

" DROVERS TAVERN "

A HISTORICAL LANDMARK OF A BYGONE ERA

By:

Melville Clark.

Out of all the thriving industries which were brought to an abrupt end by the opening of the Erie Canal (often called Clinton's Big Ditch) across the State Of New York in 1826, that of "droving" probably suffered the most complete eclipse.

No records remain, and only an occasional mention by writers of that day enables me to piece together some of the details of that bygone era, as well as to recount some of the details of a picturesque profession--that, and the fine old inn, now my residence, which may well be the sole memorial to that brief activity, droving.

Historical accounts relate the fact that ten years before the opening of the Erie Canal to traffic, herds of cattle and great flocks of sheep, turkeys and ducks were escorted on foot down well-established ~~HIGHWAY~~ turnpikes between the rich up-state grazing lands so recently wrested from the Indians, and the river port of Albany, to be taken thence down the Hudson to New York City.

However, as soon as it was proved speedier and more economical to deliver the stock by the canal, these husky, weatherbeaten transit-drivers were forced into other employment and practically all trace of their once profitable activities passed into oblivion.

The weather, for the most part, was responsible for the popularity of any given road. Thus, the northern route across the state was avoided in severe winter weather. A series of short cuts and by-roads made it possible to pass from one turnpike to another. In the majority of cases, present highways, such as Route 20 and Route 5 spanning the state, were constructed along the same routes as the old drover's turnpikes.

We find the following in a volume written by the Reverend William M. Beauchamp in the year 1876, "Notes Of Other Days In Skaneateles (New York)", "Great droves of cattle were often passing through the village. The teaming and drovers business afforded some trade to the country taverns. The boys turned out and helped drive the cattle through the town. Generally, at the head, a majestic ox bore his driver's portmanteau fastened to his horns."

Sometimes when thirsty and heated by the long and dusty travel, the whole herd would plunge into Skaneat-

eles Lake, there to cool and relax and to quaff their thirst.

Reverend Beauchamp relates that one day he was rowing on Skaneateles Lake when a herd of cattle stampeded and made for the water. They headed in the direction of his boat, and he did not have sufficient time to pull out of their path. He describes the incident in part: "Among them there was a huge black ox. He leaped from the shore above my head, barely missing the boat, and it required some mighty lively maneuvering to keep him from poking his horns through the boat as he rose from his bath."

A very profitable by-product of the drovers and their flocks, were the quills, sold by the dozens to the people along their line of travel.

On one of these historical old drovers' trails now known as Route 20, near the village of Cazenovia, N. Y., there stands today <sup>a fitting symbol</sup> ~~what may well be the sole memorial~~ of this brief industry: This is Drovers' Tavern, which is now the home of my family and myself. Through our ~~perception, artistry, and an extra-special~~ desire to save something of an almost forgotten era, this sturdy old building has been faithfully restored and its history pieced together from old deeds, diaries and other documents.

Built on five levels and constructed entirely of materials found on the place, even to clay for the brick of its walls, this white, rambling structure follows the general plan of the New England farm house; with<sup>a</sup> wide central hallway flanked on either side by spacious rooms and extending to the dining room and kitchen quarters at the rear. Large porches at the front and side give an effect of hospitality, and the old woodshed, attached to the building at the rear and now used as a garage, still bears over its arched doorway the original tavern sign: "Entertainment For Travelers and Drovers" Successive coats of shellac are all that have been added to keep the sign in its original lettering.

Built by Elisha Stanley in 1818 when streamlining, as such, was yet to come, its principle was, nevertheless, utilized by that astute carpenter in setting the main building at an angle which presents the smallest surface to prevailing winds, with the barn affording maximum protection on the other exposed side.

Thus comfortably ensconced, the house commands a breath-taking view as described in a ~~MEMOIR~~ novel, "Three Bags Full", written by Roger Burlingame, as follows:

"The ridge would provide a fine, long drive and a good ride for the horseman. It is not strictly a ridge, but a long hill running north and south. So its west slope provided, during supper, a superb sunset, and after dishes were gathered up, the party could stroll across the summit and observe an equally spectacular rise of the full moon. And the inn below, a quaint old tavern said, erroneously, to derive from stagecoach days, supplied feed and stabling for the horses as well as hasty cocktails for the wilder males."

This, then, was the setting of the old tavern, with its 102 acres of land acquired piecemeal, as the following excerpts from a deed dated 1820 indicates:

".....purchased by Daniel Thomas from Cyrenus Bartholomew and Wife and bounded as foloweth: beginning on the southmost side line of the farm sold by John Lee to James Handly and thence east on said line three chanes and sixty-four links to the center of the turnpike rode that leads to Cherry Valley, thence up said rode....then north two chanes and ninety-two links....thence east fourn chanes and thenty-four links to a stake and stones about eight links east of a nutt tree and on the county line, thence south on the county line fourteen chanes to a small creek, thence down said crick...and back to the place of beginning, which in-

clude seventeen acres and twenty-five rods of land and which cost 'the sum of five-hundred dollars good lawfull monie of the United States'.

This purchaser was the patriarch of the Thomas family, whose nephew, Daniel Palmer, was later to inherit the property, and ~~give his name to the big hill at KMAXKAXK~~ whose foot the tavern rests, and down which modern traffic speeds day and night. <sup>is now after the name</sup> The "crick" mentioned is Limestone Creek; in its meandering waters a young boy named Grover Cleveland was to fish and swim, some twenty years later.

Accomodations for traveling herdsman meant food and lodging for both man and beast--or fowl, as the case might be, for it is said that huge flocks of turkeys numbering 5,000 were often driven to market along this route.

The gracious proportions of the old house, as well as much of the equipment which remains in it, give ample evidence that nothing was neglected which might contribute to the comfort of guests. *Build on 5 acres after the farm 1794*

The pine-paneled room at the end of the central hall, which can also be entered by the side door, is obviously the old kitchen. A native stone fireplace extends the entire length of the south wall and includes a Dutch oven and honey cupboard. Its construction, wide

at the bottom, tapering to six inches at the top, affords the maximum amount of heat, both for comfort of the room and for cooking in the iron cauldron which still swings from its crane.

In the oven are a complete set of massive iron utensils and a twenty-five pound flatiron. A flat paddle for sliding <sup>the</sup> loaves in and out of the oven, completes the equipment, with the exception of a set of pipes measuring an inch and a quarter in ~~XXXXXXXX~~ diameter, obviously installed to provide the most liquid refreshments in the least time.

Four other fireplaces furnished heat to the house. These, all of cut stone slabs, are recorded as the work of a group of Italian stone-cutters imported from New York City for the purpose.

The library and bedroom, to the right of the central hall, formed the proprietor's living quarters; while the long drawing-room across the hall with its pewter-shaded chandelier was undoubtedly the main room of the inn.

At the front of the house, on the second floor, is the famous "hanging ball-room", with its spring floor on whose broad, smooth, pine boards, an unlimited number of couples could cavort without fear of crashing into the inn below.

Several bedrooms, servants' quarters, and a staircase leading into the kitchen, completed the second floor plan; and this, too, has not been changed by us.

Electricity, central heating and plumbing have been added so unobtrusively as to harmonize with the general effect of antiquity. Working through walls more than a foot thick, however, ~~proved~~ <sup>proved</sup> ~~no picnic~~ <sup>not easy</sup> during the various installations. The contractor on the job confessed to me: ~~THE~~ "I'm no longer a carpenter, I'm a woodchuck!"

Accommodations for the comfort of flocks of cattle and sheep would seem to have been ample; spacious barns, stables, and the outline of a ~~large~~ corral indicate that hundreds of four-footed animals found rest and shelter while their drivers were finding entertainment and rest within the tavern.

Turkeys presented an easier problem; they simply flew up to roost in the trees surrounding the inn, after, of course, being fed and watered. There is a legend that the old barrel which still remains in one of our barns, was kept full of tar. This tar was brushed on the turkey's feet as they resumed their long march towards the waiting ovens of the metropolis. This "tar-treatment" is said to have caused them to <sup>step</sup> ~~step~~ <sup>with the long distances required</sup> along at a livelier pace.

Although cattle and sheep escaped the "tar-treatment",



their crafty owners contrived a method to make up for the weight their animals lost in transit. It is quite natural that the animals would in the course of their long journey afoot, loose weight; and as said cattle were sold by the pound the drover stood to loose quite a sum if his stock lost too much weight. And so some crafty fellow developed the following scheme: As they neared their destination, the drover would feed his cattle huge dollops of salt, then allow them free access to water. This resulted in a "fat" appearance by the time the cattle reached the New York market. However, the practice was soon detected by the keen-eyed Commodore Vanderbilt and other buyers. Thus from this came the familiar Wall Street term, "watered Stock".

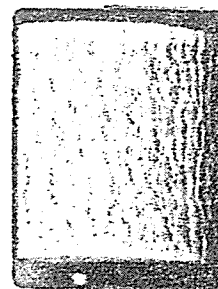
This narrative relates only a brief period in the history of a road that began as an Indian trail through the wilderness, and today is a smooth strip of modern, concrete highway. But we have endeavored to recapture a part of the past by restoring and preserving this grand old tavern, and it is my fondest hope that it will remain for posterity as long as Drovers Tavern stands with its rambling roof and beautiful doorway looking out upon passing travelers.

PIANIST WITH A PLOW

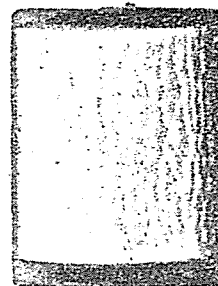
The Story of Mrs. Dorothy Clark's Venture into the Realm of Agriculture

by

Betty Burroughs



5/19



379

Farming has long been considered one of the most profitless of industries. At least that has been the complaint of farmers in recent years. Consequently, when one hears of a farmer who has made a paying proposition of his enterprise it is a noteworthy item. But when a woman, born and bred in urbane areas and a musician of no mean talent or repute, tries her hand at an occupation monopolized by men and makes a success of it---that is news. Such is the distinction of Mrs. Dorothy Clark, talented pianist and mistress of Drivers' Tavern, one of the most attractive country homes in New York State, located at Oran on the Cazenovia Road about 13 miles outside of Syracuse.

Known professionally as Miss Dorothy Clark, Mrs. Clark is the wife of Melville Clark, whom she married in 1921. Mr. Clark, aside from being the owner of a large retail music store in Syracuse, is a nationally known harpist, founder of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and inventor of the Clark Irish Harp. The Clarks have three children, all of whom are gifted performers on musical instruments.

Nine years ago Mrs. Clark knew nothing whatsoever of farming. She had always pursued a musical career, starting at the age of eight years with the study of piano. Later she studied at Syracuse University and the New England Conservatory of Music, at which institutions she was awarded several scholarships. While attending Syracuse University she maintained a large class in piano and herself studied under Raymond Wilson, now assistant director of the Eastman School of Music. After her marriage Mrs. Clark continued her study of piano at the Eastman school. Over a period of years she has been active in concert work in Syracuse and elsewhere. Perhaps her most outstanding performance was when she appeared with her husband in a recital at the White House in 1935. She has also played for Governor and Mrs. Herbert H. Lehman at the Executive Mansion.

The Clarks bought their farm about eight years ago and until recently Mrs. Clark dropped her concert work to devote her time to renovating the property. She has studied ~~studied~~ the subject so thoroughly since that time that today she is considered an authority on farming and mingled with her many requests to give musical entertainments, can be found letters seeking advice on farm problems. Aside from that the Clarks' home, Drovers' Tavern, is looked upon as a masterpiece of remodeling and redecorating. There, too, Mrs. Clark employed her ingenuity and artistic taste. I think all of us harbor a desire to take over and rejuvenate some forlorn piece of property and Drovers' Tavern is such a dream come true. One can well appreciate Mrs. Clark's pride, pleasure, and satisfaction in the result of her efforts.

"One of the grand times I have had on the farm was remodeling the old house", Mrs. Clark stated. "When we took it over, it was badly run down and we had to install bathrooms, an oil burning system and renovate it generally." The rambling old edifice was a popular tavern in the early 1800's. Sturdy but graceful in outline, the quaint homestead served as a haven for travelers in search of rest and recreation and farmers on their way to the Albany market with their produce. The original sign, "Entertainment for Drovers and Travelers", still hangs over the arched doorway of the wood shed. Mrs. Clark threw herself whole-heartedly into the task of restoring the old inn to its former charm and in her work of refurbishing she took every precaution not to destroy the flavor of the period to which the tavern belongs. She consulted books on architecture and redecoration so that the result would be accurate as well as attractive. The home is filled with antiques of that period and the only actual modernization that has been done is in the bathrooms, kitchen and heating system. The resulting twentieth century version of an old farmhouse won it the distinction of being chosen by the government as one of the 12 best examples of early American architecture.

As already indicated, Mrs. Clark did not confine her activities merely to the womanly tasks of redecorating. Drovers' Tavern is situated on a tract of 300 acres of farm land and it was the Clarks' intention to make the farm pay for itself by cultivating and selling their own crops. Mrs. Clark's first attempt in this direction was to hire several farm hands to do the work for her. This method, however, proved unsuccessful. "At first I thought all we had to do was to hire men to do the work, but in short time I found that wouldn't work," she admitted. "My husband had his own work to do and I realized I must know how everything on a farm should be done if I was going to make it pay." And with that determination Mrs. Clark set about to read books covering all phases of farming. In addition to that she has attended annually the Cornell Farm and Home Week where experts in all fields of agriculture lecture. Nor did she limit her desire for instruction to mere book knowledge. She insisted upon learning how to run all the farm machinery and partaking of all the activities of the farm. She was cautioned by one of her hired men that if she attempted to operate a walking plow, a few broken ribs would not be an unlikely result of her daring. She emerged from the experience unscathed, however, which made her all the more determined to tackle the other pieces of farm machinery. Later came her crowning achievement--the operation of a tractor which she bought for the farm. "I not only run it," she declared, "but can make minor repairs on it!"

"There were many times I nearly gave up in desperation" Mrs. Clark admitted. "It was hard enough trying to get men who normally do not like to work for women to take orders from a city woman in regard to farming. Then along came the New Deal with its many relief jobs and alphabetical projects. It was next to impossible to get good help with the government in competition, paying wages far above the farmer's reach. More than once I have had men quit the job to go on relief when they realized they could get just as much, if not more, doing nothing other than holding shovels by the roadside. During that time I hired

whoever I could and with the aid of a neighbor in the lapses between the coming and going of hired men I proceeded to accomplish what seemed to be impossible."

"Unfortunately," Mrs. Clark confessed, "when we bought the farm, our sense of beauty and love of antiquated places influenced our decision more than anything else. We didn't give a thought to its value as a farming proposition. We soon discovered that the soil, so long idle, was full of stones and overrun with weeds, conditions not at all conducive to the raising of crops." Getting the land in shape was weary, taxing labor and Mrs. Clark was amazed as often as her neighbors at the productivity of the soil. She relates one incident of utter skepticism. "My farmer neighbors said I was crazy to try to raise potatoes on my land as a major crop, claiming that the soil was unsuitable for large yields. But with the help and advice of the Onondaga County Farm Bureau and the knowledge gained from Farm and Home week lectures I ~~was~~ <sup>have been</sup> able to raise from 2000 to 5000 bushels each year."

Besides potatoes, hay and grain are staple crops of the Clark farm. There also is an orchard of 100 apple trees which Mrs. Clark planted along with 10,000 little pine trees. She has a sizeable garden where she raises enough vegetables for personal use and some extra which she sells. At one time she had a herd of 35 Nubian goats, which she tended and marketed the milk. At present she has a flock of 1000 chickens and the sale of fresh eggs is the main commercial feature of the Clark farm. She raises her own wheat, oats, corn and soy beans for feed.

"Oh, yes, the farm is paying its way.", Mrs. Clark asserted. "In my opinion any farm ought to be made to pay if a man works it himself and is willing to take advantage of all the help offered by the farm bureaus and government. Everyone, if he is near a sizeable village or city, has a market for his produce. Hotels, hospitals, restaurants and institutions are always ready to buy first hand from the farmer upon whom they can depend for quality goods."

Mrs. Clark added a word of warning to other women who would explore the field of agriculture. "It really isn't a career for women--not unless she is made of iron. I am unusually strong and have been able to stand it, but it's terribly hard work--harder than most women realize."

To engage in such enterprises is one thing--to make a success of them is another. Mrs. Clark has done both. Nor have all her attempts met with encouragement. On the contrary, more often than not she has been opposed in her optimism. She has been the butt of the criticism and derision of the farm people of the community, to whom her greatest offense was being a city woman invading a field not intended for one of her sex. Had she met with encouragement and co-operation on all sides her success would be more easily accounted for. She launched on her first attempt at farming in the worst financial period of the nation's history. Courage, confidence and initiative accompanied her in her novel experiment and less successful farmers may note that it can be done. Mrs. Clark has handled her project in a scientific and business-like manner and today she has a home and farm of which anyone may be justifiably envious.

She most certainly can claim a curious combination of accomplishments, yet no one endeavor has been sacrificed for the other. All of them have been perfectly blended in Drovers' Tavern, which retains its traditional and historic essence as the home of Syracuse's most famous musical family. Mrs. Clark has proved that one can be a refined and gracious artist and a hard-headed business woman at the same time. Her hands, so skilled at bringing melody from a piano, have been educated to the harder tasks of operating farm machinery, landscaping and redecorating. As much at home in a pair of denim overalls as in a Paris gown, Mrs. Clark has reversed the order and content of the old stand-by, "Country Boy Makes Good", when she attains the limelight with, "City Woman and Musician Masters the Farming Situation".

From Mike <sup>Heard</sup>  
S.O.

"The Palmer House"  
Oran, New York

Measured and drawn by, Gordon Schopfer  
May 2, 1936

*Gordon Schopfer*



History as related by Mr. Melville Clark, present owner of the Palmer house at Oran on the Oran-Cazenovia road.

This beautiful house was started in 1818 and was completed in 1820. The house was built for Colonel Thompson for a show place and for the coming out party of his daughter. It was for this purpose that a ballroom, forty three by twenty six by ten and a half feet high was built on the second floor. The house contained fourteen rooms and was built in French Colonial style.

All the materials for the house were taken from the land. The lumber came from the woodland that surrounded the house, and also from the woodlot below. The bricks, of which the main part of the house is constructed, are hand made of clay taken from the flats south-west of the house. Much wisdom was displayed in the construction and ornamentation of the house, and this accounts for the splended way in which the building has withstood the elements in its one hundred fifteen years. The house is built at the foot of Oran Hill, as it is called. The premises contain one hundred seventy eight acres of land running north and south on the border line of Onondaga and Madison counties.

The dining room is of pine, paneled on one side and plain on the opposite side. The beauty and skill in which this is done would be hard to surpass. In this room there fourteen openings no two being the same distance from the ceiling, each opening designed to fulfil its particular need. In this room is a fireplace with a Dutch oven of great interest and beauty. This is one of the three fireplaces on the main or ground floor, and there is another one in the basement and one in the end room, which

is now the hired man's room.

The flooring was cut from below to fit over the joists and is in various widths. The unique graining and the way they are finished makes the floors of the house very beautiful and attractive. Large copper keys were used for all the doors and Mr. Clark has one of the original keys in his possession at the present date.

The second owner, Mr. Palmer, made the house into a tavern for drovers and travelers. As this house is located on what used to be a main route to New York and Boston, the cattle and fowls were driven along this road to the markets in these large cities. There was ample stable room for cattle and sheds for the turkeys and geese. There were eleven of these taverns en route to New York and Boston, each a days journey apart. Entertainment was featured and there is a sign over an arched doorway of what is used as a garage at present that reads "Entertainment for Travelers and Drovers." This sign is in very good shape and is still plain and readable.

At the time of the tavern, there were only dirt roads throughout the country. Noah Palmer was a fancier of fine horses and especially fast trotting horses. He built a macadam road from his house into the historic town of Oran and it is said he did this so he could trot his horses.

Mr. Arthur Bigelow, author and traveler, gave Mr. Clark a rail fence from his estate at Malton - on-the-Hudson. This fence is rustic and gives the premises a certain antique appearance that is very unique.

History as found in the files of Mr. Webster Moulton.

While the stately mansions of Central New York with their classic doorways and magnificent appointments in the way of rare antiques of various types have been superseded in both country and city by the modern residences, there still remains at Oran on the Cazenovia road a beautiful place surrounded by a wealth of history which has become the property of Mr. and Mrs. Melville Clark, President of the Clark Music Company of Syracuse, New York.

The house is one hundred and ten years old, and much of its furnishings are equally old. In restoring house and furnishings for a home, Mrs. Clark has not disturbed one of the historic features of the place which was used in its earlier days for entertainment of "travelers and drovers." The sign calling attention to the fact that such entertainment was available is still in perfect condition and occupies a place over the arched doorway of the wood-shed. There was ample provision made for stock which was being driven on foot across the state as well as a place for turkeys which were also driven on foot to the markets of New York and Boston.

Real entertainment was provided for the drovers. Comfort prevailed in the house in those days as well as to-day. There are three fireplaces on the main floor, the dining-room fireplace with its Dutch oven being particularly massive with queer little features of the genuinely old construction, that makes an appeal to the students who find pleasure in this sort of thing in this modern twentieth century.

When the house was built , one hundred and ten years ago, by Stanley of Cazenovia, the Indians were parading through the wilderness, and Elisha Stanley carried a gun to keep the wolves away as he traveled from Cazenovia to the site of the big brick house at the foot of Oran Hill on the line of Onondaga and Madison Counties. The same Stanley was fond of high steppers, and he built the road from the house to the little historic village of Oran so that he might have a speedway for his horses. A direct descendant of Stanley is Miss Allis, a great granddaughter, who lives in Syracuse.

The house changed ownership a number of times after the death of Stanley. It came into the possession of Noah Palmer in 1870. His father, also of the same name, lived in the community during the log-cabin days, and upon his death his wardrobe was moved from place to place until it finally reached what is now the Clark Mansion. This wardrobe was built in 1793.

The house is of brick construction and the bricks were made by hand on the premises. As Miss Olive Palmer, the last member of the Palmer family, puts it, "the house will never have to be clapboarded." Miss Palmer is eighty-three years old, she went to live in this house at the age of ten years, and remained there until the death of her brother, Daniel Palmer, a few years ago after which she went to live with William Virgil at Fabius. She takes a motor trip occasionally around the square so that she may survey the old mansion where she passed so many happy days. The character of the place has not been changed by Mr. Clark. Improvements have been made, but the beautiful doorway opening from the porch, which has been copied by noted architects from

all parts of the country, is just as attractive as ever, in fact it is appreciated more to-day than in the days of our forefathers.

The ballroom on the second floor accomodates forty couples. There is a spring to the floor that not only makes the room very secure, but adds grace and beauty to the dances. This is not unlike the ballroom at Henry Ford's Inn~~down~~ in New England, in fact there are many things in Oran Mansion such as fixtures, woodwork and appointments that remind one of Mr. Ford's historic place in the east.

Mrs. Daniel Palmer, formerly Cornelia M. Gridley, a member of one of the old families of the community was a woman of remarkable refinement and ability. She taught school before her marriage and was the last <sup>member</sup> of the old families to occupy the mansion prior to the arrival of the Clarks. Her antique treasures were many, one of which she was particularly fond and always pointd out to her callers as a real treasure, is a mahogany table with drop leaves and carved legs and was built in Auburn prison in 1834.

Four generations of the Palmers have lived in this house. John Palmer, living in Syracuse, is the son of John Palmer, youngest son of Noah and Olive Farnham Palmer and at one time lived in the Palmer house at Oran. There were three Noah Palmers, the youngest of these, father of Miss Olive Palmer, was a blacksmith. He did some of the iron work which is found here and on the premises of one hundred eighty six acres.

" There are not many houses of that type left in country or city in this part of the state" Miss Palmer states, "I know that Mr. and Mrs. Clark have arranged the mahogany in a most manner and it will become one of the show places of the state."

Mr. Bigelow, author and traveler, presented the rail fence along the side of the house and provided the rails from his estate on the Hudson.

Mr. Clark calls his place the "Drovers Tavern". This is very fitting as the place first attracted attention by giving entertainment to the drovers. After the days of the drovers the house was the scene of many dancing and week end parties.

When Miss Palmer was a girl the house was surrounded by woods and there was no transportation except over dirt road into Syracuse and over the the Oran hill to Cazenovia. She was a grown woman when the Chenango Valley railroad was built. This lies about one -half mile northeast of the house.

DROVER'S TAVERN, MY HOME  
AND ONE OF MY HOBBIES.

By:

Melville Clark.

Modern travelers today demand the very latest conveniences and the most up to date equipment from the hotel man. This is in part responsible for the gradual disappearance of many of the historic inns and taverns of a hundred or more years ago. At least it is one reason why so many of these grand old landmarks of the long ago have gone--many never to be revived. Of course, there are several other reasons; all sad to relate: Sheer neglect, complete lack of interest, and the most pathetic of these, the owner himself who is not aware of the building's historical value, thus, thru ignorance, allowing the structure to deteriorate and become run down beyond repair, spoiling forever the rare old beauty and romance once contained in these ancient inns and taverns.

The name "tavern" was usually given in New England and New York State as a place where people went to warm and refresh themselves. And it is interesting to note that inns and taverns have often played prominent parts in the affairs of our land. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in the India Queen Tavern, Philadelphia, where

he was staying at the time. Many stirring meetings were held before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in taverns whose landlords were in sympathy with the patriot's cause. In Boston the Green Dragon was headquarters for the Whig Party. Slave runners of the underground before the Civil War, found many a sympathetic tavern keeper to aid them in their fight to wipe out slavery.

Perhaps increased travel with the privately owned automobile and numerous bus routes throughout the country may have awakened a few of the proprietors of a scant few of these old buildings as to their actual historical value. The motorist often comes across them in some of the most unexpected places. That was exactly what happened to me, and that is how I happened to find Drover's Tavern.

I had best explain how I happened to be driving out Cazenovia Road with Mrs. Clark one afternoon, and how we happened to stop for the first ~~time~~ time at Drover's Tavern. For sometime before Mrs. Clark and I were married we were undecided as to just what style we would select to furnish our home, would it be modern or antique? Our wedding was only a few weeks away and still we hadn't decided, until Mrs. Clark received a beautiful old mahogany rocking chair as a wedding gift. Then someone else presented a mahogany bureau, and we found ourselves suddenly interested in finding other furniture to match these two pieces. We had made



our decision: it was quite definitely settled that we were going antique.

Our first collection was, of course, a number of rare pieces of antique furniture. One thrill I shall never quite forget was on one occasion when Mrs. Clark visited an antique store and happened to purchase an old bedstead for less than \$10.00. We had that piece around for sometime until someone advised us to have it appraised. and lo, it was found to be a museum piece, a genuine Sheraton, valued at \$1000.00. From that time on there was never a doubt in our minds that we were not full fledged antique collectors.

It was our greatest pleasure to vary our collecting spree. For awhile we collected antique Turkish rugs, then we would switch to something else: Glassware, pewterware, mahogany furniture pieces, cherry, pine, cedar. In fact, we made a regular vacation out of these trips thru the countryside, always seeking the rare and out of the ordinary items for our collections.

And so it was that we were on one of our many collecting trips, that we chanced to be driving out Cazanovia Road one late afternoon. The countryside was bursting with early spring, and the sun was just dropping from view as we came upon Drover's Tavern. There before us stood the place both Mrs. Clark and myself had long dreamed of--an antique homestead.

For some moments we sat in the car and just feasted our eyes on the old tavern. In those moments of silence we both made up our mind, we made up our mind right then and there that if it were at all possible we would buy Drover's Tavern. It was possible and we did buy it. Drover's Tavern became ours on \_\_\_\_\_.

After the first excitement of actually buying the place began to wear off, then began the long tedious task of putting the place in order. From the very first we were determined not to paint over or remove any of the features that gave the place its air of antiquity--to keep and to preserve as much as possible of what remained. Mrs. Clark had to literally stand guard over the repairmen in order to keep them from spoiling something. She put her foot down solid when one of the men wanted to remove a portion of the flooring. <sup>a</sup> Instead she stayed right there while he scraped off layer after layer of paint, until he reached the natural wood. The results were most gratifying, and today everyone of our floors in Drover's Tavern show their natural state. The building is ~~XXXXXX~~ solidly built, and the strong beams and plankings used in building it, together with the meticulous craftsmanship of its builders, insure it of a far longer life than some of our modern structures.

I should like to relate some of the history of Drover's Tavern: It was built in 1818, and is located eleven

miles from Syracuse, N. Y. on the Cazenovia Road. In those early days of the Tavern there were no railroads, and the Erie Canal was still considered a wild dream by the more conservative thinking people. Thus there was no means of transportation save by horseback, foot, or coach. Livestock raisers were compelled to drive their cows, horses, sheep, mules, or what have you, along the roadways. And, as the chief marketing center for livestock was New York City, it was quite a long and tiresome journey from up-State New York. At most the livestock could make only about eleven miles a day.

Drover's Tavern, at that time being on the main road, was a stopping of place for the drovers. Pens were provided for the various herds of livestock, and at night the stock was fed and bedded, while the drovers took shelter in the tavern.

Liscense for taverns were easily obtained on condition that "good rule and order be maintained". And the travelers of the day--and especially the drovers--were indeed anxious that taverns be opened for their convenience along the way. However, once in awhile there was a bit of grumbling heard when occasionally a tavernkeeper overstepped the bounds of "good rule and order" and engaged in the extravagant sale of spiritous liquors, wines, and strong waters". There is no record of Drover's Tavern having

overstepped these rules of "good order"; however, there was a backroom which was equiped with a bar and tables similar, I think, to our present day caberets. And the sign outside read: "Entertainment for Travelers and Drovers"

Another feature included in the Tavern was a dance floor. This floor differed from our present day ~~KIXIX~~ floors inasmuch as it sprang up and down, whereas our present day floors are solid. The idea of the springy floor was to make the dancing easier. Today we glide over the floor while dancing, while in the early 1800's, and for sometime after, the dancer danced sort of streight up and down. I wonder how a fellow who had been driving livestock all day could possibly spend an evening dancing! But, nevertheless, the floor was there for him and the music was furnished by a neighbor or two who happened to play the fiddle or banjo.

These drovers stopped all along the way clear down to Albany, N. Y., where they loaded their cattle aboard a tow barge and floated them the rest of the distence to New York City. The story goes that when the barges got down to about Peekskill the drovers fed their cattle all of the salt they possibly could in order that they would become deathly thirsty. Then just before the barges pulled down the Hudson to New York they would give the stock all the water they could hold. This, of course, gave the stock added weight--some of which the long hike down from up-State

had removed--and by the time they reached the buyers the drover had his stock well watered. That is how the phrase "Watered Stock" originated.

Drover's Tavern has seventeen rooms and is equipped with six fireplaces. The Tavern measures 105 ft. in length and is 40 ft. wide. During the time we were in the process of restoring the different rooms, we uncovered five of the fireplaces that had been boarded up and papered or plastered over. We uncovered many antique cooking utensils, such as cranes for swinging huge cooking pots, brass kettles, muffin irons, brass plates. We even found a paddle used for baking bread--commonly called a "paddle for wives"; it hung near the fireplace and it was said that if the wife happened to get a bit too naggy the husband used the paddle on her. But the paddle's real use was to push the bread dough far back in the oven for baking.

During one of Miss Margaret Wilson's visits, she was the daughter of President Woodrow Wilson, she expressed an opinion that Drover's Tavern had every characteristic of being designed by Sir Christopher Wren, famous English designer. Sir Christopher designed six houses along the Mohawk Valley, and he is said to have designed a number of church steeples in New York State.

Several years ago I wrote to the Department of the

Interior in Washington and that agency sent experts from the Library of Congress to photograph the interior and exterior of Drover's Tavern from many different angles. This was done in order that in the event ~~any~~ the building should be permanently damaged or destroyed they could build another structure exactly like it. Drover's Tavern is registered in the Library of Congress, and is also registered with the State of New York.

And so, as the Tavern played an important part in the lives of men and women of the long ago, today it plays a big part in the lives of Mrs. Clark and my children and myself. It is our home. We have made it our hobby, as well.

o o o

MRS. MELVILLE CLARK - A MUSICIAN, FARMER, DECORATOR AND HOME MAKER.

Mrs. Clark started on a musical career by winning a Scholarship at the New England Conservatory of Music - the Morning Musical Scholarship of Syracuse and the Chamber of Commerce Scholarship. A performer at the White House at gala Musicals.

When the depression came a number of years ago, the movement back to the farm and it's hopeful opportunities, made it's appeal in the face of the uncertain conditions in that it offered at least a good living for herself and family - an old farm practically abandoned and overgrown with weeds, but with a very good house built in 1820 but in a ~~wretched~~ <sup>Wretched</sup> condition. The building was once used for the Drivers and travelers during the days of the building of the Erie Canal.

Mrs. Clark at once began to learn about the farm, attending Cornell University <sup>Farmers' Work</sup> ~~Summer~~ School, also receiving pamphlets from the Federal and State Government on Farming, becoming a member of the Local Farm Bureau and Grange, all with a view to getting the land in good condition. Having never known anything about farming, her mind was free and open to receive all of this good information given.

In order to learn the farm from the "ground-up", she went into the field and actually did all of the operating, even to the running of the "big iron horse, known as the Tractor", the plowing, the fitting and the sowing. Not only does she understand the operation of the machines, but when an occasion became necessary to put in a belt here or there to make the machine work, she even went so far as to fix them.

"SEE WASHINGTON POST STORY".

Not only did Mrs. Clark work at all of the processes of planting, in the preparation of the soil, but helped with the harvesting and did a man's work and at the end of five years, the farm is in a condition which warrants her having the degree of "MACHINE FARMER" and has actually earned a living

or rebuild this old Tavern.

The only additions made are a few modern ones like, bathroom, kitchen, etc. The electrical fixtures were made from old ship lanterns from as early as the 16th Century and the Tavern stands on a knoll protected by a hill on the north side and built lengthwise to the south winds, showing the great wisdom that our fore-fathers used in protecting themselves from the extreme cold in the wintertime.

The fireplaces are built with a slanting inward towards the top and slanting inwards from each side which is very shallow, which makes the heat thrown out from them many times that of the fireplaces of the present day, which by the way, apparently is a lost art.

The floors are of hard pine and it is stated that all of the materials used were taken from the place, even to the clay found in one of the fields from which the bricks were made.

It is related in a Diary found in the Tavern that when it was built there were some fine Italian Settlers at Cazenovia, who were skilled in the handling of marble, and the fireplaces show this skill in building. Then, too, it was related in coming from Cazenovia

to the spot of this Tavern that they carried shot guns to protect themselves from the wolves.

Another interesting point is, when the Erie Canal was built, the Supervisor lived here and paid his men off from this Tavern and the owner Noah Palmer had a great day of rejoicing a few years after it was built, when a road was built, sufficiently good that he could trot his horses all the way from this point to Oren, a distance of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles.



*Unfinished  
Article*

DROVERS TAVERN -- ONE OF ELEVEN TAVERNS BETWEEN SYRACUSE AND ALBANY -

Drovers Tavern is one of the eleven taverns between Syracuse and Albany where a sign appeared over the horse stables "Entertainment for Travelers and Drovers". In 1818 before the Erie Canal was built, there was a great need for the transportation of cattle, sheep, hogs, cows and turkeys to Albany where they were to be put on boats and sent to the New York market. The old dirt road that was in existence between Syracuse and Albany was dotted with 11 taverns which were about one days journey for these animals. These taverns were provided with barns where the various kinds of animals could be housed and the tavern, of course, took care of the Drovers (one who drove the cattle), and therefore, this particular type of Inn was known as "Drovers Tavern". One of the finest still remains - Drovers Tavern at the foot of Palmer Hill, built in 1818. The structure is 103 feet long with 17 rooms, 5 fireplaces, dance hall, a bar, and a Carral where hogs could be cared for.

There was found at the old Tavern all of the working tools by which the Tavern was built and even a Tar Barrel and brush which was used to brush the feet of the Turkeys with tar so that they might be able to walk more successfully to their destination.

When the Tavern was purchased by Melville Clark in 1929, there were still Turkeys on the place and the original old buildings. These were restored to their *Original Condition* and these buildings have attracted so much attention that the Government sent two architects to make drawings, photographs, etc., to be placed in the archives at Washington so that <sup>the</sup> all the buildings be destroyed that posterity might be able to replace

during these years on the farm.

Not only has there been difficulties to overcome the lack of knowledge of farming, but that of getting competent men, one who would be interested enough in looking after the animals, as there is a herd of Goats (35 in number) several cows, horses, 50 \_\_\_\_\_ ducks, 500 chickens, then she turns her attention to restoring the old Tavern which has been so successfully restored to it's original shape that the Government recently sent two architects to take full description, measurements, drawing, etc., and this has been placed in the archives of the Congressional Library at Washington to illustrate fine early American pieces in case it should be destroyed by fire.

Description of restoration \_\_\_\_\_

1930  
Kendall D. V. Peck  
Henry T. ...  
By Kendall D. V. Peck.

While the stately mansions of Central New York with their classic doorways and magnificent appointments in the way of rare antiques of various types have been superseded in both country and city by the modern residence, there still remains at Oran on the Cazenovia road a beautiful place surrounded by a wealth of history which has become the property of Melville Clark, president of the Clark Music Company of Syracuse. For a long time Mr. Clark, a lover of the antique in house, furnishings and surroundings, has been looking for a place of this character. He found his ideal in this respect when the Palmer place was placed on the market.

The house is more than 100 years old, and much of its furnishings are equally old. In restoring house and furnishings for a home, Mr. Clark has not disturbed one of the historic features of the place which was used in its early history for the entertainment of "travelers and drovers". The sign calling attention to the fact that such entertainment was available is still in perfect condition and occupies a place over the arched entrance to the wood-shed. There was ample provisions for stock which was being driven on foot across the state as well as a special place for the turkeys, which were also driven on foot to the markets of New York and Boston.

Real entertainment was provided for the drovers. Comfort prevailed in the house in those days as well as today. There are <sup>2</sup> six fireplaces, the dining room fireplace with its Dutch ovens being particularly massive with queer little features that makes an appeal to the student of the genuinely old construction who find pleasure in this sort of thing in this modern Twentieth century.

When this house was built 110 years ago by Stanley of Cazenovia, the Indians were parading through the wilderness and Elisha Stanley carried a gun to keep the wolves away as he traveled from Cazenovia to the site of the big brick house at the foot of the Oran hill on the line of Onondaga and Madison counties. The same Stanley was fond of high steppers and he built the road from the house to the little historic village of Oran so that he might have a speedway for his horses. A ~~line~~ direct descendant of Stanley is Miss Allis, a <sup>great</sup> granddaughter, who lives in Syracuse.

The place changed ownership a number of times after the death of Stanley. It came into the possession of Noah Palmer in 1870. His father, also of the same name, lived in the community during the log cabin days, and upon his death a wardrobe was moved from place to place until it finally reached what is now the Clark mansion. This wardrobe was built in 1793.

The house is of brick construction and the brick were made <sup>by hand</sup> on the premises. As Miss Olive Palmer, the last member of the Palmer family, puts it, "the house will never have to be clapboarded". Miss Palmer is 83. She went to live in this house at the age of 10 years and remained there until the death of her brother, Daniel Palmer, a few years ago. Then she went to live with William Virgil at Fabbus. From there she takes a motor trip occasionally around the square so that she may survey the old mansion where she passed so many happy days. The character of the place has not been changed by Mr. Clark. Improvements to be sure have been made. However the beautiful doorway opening from the porch, which has been copied by noted architects from all parts of the country, is as ever. In fact it is appreciated more today than

in the days of our forefathers.

The ball room on the second floor accommodates 40 couples. There is a spring to the floor that not only makes the room very secure, but it adds grace and beauty to the dances. This is not unlike the ball room at Henry Ford's Inn down in New England. In fact there are many things in the Oran mansion such as fixtures, wood work and appointments that remind one of Mr. Ford's historic place in the East.

Mrs. Daniel Palmer, formerly Cornelia M. Gridley, member of one of the old families of the community, a woman of remarkable refinement and ability, who taught school before her marriage, was the last member of the old families to occupy the mansion prior to the arrival of the Clark's. Her antique treasures were many. One of which she was particularly fond and always pointed out to her callers as a real treasure ~~is~~<sup>is</sup> a mahogany table with drop leaves and carved legs which was built in Auburn prison in 1834. Accompanying illustrations show furnishings that are equally beautiful and in some instances older, but Mrs. Palmer always cherished this piece of furniture.

Four generations of the Palmers have lived in this house. John Palmer living in Syracuse is the son of John Palmer, youngest son of Noah and Olive Farnham Palmer, and at one time lived in the Palmer house at Oran. This makes four generations of the Palmer family occupying the house. There were three Noah Palmers, and the youngest of these, the father of Miss Olive Palmer, now living at Fabius at the age of 83, was a blacksmith. He figured in doing some of the iron work which is found here and there on the premises of 186 acres.

The writer of this article got back to anti-bellum days during the summer and made two trips on foot to Fabius to chat with Miss Palmer.

She was as enthusiastic, or even more so, than the average girl, over the development of her old home. She showed me pictures of her father and grandfather, told about the brick making on the premises by hand and dwelt at some length upon the strength given to every part part of the house so recently acquired by Mr. Clark. "There are not many houses of that type left in country or city in this part of the state" said Miss Palmer. "I get out for a ride now and then, and some day ~~BYXXXXXXXXXX~~

I am going to call on Mr. and Mrs. Clark. I know they have arranged the mahogany in a most artistic manner and it will become one of the show places of the state. It has always been regarded as a very stately home and it has always contained choice furniture. I like the idea of the rail fence around the side yard. It is very fitting. I understand that Mr. Bielow, the <sup>author and traveler from</sup> ~~owner of many rare antiques in Baldwins-~~ villa suggested the fence and provided the rails. It is a real asset to the premises. I ~~unxxx~~ believe Mr. Clark calls it "The Drovers' Tavern". ~~Exits~~ That is very fitting. The place first attracted attention through giving entertainment to the drovers, and it is very appropriate to retain the name. After the days of drovers the house was the scene of many dancing parties and house parties over Sunday. They did not call them week-end parties in those days. When I was a girl the house was surrounded by woods and there was no transportation excepting over a rough road into Syracuse and over the Oran hill to Cazenovia. I was a woman grown when the Chenango Valley railroad was built. That was a wonder of the age. And, alas, I have lived to see the cement road, the automobile and the wonderful coach that stops at your door to say nothing of the flying machine." Miss Palmer showed me some some nice antique and then bid me adieu.