw up a suggested plan. This plan has been followed in the park's development. Liberty street was paved in 1931, the sidewalk was laid across the front of the property, the wading pool was built and with the assistance of the American Legion and material obtained from one section of the grandstand the Boy Scout cabin was erected.

**1932**

The six macadam tennis courts were built. The picnic pavilion was constructed. Most of the material was donated and the proceeds from the first annual field day paid for most of the remainder. Part of the labor was furnished by the local work relief committee. The grading of the front part of the park was commenced and during the following winter hundreds of loads of filling were donated to fill in the space north of the tennis courts.

**1933**

During this summer large areas of the park were graded and seeded. Work was started on removing the knoll where the football field is located. The soft ball diamond was laid out and lights installed for night playing. The north driveway was altered and the parking space north of the grandstand was provided. Much of the log fencing along the track and roadways was put up.

**1934**

With the temperature registering from ten to forty degrees below zero, men on work relief completed the grading of the football field with picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. A cinder track was laid out around the outside of the field, and bleachers built for the football field and soft ball diamond. The grandstands were

painted and the space beneath them fitted up for storage of village equipment and tools.

A building for the use of the Girl Scouts and Women's organizations was constructed between the tennis courts and wading pool with showers and lavatories for the use of the general public.

Much the largest undertaking in the year 1934 was the erection of the Veterans' Memorial Building containing a central hall 40 by 80 feet, a kitchen and club rooms. The building was for the use of Walter Klein Post, American Legion. On account of the excessive cold, it was necessary to blast the earth for the basement and foundations.

Many hundreds of pines from the headwaters of the water system were taken up and planted along the west boundary of the park and many other trees and shrubs were set out of which a considerable number were donated.

**Cost of the Improvements**

Other improvements made at the park include, six stone tables with seats and stone arches, a quoit court, an outdoor basket ball court, the equipment for which was donated, and an archery course.

The village share of the cost of the park improvements up through the year 1935 was approximately \$40,000.00. Several times that amount was spent by the various relief agencies which furnished labor and some materials, but there is no way of knowing how much. Of the village part of the expense \$26,000 was paid out of current revenues and \$14,000 was borrowed on notes to spread the expense over several years.

**Swimming Pool**

No further development of the park was made after 1934 until the construction of the Beardslee Memorial Swimming Pool and the remodeling of the Women's Building into a bath house in the years



of 1938 and 1939. N. S. Beardslee, a former president of the village, who died in 1915 left the village a legacy of \$25,000 for a bath house, the village to receive the bequest following Mrs. Beardslee's death. She died in the year 1937. The sum finally paid the village was nearly \$22,900. As this sum was not large enough to build the type of pool the village board wanted it obtained a grant of money from the Public Works Administration of \$13,000.00, and \$1,800.00 other Federal Aid. Contracts were let in the fall of 1938 and the pool and bath house were ready for use the next summer. Later a heating plant for the buildings, heater to warm water for the showers, pressure filter to filter the water for both the swimming and wading pools, sewer lines and sidewalks were installed. The total cost was about \$37,000. The pool is 105 by 45 feet. Water is obtained from the Truesdell reservoir.

The pool has just opened for the eighth season. It has proved most popular, particularly with the children and young people. Swimming classes are conducted each season and Red Cross certificates are issued for the various grades to those passing swimming tests. There are two life guards on duty and two attendants at the bath house. The legacy stipulates that residents of the village are to be admitted to the pool without charge. However for rental of the lockers, and physical inspection, children under 18 pay a fee of fifty cents for the season and residents over 18 years of age \$1.00.

**Girl Scout Cabin**

To provide a meeting place for the Girl Scouts who were deprived of their building when it was taken for the bath house, a girl scout cabin was built with funds raised for the purpose.

Ten acres of land on the hill above the park were bought in the year 1939 for the sum of \$1050.00 to take care of expansion and to prevent encroachment upon the

park. No attempt has been made to develop this area though a toboggan slide and ski run cross it.

The park is cared for by two full time employees. Warsaw now has a park of 35 acres with equipment for engaging in a wide variety of sports, with ample picnic facilities and a hall for banquets and entertainments.

**POPULATION**

The population of the village has shown by the various census follows:

- 1845— 808
- 1848— 910
- 1850—1017
- 1855—1200
- 1860—1287
- 1865—1305
- 1870—1631
- 1875—2017
- 1880—1910
- 1885—2503
- 1890—3120
- 1898—3010
- 1900—3048
- 1902—3226
- 1905—3196
- 1906—3354
- 1910—3205
- 1915—3424
- 1920—3622
- 1925—3404
- 1930—3477
- 1940—3554

1933 3712  
3713

**PRESIDENTS OF VILLAGE**

- 1834-44—James R. Doolittle
- 1845-46—Joshua Darling
- 1847 —Jacob Knapp
- 1848 —Alanson Holly
- 1849-51—Jacob Knapp
- 1852 —Timothy H. Buxton
- 1853 —Alanson Holly

- 1854-55—Ira Smith  
 1856 —No Election  
 1857 →Alonzo Wood  
 1858 —James C. Ferris  
 1859 —Timothy H. Buxton  
 1860 —Joshua Darling  
 1861-62—Gideon Jenkins  
 1863 —Alanson Holly  
 1864-66—Samuel Fisher, 2nd  
 1867 —G. H. Jenkins  
 1868 —David McWithey  
     Frank Miller  
 1869-71—William Bristol  
 1872 --David McWithey  
 1873-74—Milan Baker  
 1875 —Joseph Brown  
 1876-77—Norman Stedman  
 1878 —L. L. Chaffee  
 1879-81—S. D. Purdy  
 1882 —William Bristol  
 1883 —E. O. McNair  
 1884-87—Z. J. Lusk  
 1888 —Simeon Lewis  
 1889 —None Elected  
 1890 ✓—J. A. McCulloch  
 1891 —John W. Montgomery  
 1892 —Frank Wilson  
 1893 —Edward Everingham  
 1894 —N. S. Beardslee  
 1895 —J. M. Smith  
 1896 —Charles H. Hain  
 1897 —W. W. Hawley  
 1898-99—Wm. Eugene Webster  
 1900-01—Wm. C. Gouinlock  
 1902-06—Joseph C. Buxton  
 1907-09—M. J. Wilson  
 1910-14—N. S. Beardslee  
 1915-16—Wm. Elias Webster  
 1917 —Clarence Greff  
 1918 —Mark Schneckenburger  
 1919-21—Clayton Gallett  
 1922 —Elmer Norris  
 1923 —M. J. Wilson  
 1924 —Fred Schlegel  
 1925-26—J. W. Stublely

### Title Changed to Mayor

- 1927-30—Fred Schlegel  
 1931-32—Oscar Oram  
 1933 —John Simons  
 1934 —John H. Moore  
     to date

### STREET NAME CHANGES

- | Present Name      | Former Name  |
|-------------------|--|
| Main St.—         | Allegany St.   |
| Buffalo St.—      | Webster St.  |
| East Buffalo St.— | Between Short and Prospect was East St. until East St. was opened through to Main. |
| Anthony Place—    | Hanigan's Alley, Buxton's Alley  |
| Center St.—       | Münger St. until 1870.   |
| Court St.—        | Mill Ave. until after court house was built.                                       |
| Frank St.—        | Monroe Ave.  |
| Linwood Ave.—     | Mechanic St. until 1914.   |
| Jefferson St.—    | Frankville St.   |
| Miner St.—        | Hovey Hill road, Catholic cemetery road.   |
| Murray St.—       | High St.   |
| Perry Ave.—       | Water St. until 1911.  |
| South Ave.—       | Railroad St. until 1913.   |
- Humphreys St. - Stephen's Alley*

### Origin of Names of Former Streets

- Allegany St.—Part of road to Allegany county.  
 Buxton's Alley — Buxton wagon factory.  
 East St.—Location in village.  
 Frankville St.—Dr. Augustus Frank who owned mill and other property on street.  
 Hanigan's Alley—John Hanigan.  
 Hovey Hill road—Hovey family who lived on it.  
 Monroe Ave.—Monroe family.  
 Mill Ave.—Grist mill on it.

Munger St.—Deacon John Munger who owned much of that part of town.

Railroad St.—Location near railroad.

Water St.—Raceway ran back of houses on east side of street.

Webster St.—Elizur Webster.

#### Origin of Street Names

Allen St.—Allen Fargo who owned the land south of Livingston street.

Anthony Place—Anthony Capatost who owned almost all of the houses in that section and had improved them.

Bartlett Ave.—Fred Bartlett who opened the street and built the houses.

Bishop St.—Benjamin Bishop, an early settler.

Brad St.—Bradley Gallett who lived in that vicinity.

Buffalo St.—Western terminus is Buffalo.

Butternut St.—For grove of butternut trees in its vicinity.

Center St.—Location in village.

Clinton St.—Clinton Andrews.

Court St.—Court House.

Culver Ave.—J. C. Culver of Rochester, who with James E. Reid promoted the development of that part of the village.

Duncan St.—Joseph Duncan who started the vacuum process of refining salt at Warsaw Salt Plant, later moving to Silver Springs.

Empire St.—Empire Salt plant.

Fargo St.—Allen Fargo.

Farman St.—Hon. Elbert E. Farman.

Frank St.—Frank family.

Genesee St.—Part of road to the Genesee river.

Gouinlock St.—Dr. Wm. C. Gouinlock, who with Hon. L. H. Humphrey owned a salt plant north of the Erie station.

Highland Ave.—Location on high ground.

Humphrey St.—Hon. L. H. Humphrey.

Industrial St.—Factories located on it.

Keeney St.—Keeney family who owned the land thru which it passed.

Liberty St.—Liberty party. Named by F. C. D. MacKay who opened it. He was ardent abolitionist.

Livingston St.—Livingston county toward which it lead..

Main St.—Main business street.

Mill St.—Lead to flour mill.

Miner St.—Minard family who lived on it. Name incorrectly spelled Miner.

McDonnell St.—John O'Donnell.

Mt. View Ave.—Location on hill.

Moody St.—Moody family.

Murray St.—S. A. Murray, a merchant and old resident.

North St.—Location in village.

Old Buffalo Rd.—Same as Buffalo street.

Oatka St.—Oatka creek.

Palmer St.—Palmer family.

Perry Ave.—E. B. Perry who built several houses on the street.

Phillips St.—Phillips family.

Prospect St.—Location on high ground.

Purdy St.—Purdy family.

Reid Ave.—James E. Reid.

Roberts Ave.—Roberts Brothers who built flour mill.

Short St.—For shortness.

Salina St.—Lead to Warsaw Salt Works.

Summit Ave.—Located on hill.

South Ave.—Location in village.

Wyoming St.—Lead to Wyoming.

There seems to be little significance to the names of any of the other streets.



### VILLAGE CLERKS

Linus W. Thayer	1843-44
Andrew Hammond	1945
Ethel Bronson	1846-47
Daniel Nichols	1848
L. W. Smith	1848
Francis Fargo	1849-53
B. F. Fargo	1854
Samuel Murray	1855
None elected	1856
Ranson Crippen	1857-59
Wilbur Bentley	1860
B. N. Pierce	1861-62
Allen Brech	1863
Ranson Crippen	1864
Wales Cheney	1865-68
D. N. Jenks	1868
James O. McClure	1869-73
William W. Moody	1874
James O. McClure	1875
Thomas Howard	1876
S. W. Wade	1877
Edward M. Jennings	1878-79
George Jennings	1880-85
Newton Wells	1886-88
Merrit Hale	1889-91
George Lewis	1892-95
H. R. Bristol	1896-98
George Warren	1899
H. R. Bristol	1900-01
Charles H. Hain	1902-27
Lewis H. Bishop	1928-46

### VILLAGE TREASURERS

William Bingham	1943-44
Roswell Gould	1845
I. Hodge	1846
Noble Morris	1847-48
George Bates	1849-51
Edward Lansing	1852
None elected	1853
Noble Morris	1854
E. W. Andrews	1855
None elected	1856
Henry Garretsee	1857-58

Silas Allis	1859
Noble Moris	1860
J. H. Darling	1861-62
Henry Jenks	1863-68
Frank Lewis	1869-73
J. F. McElwain	1874
Frank Lewis	1875-79
Frank Wilson	1880-86
Marshall Campbell	1887-88
Charles H. Fargo	1889-93
Fred Lester	1894-04
A. B. Bishop	1905-24
Lewis H. Bishop	1924-46

### CONCLUSION

In the foregoing brief history of the government of the village of Warsaw in the past hundred years, I have traced its growth from a hamlet, only a few years removed from the pioneer era, to a thriving modern community of nearly 4,000 inhabitants with almost all of the municipal improvements demanded by people in this mid-twentieth century. Having plans prepared for other needed improvements, with \$38,000 set aside to initiate these improvements and buy further equipment and with an indebtedness of only \$47,000, Warsaw faces the future with confidence.

### SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Minutes of the Village of Warsaw from 1843 to date (4,000 pages).

Local newspaper files from November 1842 to date.

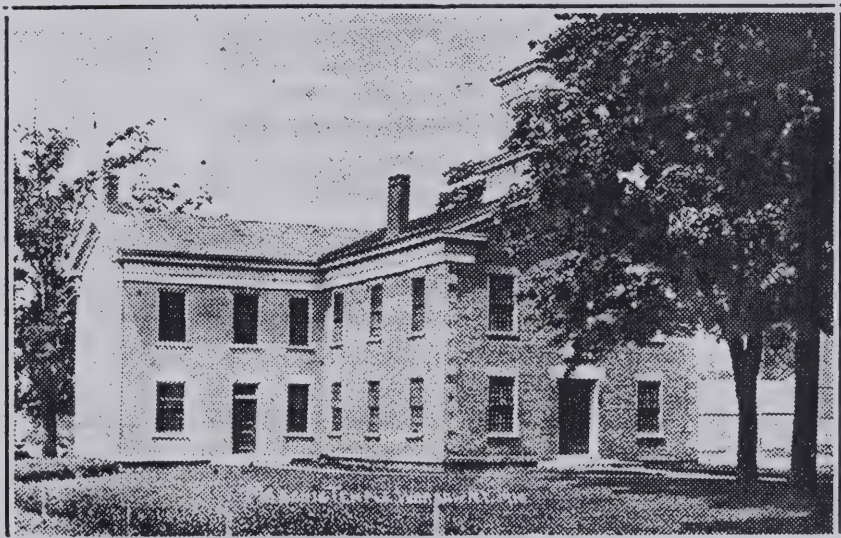
History of Wyoming County.

Annual reports of village treasurer 1869, 1870, and 1872 to date.

Miscellaneous village papers.

Minutes of the Town High Commissioners from 1838 to 1906.

Information furnished by older residents.



### MASONIC TEMPLE

*Former School House Built in 1846*

The Western New-Yorker of December 2, 1846, says in part:

"OUR VILLAGE SCHOOL: — The winter term of this school opened on Monday in the new house under the charge of C. J. Judd, principal; Miss Merrill and Miss Stevens, assistants. This is one of the district schools of the town, and the marble slab, over the door, informs us that it is District No. 10. The building which is just completed is a noble edifice of cobble stones, 57 by 35 feet, two stories high, and surmounted by a beautiful tower, fitted for the reception of a bell.

Mr. (Chester) Hurd, the builder, has also done himself great credit in going on through many discouragements, and finishing up the building in so beautiful and tasteful a manner.

At the opening on Monday, there were 170 scholars present with a prospect that the number will be increased to 200. The trustees we understand, will provide another assistant teacher immediately. We also understand that they have fixed up the following terms for foreign scholars: in the senior department \$2.50 per quarter; in the second department \$2.00 and in the primary department \$1.75."

ORGANIZATION OF  
VILLAGE OF WARSAW, N. Y.

OFFICIAL YEAR 1946-47

Mayor—John H. Moore  
Acting Mayor—Arthur J. White

TRUSTEES

Arthur J. White  
Walter Peckham  
POLICE JUSTICE—William S. Smallwood  
(In Red Cross Service Overseas)  
ACTING POLICE JUSTICE—Donald D. Bentley.

Harold Doody

George Weidman

CLERK, TREASURER, ASSESSOR AND REGISTRAR OF  
VITAL STATISTICS—Lewis H. Bishop  
SUPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS—Gerald F. Sheehe  
CHIEF OF POLICE—Clifford Cofield  
FIRE CHIEF—Donald R. Bouton  
HEALTH OFFICER—Dr. Z. G. Truesdell  
PARK CARETAKER—George Coltaux

Zoning Board of Appeals

Maurice F. Martin, Chairman, Oscar C. Oram, Edwin R. Gott  
Fire Prevention Bureau

Donald R. Bouton, Chairman, Arthur J. White, Geo. Weidman,  
Edwin Stearns, W. Merle Wilcox

Board of Plumbing and Sanitation

Gerald F. Sheehe, Chairman, Arthur J. White, George Weidman,  
Robert McWithey, Otto R. Landcastle.

Board of Buildings and Structures

Gerald F. Sheehe, Chairman, Arthur J. White, Harold Doody,  
Henry Ten Hagen, William J. Nicholson.

Board of Planning

Edwin R. Gott, Chairman, Harold Doody, Walter Peckham,  
Maurice Martin, Oscar C. Oram

Board of Health

Dr. Z. G. Truesdell, Chairman, Village Board

Park Commission

Harold Doody, Chairman, Walter Peckham, R. Laurence  
Montgomery, Albert C. Albro, Milton J. Barlow.