



Orleans County Historical Association

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1893-1980

ORLEANS COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

INTERVIEW

Mr. ALONZO WATERS
410 West Center Street
Medina, New York



Interviewed by:

Arden R. McAllister, Orleans County Historian

Helen M. McAllister

February 14, 1978

June 15, 1978

W WATERS (born 1893)

Mc McAllister, A./ H.



Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

[Handwritten Signature]

Signed

Feb 14, 1978 ; June 15, 1978

Date

Understood and agreed to:

Cliden R. McAllister / Helen McAllister

INTERVIEWER

Feb 14, 1978 ; June 15, 1978

Date

W I was born at Oak Orchard on the Ridge in 1893. My father was Arthur Waters. The Waters family came into this country from Canada and settled here. Most of them, regretfully, are gone. As a matter of fact the local Waters' name in our segment of the family concludes with Bob and his family. I mean, he has two girls. Lewis has a girl and Harold has two girls. There are no boys to carry on the name after Lewis, Harold, Bob and myself leave the picture. The Lewis family is a family that goes way back to 1756 and it was through this family that I identified, and was one of the organizers in this county of the Sons of the American Revolution. Harry Tanner, George Bronson (who lived across the street from me) and myself organized this group. But this goes back to the William Lewis who was born in Rhode Island, July 10, 1756 and traces the genealogy of the whole family down through my mother and so on. They came into the Gaines area in the middle part of the 19th century and settled near Albion where they have remained since that time. Most of the Lewis family have now scattered or have gone. My mother's name was Ida May Lewis and she died in her 90th year. My father died when he was 76. Then of course, I have my two brothers, Lewis and Harold. My sister died a couple of years ago. So that's as far as my family is concerned. My father was the owner of a small farm and was a cooper, making apple barrels for farmers of the area. He and his brother Frank Waters, father of Doctor LaVern Waters, well known local physician, operated a cooper shop at the time where they, with four or five others, made apple barrels. They started in the middle of the summer and worked through the fall. Then he had a small farm, about 50 acres that he worked.

Mc Where was that located?

W Oak Orchard, just north of the Ridge Road. Do you know where the River Road (once called Creek Road) is? There is a large stone Inn there on the corner. At that time, that was where my Uncle Frank lived. He and my grandfather had a general store there for a good many years. My father's residence was two houses north of there.

Mc Probably the house is gone?

W No the house is still there. The house that I was born in, is not. There was a little house that I was born in that afterwards burned. The Waters' family home is still there. We sold it two or three years ago and the people are fixing it up very nicely. It is right there on the Oak Orchard River Road, just where the road runs down. I attended the public school (a little country school) at Oak Orchard. Then when Professor John Filer came to Knowlesville, I attended the Knowlesville Union School. I was graduated from the elementary school there, went to work that summer for a chap by the name of Woods who had a nursery in the Knowlesville Station vicinity. Really, I had no encouragement and had no particular thought of continuing my education but finally along in, I think October 1908, I did enroll in Medina High School and came here and was graduated in 1912 from the school here. During that time I entered somewhat into both the athletic and cultural activities of the school. I played football, baseball and was on the debating team, and so on and so forth. But during the years that I was at Medina, the principal of the school, Paul Merriman who was a graduate of Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, encouraged four of us to enter there. There was Harry Freeman, who later became quite active in city management work in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was city manager there and finally became city manager in Buffalo before he died. James Campana, who was an attorney, came back and settled in Buffalo and was an attorney there; and a fellow by the name of Robert Coleburn, who afterwards became identified with the Proctor and Gamble Company in Cincinnati, Ohio; and myself. But I only attended one year, and after that I engaged in the life insurance business here in Medina. I was encouraged by a man by the name of Earl Coleburn who was then head of the history department at Miami University while I was there. I engaged in that business until World War I when I entered the Service in 1918 and continued through. I was wounded and returned to Medina in the fall of 1918.

Mc Were you recruited through the Armory here?

- W No I was drafted.
- Mc When you left for the Service, was there a whole contingent that left?
- W Yes. I went from Medina to Fort Dix, and I was only in Fort Dix six weeks before I went overseas. I actually had no training at all. I was a part of the 308th Field Artillery, the 78th Division. The regiment was practically completed. They only needed a few more to fill out the regiment and I was one of them. So I went in the spring (I think it was in April) and I was overseas shortly thereafter. After landing at Liverpool, we went immediately to a camp in France and our first engagement was the Meuse-Argonne. In October I was wounded and I went to a camp in ~~the~~ Dijon. The War was over on November 11th, and afterwards they kept evacuating those medical camps; so I think I was in seven before I finally landed in Camp Mills, Long Island in February 1919, when I returned to Medina. I went then with the Journal-Register.
- Mc May I ask you a little bit more about that? When you left Medina to go into the Service, how did you get to Fort Dix? By railroad? And was there any kind of ceremony or anything with the small group?
- W No. You see each county was required to send a certain amount of draftees, so I went to Albion. From Albion (I think there were 7 or 8 of us)... I don't know whether you know John Ciele-~~ix~~ vich? He died some months ago... he was one of them; and Oscar Stanton, and a fellow by the name of Francis Hawley out on the Ridge Road. I can't recall the others but there were half a dozen of us from Orleans County who left Albion and went directly to Fort Dix. We were all put into the 78th Division of the 308th Field Artillery.
- Mc Did you have a time there when you were a motorcycle driver?
- W No, I don't recall ever operating a motorcycle. I never had any experience with a motorcycle.
- Mc You were in the Field Artillery?
- W Yes I was in the Field Artillery; a gunner on a French 75 m.m. (a cannon).
- Mc Were you involved in any of the big battles there?
- W The Meuse-Argonne. That was the sector and we were in those

aresa, engagements, which was a major one at the time. Actively we went into training in camp. We didn't get up to the "front" until about July. The following October I was incapacitated. I was hit in the shoulder and received some gas. (On the tape, Mr. Waters stated the month as September. In checking the transcript he made the correction, to the month of October.)

Mc (Examining an official commendation).. That was awarded you?

W Yes. That shows I was wounded. The Purple Heart goes with it. So, I came back to this country and was quartered at a camp near New York and I had a dickens of a time getting out of the Army! I had more trouble getting out than I did getting in! Because of the fact... well, we came back as a "casual company". I don't know the exact number but we'll say 126 men who had not been assigned to the original unit, but were all from New York state. We came back to Camp Mills, New York. We were so near New York that about 50 of them lived there and they just went home! Our company has shrunk, so what they did was to take them alphabetically and I was to the "W's"!! So I was out in nowhere. I wasn't next to anybody. So what I had to do, I got a job in the office and I attached myself to a company and finally got out! (laughter).

Mc Yes that works to a disadvantage a lot of times, to be at the end of the alphabet, doesn't it!

W So then I went with the Journal. Oh, I had some experience with the Journal while I was in school; correspondent to the paper and so on and so forth. I've always had a little flair for that type of work. So, I went with them in 1919.

Mc Who owned it then, Lon?

W There were two owners: W. John Hinchey and William Baker. That was in the spring of 1919. In the fall of 1919 Mr. Hinchey and myself bought the Medina Register, which was owned and operated by Mr. Bowen. We moved the plant from East Center Street. At that time, the Journal was down on East Center Street. It was in one of those buildings that belonged to a fellow by the name of John Kelly, who operated the hotel right there on East Center Street. Yes, that was about where Bramer's store is now.

We were across the street. Do you remember that there were two or three saloons: the Benz Saloon, the Murphy Saloon and the William Batt Laundry and Kenmore Hotel. The Journal was in the small building there. The Journal was organized in 1903 by David Benson and William Baker. Mr. Hinchey, I think in 1907, bought out the Hood and Whedon interest. That fall we bought the Medina weekly Register which was owned and operated by Morton Bowen and we moved up to where we are now, the south part of the building, 413 Main Street. It was just a third of where we are now. So that's where I started my newspaper career. It had been my good fortune as a young man to have had the advise and counsel of several civic and business leaders. One was George A. Bowen, President of S. A. Cook and Co., and another was Robert H. Newell of the Robert H. Newell and Co., and several others. I was much younger than they were, but I guess I had this means of exposing the community to the public through the Journal, that they sort of fathered me and I was identified with a lot of the 1920 and 1930 part of the community that was more or less interesting. It was interesting because of the change in the make-up of the mercantile activity in the town. I can recall when I first started in, there were about 8 or 9 clothiers. Six of them on one side of the street! On the north-west quadrant it started in with George Parkhurst, at that time in the clothing business. Frank Howard was in the clothing business and George Owens, and Adler Crook and Metz, and a fellow by the name of James Sayers and Montgomery and Rook, and Philip I. Brust (tailor) They were all in that one section. There were some others of course, in other parts of the town. Of the grocery stores (which now are confined to your supermarkets) the A and P had three stores at that time in Medina: two on Main Street and one on East Center. There were various others, like the Cooper's, Henry McElwee, Grinnell and Posson had a grocery store at that time, and Arthur Hovey... many more grocery stores than there are now. Then Bill Franchell came along and bought the old Conley store, and the same way with the hardware stores. Hanlon Brothers

which later became owned and operated by Abner Bancroft, and Chase and Breed which now is the Brundage Hardware Store. D.W. Wilson had a hardware store and J.J.Morgan had a hardware store. That is all that I can think of right now, but it shows you the change. Now they are more spealized and particularly limited in what they call the "downtown section". This of course, largely influenced by your supermarkets. My job with the newspaper was largely advertising at that time, so I ran up and down the streets each day getting ads. I got to know the community pretty well, various parts of the community. When Medina Memorial Hospital was organized, I was on the committee that organized it, with Mr. Bowen, Mr. Newell and so forth. After the closing of the banks, we organized the Medina Trust Company and I was on that committee.

Mc That was after the Depression?

W Yes. Both banks closed. First the Union Bank, which was Thomas Robbins' bank. That was where Jay's Drug Store is now, on the corner. Soon afterwards the Central Bank, of which Watson Berry was the founder and E. Roland Clark was cashier at that time, and that closed. That was located right where the present Medina Trust Company is now. We were without banks for several months. Matter of fact we had to go to Albion for banking business each day! Then we organized the Medina Trust Company, which became a part of Marine Midland. Of course, during my lifetime I have been quite largely identified with the fraternal life of the community. I was quite active in the Masons. Matter of fact, I was the Master of the Lodge at the time the Temple was built. That was largely through the activities of George Bowen and Bob Newell and myself and a few others. Yes, that is right where it is now located. We built that building. Prior to that, we met in an upstairs room that was owned by the Knights of Columbus. It was practically across from where the Journal is now. In 1925 we dedicated the building, the Masonic Temple, which formerly was the home of the Newell family. Yes, Senator Pitts lived there at one time. It was the same building. The Newell family lived there and the Senator lived there afterwards. It was the same building where the Masonic Temple is now, that is, part of the building: the first part of it. Most of it, of

course, was new structure. We built that and it was dedicated in 1925. I know that because I was busily engaged in some of the activities down there when Bob (my son) was born over in the Medina Hospital. So I went on from there, was District Deputy, and held some other positions state-wide with the Masons. I was active in the Elks. I was one of their youngest Exalted Rulers I guess. I was Exalted Ruler right after I came back from the War. The Elks, at that time, were located right directly across from the Knights of Columbus in their building. They were all grouped there together. Later they went down and occupied the building the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) have now. Afterwards, came up into the Cook building and occupied rooms that were formerly built for the old Alert Club, which was originally a fire company. It eventually became a social club. They sort of fell apart as the interest waned, then the Elks came up there. They were there until their demise, I don't know how many years ago now. But I was Exalted Ruler there and went on to head the state association. So I was quite active in that organization, and the American Legion too. I was one of the founders of the Clark Post, which is now the Clark-Butts Post.

Mc What Clark was this post named after? He was killed in the War?
 W Yes. He was the first man from Medina area that lost his life in World War I: James P. Clark. The Post was named after him. Colonel (later became General) John Thompson was its first commander and one of the prime organizers. We organized it in a gathering over at the State Armory. I was the first Adjutant of the Clark Post. We were quite active, then the interest waned until it had its rejuvenation following World War II. Then it became the Clark-Butts Post. The combination, Clark in the first World War and Lieut. John E. Butts who gave his life in the Second World War. He was Jerry Butt's brother. So that organization had its ups and downs. It had a building on East Center Street which it gave up. I've had little or no direct activity with it for a long time because of the fact that I just haven't had the "oomph" to keep up with it! (In conversation, off tape, Mr. Waters stated that he was very active in Medina Rotary Club; with Harry Tanner and Burt Tucker as the founders). The germ of my political career started back when I was young, when I became

interested in community affairs. I would say that probably my first political activity, and yet it is now non-political, was when I became the Postmaster of Medina back in 1926. The Postmaster, whom I won't name now, was unfortunately caught in an embezzlement sort of thing. So the Post Office removed him and told the local Republican organization that they had to name a Postmaster within three days. At that time it was purely a political job. Judge Harcourt (a particularly good friend of mine) called me and asked me if I'd take it, temporarily. So, I went in there and stayed there for 9 years I believe. I was re-appointed by both President Herbert Hoover and President Calvin Coolidge. The appointments were for 4 year terms. In the 1930's Franklin D. Roosevelt was made the President and Jim Farley, who was a very personal friend of mine (thru the Elks) became Postmaster General. So I served about a year under the Roosevelt administration, 'til finally Jim called me one time. I was the last Republican to hold office. He said, "I guess maybe we have gone about as far as we can on this." So I resigned. George Callaghan took my place.

Mc James Farley was quite a personable man, wasn't he? He had an excellent memory and could remember names all over the country.

W Oh yes. He was quite a fellow! Then back in 1946, I think it was, I had the "bug" to go to the State Assembly, so I ran against the incumbent who was Col. John Thompson, in the primary and I was defeated. Two years later I wrote to all the committeemen saying that I was not a candidate. (There was a general rumor that I was going to oppose him again.) But within a few weeks after this letter was written, Col. Thompson died very suddenly and it was the year of the election! The County Committee met and designated me as the candidate. I first started in 1949 and I was there until 1965; that was my last year. I represented Orleans County only. One of the motivations for my not (running again) was the fact that at that time, the re-apportionment placed Orleans County in with several parts of other counties which made it more of a laborious campaigning operation, and also a much wider territory to service. So that was my last year in the State Assembly. While I was in the Assembly, I had

the opportunity of meeting a great many well known people throughout the state. Now it is most frequently that I can pick up a newspaper and read of some prominent person's death and I well knew him in the Assembly. Notice the picture on the wall in back of you? That was my first year there (Albany, New York). There were 150 Assemblymen and I don't presume there are 25 of them still living. Most all that I can look at in that picture, I know have passed away. So going back to Albany as I did a few times, got to be a rather lonesome time for me because the fellows that I knew either were not interested in coming back, or had died. While I was in the Assembly, I was assigned to several committees and I served as Chairman for Education for several years; rather a singular sort of a thing. Earl Bridges, who was a Senator from this area (that was Niagara and Orleans County at the time, the Senatorial District), went to Albany the same time I did, in the Senate. He became, before he became the Majority leader of the Senate, Chairman of Education in the Senate. So he was Chairman of Education in the Senate at the same time that I was (Chairman of Education) in the Assembly. So we had the opportunity of working very closely together. While I was in the Assembly, I became interested in the migrant labor situation here, particularly in Orleans County.... I introduced a resolution asking for a joint legislative committee be appointed to make a study of and see to the farm labor situation... in the state, which passed and I was named Chairman of it. I was Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Migrant Labor for a number of years. I had the opportunity of seeing a lot of legislation passed, some of which has never been too rigidly enforced but never-the-less, is on the books. But of course, the migrant labor situation in New York State is entirely different now from what it was then. That was before the advent of the harvesting machinery, which has replaced the need for migrant labor. So where there were at one time 40,000 to 50,000 migrants in the state, why that's been reduced to a very few, as you well know, here in Orleans County. We don't have too many any more. So with the reduced number of course the troubles have reduced, but it was quite a job for several years.

- Mc During those years were most of the migrants Black or were they Puerto Rican?
- W Oh they were nearly all Blacks. We had very few Puerto Ricans at first. They were nearly all southern migrants, southern Negroes. They worked a pattern. They started in Florida and moved up the seaboard as the crops ripened. In other words, the crew-leader would organize the crew of anywhere from 50 to several hundred in Florida and move north. Like in the Colony Camp there would be maybe 500 at one time!
- Mc Where did most of the labor come from prior to... this began around the Second World War, I guess when the southern Blacks came?
- W Well, we didn't plant the number of field crops and we had much more local labor than we had before they came here. But back in the '30's with the advent of the expansion of the canning companies like H.J.Heinz, General Foods, and so on, which demanded a lot of tomatoes... the tomatoes back when I was a kid on the farm was a relatively small crop. As a matter of fact, commercially I don't think anybody ever planted any. But all of a sudden that area of agriculture exploded and it was largely picking tomatoes that they (the migrants) were imported for. They came along in August and they stayed, and afterwards they went into orchard work. So mostly now they are orchard workers because there is very little field labor for them to do any more. The camps here are reduced to practically nothing to what they were at that time. I don't know that there are any organized camps in the county any more.
- Mc Not many I guess.
- W I don't know of any, but there probably are. There used to be at the Searles Camp down near Lyndonville, and of course the Colony Camp which is now Carlken Manor. That was a big camp! Oh there were 50 camps around at one time. Seasonal farm labor. Now they import 200 to 300 is all. During the years it has practically dribbled down to nothing. What they do now is supplementing it. They have "day-haul-labor". In other words the farmer goes to Buffalo in the morning and picks up a load of workers and brings them here and then takes them back at night. They are just here during the daylight hours. So there were other activities in the Assembly. As I say because of the tenure in the Legislature largely, you grow into some importance. I had the

privilege of knowing a great, great many men who later went on in political fields: like Gov. Rockefeller. I only served under one Democratic Governor: Averell Harriman. Otherwise they were all Republicans. Tom Dewey was there when I went there and he was succeeded by Averell Harriman, and along came Mr. Rockefeller.

Mc How much contact does an Assemblyman have with a Governor?

W Well it all depends on his position. Education is one of the major committees, so I had quite a few personal contacts. He'd send for me and I'd go down and we'd talk over situations. Otherwise not too much personal contact with them.

Mc That gave you some opportunities to meet some pretty important people.

W Well it did. As I say, a lot of these fellows (in the picture) like Judson Morehouse who was quite a friend of mine and who later became quite prominent throughout the country as Republican State Chairman; unfortunately he fell into some evil ways. There are a number of them that went on into other state positions. But as I look at it now, there are very, very few of them that are still here.

Mc How did you travel back and forth?

W At that time, when we started out, a fellow by the name of Jacob Hollinger from Middleport was also in the Assembly; either one of us would drive to Rochester where we would leave our car and take the New York Central train from there to Albany. As a matter of fact, that Monday morning train... the Assembly convenes on Monday night and then it stays in session during the week as the time might require; so that during the daytime they met in parts of the State Assembly. By the time we got in Rochester, we took a train out of there around noontime and practically the entire train was filled up with either Senators or Assemblymen, or people who worked for them because each one of them had his own little retinue of workers from his own county. They made up practically the entire train! It was quite an experience going down and back. A lot of legislation was thrashed out on the train. After the Thruway was built, why then I drove back and forth mostly. Mrs. Waters went with me mostly.

(End of side one of tape)

W (conversation is in progress...) By virtue of the fact that I had spent so many of the years in Albany; I was quite active in Republican politics for a number of years afterwards. As time went on and I became older and not able to be as active as I was previously, I haven't taken as much a part of it lately. Although they offered me the courtesy of asking my council on some occasions. With the conclusion of my work in Albany in the Assembly, my active political life practically ended at that time.

Mc You were in education. You had some background there. You served on the local school Board?

W Yes, I was named to the Board of Education. I can't recall whose place I took, but I was named and I served for a number of years. (In a later conversation, not taped, Mr. Waters stated that he had served from 1924 - 1949; 25 years); the later part of which time I was President of the Board. That was under Dr. Trippenese. I resigned from that when I was elected to the Assembly. My activity on the Board was nowhere as near exacting as it is at the present time because we were still a union-free school district. That was before centralization. I ceased to be active in local education. It was a pleasure to have served with all of these various chaps on the Board of Education. Many of whom I tried to recall the other day, have died. Dr. Ross Arnett, Dr. Shoemaker and myself are the only ones that are left. There are three of us. At the time, there was Ed O'Reilly and J.C. Posson and Jack Vernon, and several others. It was a pleasure to have worked, although as I say, my trials and tribulations if there were any, I would presume to be minor compared with what they are today with the expanded educational system with centralization. I was on the Board and instrumental in buying the site for the Oak Orchard School. It wasn't developed. We bought the area that was then an orchard from William Boyd. It was a very nominal price; a few thousand dollars, which was a very cheap price, and we knew it was ^{the} possible site for a future educational building. So we bought it. That's the only identification I ever had with it. John Kennedy was President of the Board when the centralization took place and a lot of the expansion because when I was on, we just had the High School building, Oak Orchard School and the old building over on the east part of town, on Ensign Avenue. Howard Brown was the Sup-

intendent of Schools when I first went on the School Board.

Mc Yes, Dr. Trippenese followed him. I came to Medina in 1947 when Trippenese was Superintendent so I'm not sure prior to that. Well, we have talked about your fraternities and so forth. Would you like to say a few words about your church?

W Yes, my religious background. I grew up in the country where I went to any kind of a church that happened to come along. I never identified with any particular denomination until I came to Medina when I joined the First Presbyterian Church. I was rather active there; was Superintendent of Sunday Schools. Then when I married in 1923, I married in the Episcopal Church. My wife was an Episcopalian and I joined the Episcopal Church, of which I've been a member ever since. I was a long term member of the Vestry and served in a Diocesan capacity, as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Dioceses, also on the General Committee which was a large committee. So until I was unable to go frequently I have always felt a great affinity for the church and all it stood for. I guess you'd call me an active and regular member. It was on very rare occasions that I wouldn't be in church either at the 8 o'clock service or at eleven. Largely at the early morning service. Bishop Scaife, who was the Bishop of the Diocese of western New York at the time, I had the privilege at the time Bishop Scaife was inducted into office here, I had the honor of representing the Dioceses. I was on the committee and gave the welcoming speech, which I felt quite complimented about. Of course, Father John Wilkenson, whom you well knew, was a very good friend of mine. Probably all these various opportunities for services of recognition came about because of our friendship. I was born a Protestant and as these little churches in the country were non-denominational in a way, and when as a young fellow I came to Medina and chose a church, I chose the First Presbyterian Church. William Findley was the pastor at the time. My two brothers still belong there.

When I married the first time, we were married in the Episcopal Church.

Mc One of the things that I like to ask the people that live long enough to have had a little memory of the horse and buggy days, and when the automobile first came is: do you remember your first automobile, or the first one that you saw?

W I remember my first one that the family ever had. It was an old Ford automobile and I remember the first time I ever tried to drive. I put it in reverse and went right across the road and into a ditch! (laughter). I didn't know how to stop it! The first car I ever owned, I think was around 1912. A Chandler, I think. Of course, I remember something about the horse and buggy days because when I went to Knowlesville to school, I used to drive either a horse and buggy or, in the winter-time a horse and cutter. I would stable it during the daytime. I remember one instance there: I came near freezing to death. I got so cold that I just went into the barn and lie down. You get so numb! I guess I would have frozen to death but... somebody came along and found me or I guess I would have frozen to death. But.. we tipped over a few times. I was first acquainted with automobiles.., well, I was born in 1893.. the old Ridge Road (which is now 104) was a popular route and the first automobiles that I envisioned were coming from Medina. Like people who were going from Medina to Lakeside and they had to pass our house and some of the older families in the community, like Charles Swett or his father or some of those would have an automobile. The Ridge Road was quite a popular place although that was before that was improved at all. It was a very sandy sort of thing and driving in sand is difficult, or even more difficult than driving in snow. So, there was a hill there that was kind of a "stopper". On many, many occasions we would have to get out and push the car up the hill to get it going; you know?! But the horse and buggy days actually were a little bit before my time. After I became identified

with Medina, it became motorized to quite an extent. There were several car dealers here at the time I came here. LaVern A. Walker had the Buick agency; Dr. J.J. Walker had the Ford Agency and Irving Rowley had the Chrysler Agency. Harry Robbins was probably the first devotee you might say, of motoring in Medina. At that time, and I was President of the Orleans County Automobile Club for a number of years, we had an Automobile Club here of 700-800 members or more.

Mc What was the purpose of this automobile club? Was it like AAA?

W It was really a part of the AAA and acted as a liason between the motorist and the state and the legislation. The reason I suppose, there was a community of interest among people that had automobiles. They'd get together and cite their experiences and so on. But really, the main goal of it was for the improvement of the conditions like the roads and the passage of regulations of driving, etc. We had several hundred in each county at that time. First Medina had a club, and then Albion had a club, and then they joined together. I think it was just sort of a community of interest that put them together in the first place. They used to organize tours. They'd start out on a Saturday, about 50 or 75, and all go together.

Mc Do you remember where you were and what you thought about on Pearl Harbor Day? (December 7, 1941).

W Yes. It was on a Sunday afternoon. My wife and I were attending a social occasion at the Elks Club in the afternoon of Pearl Harbor Day. I was particularly concerned because Bob was of that age and I knew that sooner or later he would have to become involved in the war. It wasn't too much later that he was! He enlisted. Originally he was sent to a camp out near Missouri. Then he was sent back to school to Olean. At that time they had a program at Saint Bonaventure in Olean. Funny... it was right back in our own back yard! He was there up until the time when he was sent overseas. Afterwards the program was disbanded because there was too much criticism of it. "Fighting the Battle of the Ivy Halls", etc. He went from there directly overseas. He was assigned to an outfit over there, which I can't recall now. But I remember the time very well. Everyone was so indignant and passionate about the situation. At the time I don't think the average person appreciated the military capacity of

the Japanese. So many said that they were "upstarts, coming over here..., etc". The way it turned out not to be so, but I can remember it, and the war days as well!

(The initial interview was ended at this point. Mr. Waters had been interviewed by County Historian Arden McAllister. When it was discovered that approximately 15 minutes remained on the tape, Mr. Waters agreed to a continuation and this was done by Helen McAllister, as follows):

Mc Mr. Waters I would like you to tell us a bit about your first marriage if you will.

W I was married in September 1923 to Helen Dorothy Eckert. She was the daughter of Harry and Julie Eckert. Her father was a cigar maker here in Medina for many years although she was born in Philadelphia and came to Medina as a young girl. She was the mother of my one and only child, Robert Eckert Waters and she was very active in community affairs during her lifetime, especially during World War II. She died very suddenly in 1952. My second marriage was in 1954 and I married Mary Harmon Hazard, a native of Montgomery, Alabama. She was a nurse and at the time was operating a nursing home in Albion. It was called Rose Villa. We have always made our home here in this house.

Mc Would you like to tell us a bit about this house?

W I purchased this house in 1929. At the time I had had plans drafted for a new home on Howell Parkway but this house was on the market at a very low price.

Mc This must have been at about the time of the Depression?

W It was. It was the time of the Depression, and this house went for a very low price. The house was built in 1907 by Samuel and Jesse Landauer, who were at that time proprietors and owners of Landauer's store which was located where the J.C.Penny Co. is now, on the corner of Main and East Center Streets. They lived in the home, raised three children: two boys and a girl (who are all living, as far as I know), until they both passed away. The estate sold the house to Robert Brennan and he was here until 1929 when I bought the house from him. It was one of the better homes of Medina at the time. That was approximately 50 years ago. Most of the village west of here was not developed at that time. As a matter of fact, when I originally purchased my lot on Howell Parkway, the first one after Fred Howell...

Mc Do you still own that lot?

W No, I later sold that lot to Ernest Hart. It is now owned by the Hart estate.

Mc This property goes out back as far as the alley?

W Yes, it is a deep lot. It goes from West Center Street to the alley; Proctor Alley I guess they call it.

Mc I remember when we lived nearby, seeing you work the hedges and the roses and other flowers. Now I wonder if you would like to tell us about your interest in the Child Welfare organization?

W My interest in the Child Welfare was primarily due to the interest which my first wife had in it. As a matter of fact, she was one of the organizers of the Child Welfare Association in the county and at the time of her death was President. I later was president for about five years of the group, although it is largely almost exclusively a woman's organization. It was because of her interest in Child Welfare that the Journal-Register at the time of her death in 1952, established the J-R Camp Fund which has been very well received by the community. It has grown from a few modest dollars to some \$4,500 each year, which is the major contribution towards financing 80 youngsters.

Mc Does the number remain at approximately 80 youngsters every year?

W Yes, about 80 youngsters every year.

Mc How are these youngsters selected?

W They are selected by groups in each of the various schools in Albion, Holley, Kendall, Lyndonville and Medina. The school nurse largely selects youngsters which, in their opinion, are most worthy to comply with the concept of the summer camp, which is largely geared to furnishing camping experiences to those youngsters from families who otherwise could not afford to send them to camp.

Mc What camps do they go to?

W Camp Troutberg, largely. That is north of Brockport; it is in Monroe County. It is a Rochester YMCA Camp.

Mc I wonder, in the few moments remaining on this tape, if you have anything more to say about World War II? I know that you said that Boh was very much involved in it!

W Of course I took part in many of the local campaigns that they had here, which were several, largely through the selling of War Bonds. I was chairman of some of them and participated in others. World War II was rather a difficult experience for Medina

along with the rest of the country, economically, because of the fact that all of our efforts were directed towards winning the war. Much of the favorite merchandise which would be available during peacetime, was not available during wartime (and I'm speaking now from the newspaper point of view), which made it very limited as far as the advertising revenue was concerned. As a matter of fact, if it had not been for a great deal of cooperative effort for the sale of War Bonds, I doubt if the Journal-Register would have continued because of our very limited income! As a matter of fact, we did reduce publication from, at that time six days a week (we published on Saturday, which we no longer do) to three. Yes, three times a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. That was during the war years. Of course we were not the only industry that was affected during that time. But it was all done with a cooperative spirit because, as I said before, interest was all geared to the successful conclusion of the war as far as we were concerned. A great many of the families, like our family, were interested because we had members in the armed services. They were very trying times, yet they were times which knit the community together. I mean, it was a catalyst towards joining the community together in one common effort.

- Mc In collecting for War Bonds, did they have dances at the Armory?
- W No, there was no public occasion such as dances. As a matter of fact, our first major contact with the war was the departure of Company F, which at the time was a compliment of over 100 men I should say, under the leadership of Captain John Thompson. The rest of those who entered, either volunteered their service or, as I was in World War I, were inducted into the Service through the Selective Service of the Draft. My son Bob entered
- W into the service in a rather unique way. At the time, the Army took several of the graduates from the higher levels of the schools and placed them into a training program. In other words, they were supposed to be sent right out of school as graduates (in which he was one of them), but they were sent with the idea of becoming officers. But as I said previously, the program met

with such opposition because it was a sort of class situation that it was abandoned finally before any of them ever were graduated. So he went immediately into service abroad.

Mc He was very fortunate in that he returned unhurt. Now, I would like to ask you just one more question: most people think of you as a dynamic person who has contributed a great deal to the whole state and the country. Do most people now call you "Lon", or Mr. Waters?

W They call me "Lon". My contact with people is very limited due to this heart condition that I have, which doesn't permit me to be very active. I'm mostly restricted here at home.

Mc Your mind is keen and very sharp!

W Well, I don't think this has affected my mind although you cannot reach the age of 85 without having your memory somewhat dimmed.

Mc Not very much, I'd say! Thank you, Lon.

* * * * *

Additions and deletions have been made by Mr. Waters.
Typed and edited by Helen McAllister.

Alonzo L. Waters, 86, publisher of this newspaper for a half century and a state assemblyman from Orleans County from 1948 to 1965, died early today at Medina Memorial Hospital after an illness spanning about two years.

Mr. Waters was dedicated to the newspaper profession and to the community in which he spent his life. He was a contemporary of numerous pioneers in the daily press of the region, especially men such as the late Egbert Corson of Lockport and the late Milton Miller of Batavia. He had been active in the Associated Dailies, a group devoted to the strength of the daily press of smaller centers. And he was also a member of the N.Y.S. Publishers Association.

Born on a family farm in the rural hamlet of Oak Orchard on the Ridge, he was the son of the late Arthur and Ida Waters, and as a boy he knew the country life and its ways. He learned the cooper's trade at a shop near the Ridge Road, while attending school at Oak Orchard and later at Medina High. It was during high school years that he first began contributing to the Medina Daily Journal, later to become the Journal-Register through merger.

He attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, prior to early business life with an insurance agency. This terminated with service in World War I and wounds received while in battle with the Field Artillery (78th Division) in France. In 1919 he returned to take an active part on the staff of the Medina Daily Journal. He eventually formed a partnership with the late publisher, W. John Hinchey, and still later purchased the newspaper in entirety.

He remained active on a daily basis until 1978 when declining health forced him to retire and relinquish active publishing duties to his son, Robert. He continued to provide editorials until late last year, giving up only when strength could no longer conquer the typewriter keys.

Surviving the late publisher are his widow, Mary (Harmon) Waters; a son, Robert E. Waters, publisher of the Journal-Register; two brothers, Lewis H. Waters, vice president of the Journal-Register Corp., and Harold A. Waters, all of Medina. Also, two granddaughters, Kathryn and

Julie Waters, of Medina, and a number of nieces. His first wife, Helen Eckert Waters, died in 1952.

Friends will be received tomorrow from 2-4 and 7-9 at the Barnes-Tuttle Funeral Home, Pearl Street and on Saturday morning at 11 there will be the Service of Burial and a Requiem Eucharist at St. John's Episcopal Church, East Center Street, with the Very Rev. R. Benjamin Moss officiating. Burial will be in Boxwood Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

Memorial gifts may be given to the Journal-Register Camp Fund for Underprivileged Children or to St. John's Episcopal Church, which the deceased served for many years as a one-time warden of the vestry.

The political career of the late assemblyman began when he succeeded Gen. John Thompson upon the latter's death. He was re-elected for eight terms and served until the assembly district was altered to include a multiple county structure.

In Albany, Assemblyman Waters headed a number of committees including the Committee on Public Education, which brought him into close association over many years with the late Senator Majority Leader Earl W. Brydges. Waters also created legislation funding Junior Agricultural Fairs in the counties of the state, paving the way for them to succeed the faltering and under-financed county fairs of the 1940s.

He also served at length as chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Migrant Labor at a time when this transient help was a major factor in NYS and Orleans County.

The publishing years were long and varied for the deceased, starting with the boom times of the Twenties, and then into the Great Depression when the job of holding together a small daily newspaper and paying the help was not an easy task. The years of World War II offered no relief from problems. With merchandise scarce, advertising was also scarce and there were considerations given to cutting the number of publication days. This did not occur, and Publisher Waters was able to assemble a loyal staff of editorial, advertising and mechanical people who carried forward the Daily

Journal-Register into the 1940s, 1950s and beyond.

Coincident with his editing duties at the Journal, Waters also served by federal appointment as Postmaster of Medina in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Actively interested in the Elks Order, he traveled the state in the 1930s as president of the N.Y.S. Elks Association. He also held a great reverence for the Masonic Order and was one of the men instrumental in the construction of the new temple here in 1925. He became local lodge master, then head of the Royal Arch Masons, the Royal and Select Masters, a Shriner and also district deputy grand master of Masons in Niagara and Orleans.

School affairs commanded much of his time between 1938 and 1948 when he served as a member and president of the Board of Education when there was both expansion of the existing high school and purchase of land for future new schools.

Following World War I, Waters was active in organization of the American Legion unit here and in the county and was a commander of James P. Clark Post, as well as a member of the V.F.W. Lincoln Post.

In church work, St. John's drew his interest in matters other than regular worship and he became warden of the vestry for some length of time. In addition to his close acquaintanceship with rectors of the parish, he was a friend of the late Bishop Lauriston L. Scaife, who placed him on the Diocesan Board.

After the death of his first wife in 1952, he established the Journal-Register Camp Fund for Underprivileged Children to carry on work which she had been doing. He later became head of the Child Welfare Association and made certain that the Camp Fund remained annually strong. It has sent

Continued on Page 3

J-R Publisher Is Deceased at 86

Alonzo L. Waters
1893-1980

3-13-'80

President and Publisher Emeritus
Medina Daily Journal-Register



THROUGH THE YEARS--Publisher Waters is shown (L to R) during the 1940s when he became sole owner of the newspaper, during his years as a state assemblyman, and finally, in the early 1970s when he had retired from political life.

hundreds of boys and girls to camp and continues to do this each summer.

Civic affairs were a natural part of Mr. Waters' life. He was an organizer of the Medina Rotary Club and president, he headed the Advertising Club, later Chamber of Commerce, the Orleans Automobile Club, and was a Moose Lodge member.

He spent 20 years involved as an officer or board member of Lewiston Trail Council Boy Scouts of America, and was accorded special honors by the

council several years ago.

Tracing his ancestry back to the American Revolution he had been active in Lemuel Cook Chapter, Sons of American Revolution, and as a maker and writer of history he had become involved in the Medina Historical Society in recent years.

In college years he was a member of Alpha Chapter, Sigma Chi Fraternity, and at that time of life, with a lean frame and a head of blond hair he carried the name "Whitey" or "Blondie" among his school

friends.

When the Journal-Register celebrated its 75th birthday in 1978-79, the senior publisher was able to attend a banquet of the entire staff which had grown from seven people to over 40 in his time.

His final project when illness limited him was the recording of an "Oral History" tape of his life and memories. This was done under direction of Mrs. Helen McAllister of Medina and the tape is now part of a private library of such references.

X

Editorial

Waters
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Alonzo L. Waters

Having closed the last chapter on a career of service to many thousands of faithful newspaper readers, to his community, his family, and the people of the State of New York, Alonzo L. Waters quietly "put the cover on his typewriter" early this morning. In true journalistic fashion he was alert right up to the deadline, then wrote "30" and turned off the lights before going "home".

Newspapering was his great love and with a keen mind despite a two-year decline of health, he asked yesterday from his hospital bed if things were going well "at the plant".

It is hard to define his service to the Medina Daily Journal and its successor, the Daily Journal-Register, in terms of years. He was a contributor as a schoolboy, then dabbled a little more seriously before going off to college and to war in 1918. He grew in stature with the newspaper he shaped and nurtured. His full-time association with printer's ink started after the Armistice and his return to the community to which he tied his future.

He knew the glory days when, with neighboring publishers, he helped nourish the roots of small-town daily journalism in W.N.Y. And he knew the tough times....the years when farm folk paid for their paper with a bushel of potatoes or a handful of eggs because there just wasn't any money. And the times during World War 2 when advertising slumped because merchandise was hard to come by. There was the week-by-week decision whether to keep publishing as a daily or to curtail to a couple days a week.

Faith never slackened, and with a faithful band of printers and staffers around him he took over full ownership of the Journal from W. John Hinchey and charted a course built on a policy of integrity.

Integrity and honesty do not always make one popular, and he knew it. But it was a watchword, and it led him to seek public office as State Assemblyman from Orleans County at the urging of friends.

In 1948 when he began an Albany career of 16 years, he needed the assistance of an only son, who by coincidence was just graduating from college. Without using the words: "You must"....he made his need known, and used a quiet but firm disposition to convince this fractious colt that Medina was a good place to stay, despite the times when the younger wanted to "pack the bag and run to the city".

Publisher Waters was demanding. Some parents, bosses and civic leaders today could remember that it is the fastest way to get the job done.

His rural background never deserted him, and he could turn a phrase with skill and tenderness, with a barb of indignation, or with wit, or charm. His editorials appealed to the farm reader as well as the small town audience, and became favorite reading material for many. He knew the joy of hunting blackberries as a lad on the creek bank, and during the Albany years he knew the intricate ways of politics and government. All this background made him a better journalist.

He was pleased when Tom Dewey or Nelson Rockefeller yelled, "Hi, Lon!" He was less than pleased when the Republicans became the minority in the Assembly and he found his office reduced to the size of a clothes closet.

It is the easy thing, editorially, to run on. It is self-defeating. Were Publisher Waters, Sr., on the job today he would say, "Stop here. Put 30." And so we shall. But with lessons learned by his experience.

We live this mortal existence for only a pinpoint of time in the scheme of things, but Publisher Waters put most of his 70 professional years to good use.

His Maker will find him eager to get to work.

J-R

5/1/1978

Editorial

People Make It Work

People come importantly into the picture today. The "Journal gang" of 35 or more souls with printer's ink somewhere in their blood has provided a daily newspaper by work and by understanding. Especially with forbearance in working under the dislocations and expansions of both plant and product in the 1970s. To such people who work and care the Journal owes its existence.

And still more attention to people. The reading public which has shown its acceptance. As the 2-cent Journal of the 1930s has gone to the 20-cent Journal of today, the loyalties have remained and grown. We could never be more proud.

Thus do we pay tribute to people on all sides. This column is our place to speak our mind. And God help us if such words are ever set down as the ultimate in right or wisdom. We are ready to be rebutted, corrected, rebuked or chastised. That is the responsibility of a free press and space remains open for replies at any time.

As we close and prepare to bake our birthday cake, the Journal must emphasize its deep feeling for what we choose to call "our community" . . . today stretching from Eastern Niagara to Eastern Orleans.

It is the same view of "community" which leads to support for such philosophies as a County Legislature, relinquishing the provincialism of old. As we continue on into the waning years of the 20th century we depend on people and "community" to provide a daily newspaper.

If we did not have such a faith we would succumb to the daily flailings of inflation, cost spirals, public outrages and accusations of a biased national press.

Thus we approach the season of another beginning with a heartfelt salute to people, all kinds, shapes and sizes. Those who sustain us.

May is a time of beginning. The sunshine is more penetrating, the grass grows green, the buds give hope of bright blossoms, birds sing a happier song. And as the Journal-Register moves well into its 75th birthday year, it seems a fitting time for reflection - from the publisher's point of view. It may set the mood for our observance.

People are our first concern; thus we're moved to deal first with this aspect of our humble but appreciated success. (And this can never be taken for granted. Today's success can be tomorrow's greatest pitfall.)

It is altogether fitting to pay tribute to the "publisher emeritus", Alonzo L. Waters, now 84, and a contributor of both news and editorial matter despite limitations imposed by health. He has earned the title through time and trial.

Joining the Journal in the years after World War I, he encountered the depression years with little income, the war years when products were limited and advertising was slim, then times of lag in local growth . . . all requiring the day to day decision as to whether a daily newspaper could, indeed, be continued, or whether a weekly would take its place. The determination of those earlier days placed a goal ahead of private gain, and it is well to look back on such determination as the Journal enters the next quarter century.

Another salute to people - those veteran employees, faithful to the principal, who knew the struggles. Men and women. Ed Bidell, Walt Caldwell, Bill Knuth, Vicky White, Virginia Rich Welton, Mae Montgomery, Charles Hauswald. Those names and others will be called up as we eventually write our history in this birthday time.

**Journal-Register...
75 Years Young**

The Journal-Register has now been accepted as an Orleans County institution and its success is a direct result of the spirit that has prevailed since those days in the first decade of the 20th century. The daily deadlines have been met and the readers have been receptive.

(This keepsake publication is dedicated to Publisher Emeritus Alonzo L. Waters, marking the 75th anniversary of the newspaper with which he has been associated for 60 years. The history presented below was written by him, made up of many memories, in 1978, and has been edited and embellished in some portions by the current editor-publisher, Robert E. Waters.)



Alonzo L. Waters
Long-Time Publisher



Robert E. Waters
Editor-Publisher



William Baker
A Co-Founder



Charles Newton Hood
Author, Civic Leader
Newspaperman

The Medina Daily Journal was born in 1903 with the first issue published on Feb. 3. Its founders were David Benson and William Baker, both young printers in Medina. The newspaper's first home was on the second floor of the building at Main and West Center Streets now occupied by Liberty National Bank — a building known familiarly to generations of Medinans as the Bent Opera House Block.

Let's go back to that early day of the birth of the Journal. By word of mouth we learn about the first press, a hand-fed Babcock cylinder model of 19th century vintage. It created such a vibration when the paper "went to bed" that the merchandise of Peter Theodorakos' store on the ground floor was often shaken from the shelves.

The operation of the paper at that location was short-lived and it was moved to a place on East Center Street which now accommodates part of Corky's Bakery and shopping center.

Also at that point David Benson soon departed from the firm and a new corporation was formed consisting of Mr. Baker, Charles N. Hood, a local real estate man, lecturer, world traveler and writer of note in both the journalistic and entertainment fields, and Milton J. Whedon, a Medina attorney.

In about 1912 the interests of Hood and Whedon were sold to W. John Hinchey of Middleport, who had sold the Middleport Herald, a weekly newspaper which he formerly operated.

While my first contact with the Journal began during my years as a high school student (furnishing news items and athletic reports to the editors), I made my first material contribution in 1917 when I wrote a daily column headed: "Yours Very Truly." It consisted of a bit of doggerel and quips centered around local people and happenings.

My first contact with the business world in Medina was in 1914 following my return from Miami University in Ohio. I was employed by a Rochester insurance firm of Hill and Colburn as a representative in Medina. Mr. Colburn had been head of the history department at Miami while I was a student there. As Medina insurance representative I shared an office with the late Gordon Payne.

My interests, however, had always been attracted to journalism. After discharge from military service in 1919 after serving with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in France and Germany, I sought and obtained employment with the Journal both in writing and selling advertising.

The force at that time, in addition to Mr. Hinchey and Mr. Baker, consisted of one or two apprentice printers, plus Percy Krompart, as a linotype operator and Madeline Bowers, who doubled as office girl and press feeder at times.

There were, at that time, three weekly papers published in Medina as well as the Daily Journal. The Medina Tribune had Frank Hurd as editor and publisher. The Medina Register had Mortimer A. Bowen as editor and publisher, and the Orleans County News had Barry Murphy as its editor and publisher.

The Tribune and Register were printed in their own plants, the former where the Coppa Shoe Repair Shop now exists and the Register in the south part of the building where the Journal-Register is found today. The Murphy publication,

as was Percy Krompart, and later William Knuth, Walter Caldwell and Walter Dombrowski. Mr. Knuth retired in 1970 and is now deceased. Mr. Dombrowski later went with the Batavia Times and met demise in an auto accident. Mr. Caldwell is still associated with the Journal-Register.

And there was Victoria Chick (now White), and Florence Dujenski, later to become Mrs. Frank Balcerzak, mother of the wife of the present Journal-Register publisher, Robert Waters.

Over the years the staff changed and slowly grew to a dozen, to two dozen, to three dozen and today to more than 40. Veteran employees and associates dropped out. Mr. Krompart left in the 1920s to operate his own printing establishment on East Center Street as did Mr. Baker.

A linotype operator for the Journal for some years during its early existence on Main Street was Miss Viola Waters, a sister of the publisher (emeritus).

During the busy years of the twenties when Medina was a town of aggressive business interests my concern was largely to make daily contacts with merchants for advertising, although I did some writing.

The limited attempt at news coverage in those early years under the very first publishers can be noted in searching the file copies. The paper consisted of four pages and sometimes the front page would go unchanged for days at a time.

A generous amount of the paper in those days was made up of what the trade then called "boiler plate" provided from such companies as the Western Newspaper Union. The type was fitted to a patented base. Photographs were few and far between since they had to be ordered from a Buffalo engraving plant and delivery required several days.

The format of the Journal-Register changed in 1929 we purchased our "pride and joy" — a Duplex flatbed web-fed press which could be considered a high speed machine in those days, turning out all of 2,500 papers per hour. Gone was the old hand-fed sheet press operation which often got us rolling as late as 6 p.m. The Duplex made it possible to improve our printing deadline gradually to 4 p.m., then 3 p.m. With the Duplex came the deliveries of large newsprint rolls which had to be rolled from a truck and "dollied" into position. And newsprint in those memorable days was

along with a monthly slick-paper magazine, the New York State Fruit Grower, also a Murphy product, were printed at the Eddy Printing Co. plant in Albion.

In the fall of 1919 Mr. Hinchey and I purchased of Mr. Bowen the Medina Register together with the building. I also bought the interest of Mr. Baker in the Journal and a partnership was thus formed between Mr. Hinchey and myself.

We continued to publish the Journal which was then a six-day-a-week paper, and also continued the weekly edition of the Medina Register. The depression years brought an end to the Register as a separate paper.

Mr. Baker continued as an employee of the institution for a number of years, primarily in what was called "job printing." The staff then also consisted of Edward Bidell, who came along after serving his apprenticeship at the East Center Street location, May Montgomery as a linotype operator

purchased for \$24 per ton (today \$345).

The Journal was gaining friends, even though in its infant state it still only offered six pages on a normal day, sometimes eight, and now and again a drop back to four.

A "stereotype" department was established to perform our own lead casting work and Charles Hauswald became a staffer and the man in charge of this work.

Commercial printing was also a consideration and Mr. Bidell took this part of the business under his supervision, aided by numerous assistants, not the least of whom was Viola Seefelt.

The operation of our new web press was a new venture for us all and for a long time the tension adjustments in the paper as it wound through the machine offered a challenge to all. There were frequent snaps as the web broke and there were resulting delays.

The delays began to pose more of a problem as delivery deadlines were observed. The paper then had two delivery systems - a half dozen carriers of its own and the services of the Spears News Stand which sold or delivered the majority of copies. Poor George Spears...he suffered much! Press time was then four o'clock in the afternoon, but with mechanical problems and web breaks it was often later. Mr. Spears would tear his hair as the clock ticked onward. With late deliveries a frequent situation, the complaint department of the newspaper had occasion to work overtime.

per week. There were a few instances when "the ghost failed to walk" on Friday afternoon and the employees were cooperative enough to wait until the following week for their pay. At that time the scale for printers was 50 cents an hour.

But never can we forget the earlier business people and their methods of promotion. Their names are forever engraved on the pages of local history.

Over the past half-century there has been a significant change in both forms of advertising and its sources. Before the days of radio, TV and a rash of magazines the most common advertising methods were use of newspapers and billboards. They handled a variety of nationally known products.

The most generous use of the Journal-Register during the twenties, and continuing until after World War 2, was by the cigarette and automobile producers.

In the local market 50 years ago the number of retail stores and their variety was much greater than today. It was a time before the huge shopping centers, supermarkets and variety stores and before the mode of living erased the need for some of the smaller stores.

For one example, the changes in the cosmetic field have made things very different. When I was soliciting advertising for the Journal there were no beauty parlors, but there were many places which catered to the tonsorial needs of the male.

Among the barbers with shops in the business district were John Waldner, Steve Chick, Bill Durnan, John Day, John McGinn and his son Ray, Arthur Buncy, William Sly, Elmer Fox, Jack Peglow, Hugh Hart. The barbershop shave, now a thing of the past, meant a daily trip to the barber by scores of the business men.

There were nine men's clothing stores that I can count in my memory; and six of them were in one block on the west side of Main Street from the Four Corners to Pearl Street. The six included George Parkhurst, Frank S. Howard, George L. Owens, Adler, Crook & Metz, Montgomery & Rook and Philip I. Brust. Also along the street were J. D. Lott, the Murdock Brothers, Louis Bacon and Abraham Spiller.

The office force began to develop. Virginia (Rich) Welton was clerk, bookkeeper, proof reader, writer, etc. Harold Waters was advertising solicitor for a time in the thirties, succeeded by Rolland Fisher, then Anthony Donvito and finally Lewis Waters, advertising manager.

There were a number of short-time ad salesman including Robert Gibson. His major contribution consisted of a giant merchant promotion with a give-away to be held at the Diana Theater. It attracted a full house and ended with Mr. Gibson himself receiving the grand prize of merchandise. He moved away silently one night without leaving word of his anticipated departure or location.

The World War 2 years were difficult to say the least. There was little merchandise to sell and thus a sharp drop in advertising. With Mr. Donvito in charge of the department the major effort was in selling one cooperative advertising program after another...all on behalf of the war effort and its bond sales. Without these ad campaigns the Journal itself might have become a casualty of the war years. Mr. Donvito was a hard worker who later moved west and made a name for himself in various newspaper positions.

If World War 2 posed some difficult problems for the Journal, it was not as if the little newspaper wasn't used to adversity. The Great Depression had left its own scars and tested the Journal's mettle. It was a "rough go" and for a time the newspaper was reduced to three issues per week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. The Saturday paper never again re-appeared when prosperity returned.

During the difficult years it was necessary to go from storekeeper to storekeeper to collect five or ten dollars on account in order to meet the limited payroll which at one time consisted of less than \$200

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A further look at the early years in Medina's business district:

There were three department stores, Landauer Bros., Leonard & Richmond and the Medina Dry Goods Co.; four drug stores, Wright & Ross, Mercer & Fawcett, Ray Brooks and Charles A. Mack. The Brook Store occupied a building at the corner of East Center and Church Streets, which formed a part of the Spiller complex of stores and which was subsequently torn down to accommodate a service station.

At that time the spirit of the district was "Watch East Center Street Grow" and Abraham Spiller, who conducted a variety of retail establishments in the several stores that he owned in that section, was the promoter. He with Francis Reynolds (who occupied the greatest part of the building which now houses the Journal-Register) were engaged in the sale of second-hand merchandise and each did a thriving business.

Operators of furniture stores at the time were H. Lebaron Hartt, LeVan & Krompart, O'Reilly & Son and Frank Whittleton with Hartt, O'Reilly

and Whittleton operating as funeral directors as well.

Catering to the needs of the family food were the groceries of William Cooper, Henry & Hugh McElwee, Posson & Grinnell, Arthur Hovey, William Franchell, three Atlantic & Pacific stores, Perry's, J. Kerrison, as well as a dozen so-called "Ma and Pa" stores scattered through the various neighborhoods of the village.

Hardware needs were taken care of by Hanlon Bros., later to become A. J. Bancroft; Chase & Breed, Dygert & Son, D. W. Wilson (formerly Acers) and A. J. Morgan on East Center Street.

Harry Meland, Arthur Ennis and A. E. Miller took care of the fresh meat needs of the community in their downtown markets.

During the early days of the Journal-Register the attorneys who were practicing in Medina included Isaac Swartz, William H. Munson, John Plimpton, Bertram E. Harcourt, Albert J. Coe, Harry Cooper, LeRoy Skinner, Lee J. Skinner, Frederick Skinner, Gordon H. Payne, Stanley Filkins, David A. White, Leon Sherwood, Milton J. Whedon, Irving L'Hommedieu, Neal Heitz, John J. Ryan.

Of the several hotels that flourished a half-century ago only the Walsh Hotel remains. Others at that time included the stately White's Hotel with its tower (where Medina Parts Co. is now located), the Kelly House, on the site now occupied by Bramer Electric, the Kenmore Hotel on East Center Street, now a part of the VanDenBosch holdings. Also the Hart House, probably the most generally recognized and in the building now housing the R. H. Newell Co.

One could go on and on with fond reminiscences of the days when most all commerce was home owned and operated and the viewpoints of the people often did not extend beyond their community's borders.

In the thirties we purchased from Barry Murphy both his publications, the weekly paper and the more sophisticated "Fruit Grower." Then as history moved along, in the late forties the physical equipment and name of the Medina Tribune were acquired by the Journal after the paper ceased publication.

It was the thinning out of the ranks of small papers. In the early days when the Journal was young there were competitive weeklies in all of the nearby communities. In Middleport it was the Herald and in Lyndonville the Enterprise. There was the Barker Register, the Holley Standard, and in Albion no less than three, the Orleans American, the Orleans Republican and the Albion Advertiser.

The Advertiser, a later arrival in terms of years (1929), is the only paper in Orleans County and eastern Niagara County still being published except the Daily Journal-Register. The Journal currently serves the Middleport-Barker region with a special Wednesday edition.

Room for expansion was an inevitable requirement for the Journal and in the forties the company acquired from Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. (Niagara Hudson in earlier years) the building north and adjacent to the one already occupied. Work space was enlarged. The commercial printing department enjoyed separate space and added automatic presses. The basement offered important paper storage. And a small

store in the front corner provided an area for a new venture, an office supply outlet called Medina Stationers. It began in the late forties and outgrew its space by 1955 when it was purchased by John Garlock of Rochester. Garlock Office Products is now a large and widely respected business in Medina.

The past 30 years have seen dramatic changes in the Journal, both in appearance and technology. First came the entrance of a United Press news wire service, a growth in number of pages, then the equipment to produce instant halftone photo engravings in the plant, as well as teletypesetter equipment to operate linotypes at higher speeds by perforated tape.

In 1970 on a warm July weekend, history was again made. Over that weekend the old Duplex press was retired and the use of lead type and hot metal had a complete phase-out.

By the time Monday morning arrived a new Goss Community web offset press was ready to roll and banks of paste-up tables were in place ready for the first "cold type" pages. Computers had been installed to produce both body type and headlines. A camera room awaited the pages and new plate-making equipment was also ready. During 1970 a conversion program of over \$125,000 made the entire operation keep step with modern trends.

Medina itself seemed to be keeping step as a new shopping plaza sprang up around a large W. T. Grant store. The decade of the seventies was bringing changes.

Today just as the Journal-Register has grown from 2,800 to nearly 6,000 in circulation since World War 2, the mode of living has expanded with more mobility of people and of families and chains of businesses and industrial plants.

But despite the change in lifestyles, the ascendancy of television and our space-age technology, people still remain eager for the day's news of community folks in community situations. This is the job of the small community newspaper and will keep it in the forefront of the media for many years to come.