

THE

HAGUE CHRONICLE

VOL. III - No. 12

D E C E M B E R 1 9 7 4

HAGUE, N.Y.

ELECTION DAY

The state-wide election on November 5 attracted 380 voters from the Town of Hague.

While Hague is normally Republican the Democratic candidate for Governor Hugh Carey, carried the town, 182 to 169. Louis Lefkowitz the Republican candidate for attorney general received 201 votes to 118 for his Democratic opponent. Senator Javitz received 201 votes to 111 for Ramsey Clark and 38 for Barbara Keating the Conservative Party candidate. Congressman Carleton King, who failed to win another term, carried Hague 198 to 134 for Edward Pattison. State Senator Stafford who ran unopposed received 318 votes. State Assemblyman Andrew Ryan was re-elected. He received 210 votes to 117 for his opponent Robert R. Purdy.

There were no local offices to be filled this year.

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THE BI-CENTENNIAL

Since no worthwhile bi-centennial project is possible without community interest and support, we asked for your suggestions and opinions. Not one person has responded.

Instead of asking for your suggestions and opinions as to various projects, we perhaps should have asked the basic question - Do you think the Town of Hague should do anything special to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the United States of America. Only if the answer to that question was yes would it have been proper to ask - What do you think we should do? Do you favor any of the proposals made by the committee -

such as: 1. Identify places of historical interest; 2. Obtain a home for the Historical Society and the Library; 3. Undertake a town beautification program; 4. Construct tennis courts and an ice skating rink; 5. Build a bandstand; 6. Decorate the entrance to the town park.

Perhaps the different town organizations would want to do something on their own. The school? The Fire Department? The American Legion? The Churches?

Or maybe we ought to forget the whole thing. Tell us what you think. The committee would appreciate some response.

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TOWN BUDGET - 1975

Public hearing on the budget was held on November 6th. All members of the Board were present. Your correspondent was the only member of the public to attend.

The budget, as reported last month calls for expenditures of \$195,195. an increase of \$22,446. over the amount budgeted in 1974. With the \$25,000. which the town will receive from County Sales Tax revenues, the amount to be raised by real property taxes will actually be about \$2000. less than the amount raised by taxes in 1974. The best estimate is that the town tax rate will be \$4.91 per \$1000. of assessed valuation. Last year's rate was \$13.24. Under the 1974 re-assessment, this is comparable to a rate of \$4.99.

Highlights of the budget: An increase of \$500. to the Fire Department and \$500. to the Ambulance Corps bringing the Town's contributions to

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these services to \$7000.

An increase in the salaries paid to elected and appointed officials of about 7%. Wages of highway employees increased 30¢ an hour. Salaries will now be \$2.80 for part-time help, \$3.40 for regular employees and \$3.80 for garage mechanic. In addition employees were given Columbus Day as an additional holiday. The town has nine employees presently enrolled in the State Retirement Program which is paid for by the town. Cost of this program in 1975 is estimated at \$7400. Employee hospital and medical insurance will cost \$3250. The town's share of Social Security payments will be \$4450. Thus, fringe benefits not including holiday and paid vacations will cost in excess of \$15000. or more than \$1500. per employee.

A new police car is provided for at a cost of \$4400.

Debt service will cost \$11,750. This covers \$5000. to be paid on the highway garage; \$1000. on the town park; \$3250. on the town dock; and \$2500. on the Highway Department's Trojan loader. Unless additional bonded indebtedness is incurred, Hague will be completely free from debt in two years. Probably no other town in the state will be able to make that claim.

The highway improvement program is estimated to cost \$14,860. Under the so-called Donovan Plan the town will recover \$5544. of this from the state. The town will also receive \$9,000. from Warren County, \$2000. from the state, and \$1700. from Essex County and the town of Ticonderoga for plowing and sanding.

Federal Revenue sharing funds,

which are not a part of the town budget, will be \$18,829. during the fiscal year, July 1, 1974 to June 30 1975.

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THE COUNTY BUDGET

The Warren County budget calls for expenditures of \$14,093,392. in 1975 as compared to \$12,315,915. this year. A \$450. increase in pay to all county employees with few exceptions and increases in other areas mandated by the state are cited as principal causes for the budget increases.

The amount to be raised by real property taxes has been increased from \$2.5 million to \$2.6 million. The tax rate for Hague has been set at 96¢ per \$1000. of assessed valuation. Last year the rate was \$2.22 which is comparable to a rate of 82¢ on the basis of the 1974 re-assessment. The increase is about 17%.

As you no doubt are aware, the county tax appears on the town tax bill which will be payable during January, 1975.

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ARCADY TAX LITIGATION

At the hearing on the budget, the supervisor advised that the suit brought by Arcady Corporation for alleged over-assessment of its properties during the years 1968 through 1973 was settled before trial for \$9499. The cost of the settlement including attorney's fees and other expenses will be paid for out of the current year's revenues.

With the settlement of the Arcady suit by the town, the school will also be required to refund an amount equivalent to the school taxes collected on the assessed valuation over the amount finally agreed upon in the settlement. To date no report has been made by the school board but since school taxes are more than twice as high as town taxes, it is likely that the settlement will cost the school more than \$20,000

TOWN BOARD MEETING

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

The regular meeting of the Town Board was held on November 12 with 11 members present.

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on November 11 with all members present.

The budget as presented at the November 6 public meeting was approved without change.

A request from Mr. Plass to use the gymnasium for home games of the town basketball team was approved.

Bids in the amount of \$655. and \$800. were received for the 1970 town truck which is for sale. It was the opinion of the Board that the truck is worth more than the amount offered and the bids were rejected.

The increase of 10¢ in the adult admission tickets to basketball games approved at the last meeting of the Board, was rescinded. The admission price will return to 25¢.

Mr. Mike Riley, who is in charge of the town youth program, reviewed at great length various programs which are in effect or under contemplation. A bowling league with four teams of four members each is now in progress. Roller skating parties have been and are being conducted about once a month. Mr. Riley did not believe the youth activities at the town hall were successful since there was little participation. It is difficult to organize basketball, soccer or baseball leagues because of insufficient interest. Trips to professional sports events, swimming, skating and skiing were discussed as possibilities.

The re-routing of the bus schedule announced at the last meeting of the Board was also rescinded. The bus will be operated as before.

The Board approved proposal to excuse seventh and eighth graders from regular classes during regent's week. The Board also approved excusing girl scouts from class to attend Girl Scout meetings.

Merrill Dolbeck of Ticonderoga who from time to time has been a substitute teacher was appointed third grade teacher during leave of absence previously granted to Mrs. Cobb.

The price of lunches for teachers was increased to 70¢ plus 5¢ tax effective January 1, 1975.

The audit by Messrs. Telling, Kelling and Potter of the school accounts for the year ending June 30, 1974 was approved.

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SILVER BAY'S SENIOR CITIZEN

Now eighty-eight years of age, Louis Spelman has lived in Silver Bay more than sixty-one years. He has lived in Silver Bay probably longer than any other resident; in any case, he is Silver Bay's most senior citizen.

In a general discussion which followed, it appears that roller skating and bowling involve expenses by those participating and this probably was keeping some of the young people from participating. As to these programs, the Board authorized Mr. Riley to proceed with them until the end of the year with the town bearing the total expense. The results together with other proposals to be submitted by Riley would be reviewed by the Board at its first meeting of the new year and decisions reached as to future programs.

The budget provides for \$2500. for youth programs (with the state paying half) but because of lack of interest and participation only about \$700. has been expended this year.

Our story begins in 1886 in Kirchen, Germany where Louis Spelman was born to parents he never knew. He was brought up by his grandmother in

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a part of Germany which was vigorously opposed to German Prussianism and which did everything in its power to thwart the law which required young men to enter the German army when reaching the required age.

Louis' first employment was in a bakery. When his employer returned from a visit to the United States with stories of the opportunities available in that country, Louis was immediately interested. The U.S. newspaper to which his employer had subscribed, kept his interest alive but the clincher came as he reached military age. His employer and some of the townspeople operated a sort of underground railroad to get young men of military age out of the country and they arranged passage for Louis to Switzerland, thence to Italy, France, England and finally to Syracuse, New York. He was sixteen years old when he landed a job in a bakery in Syracuse.

At a German Lutheran church in Syracuse, Louis met the girl who was to become his wife, Katherine. Soon after the wedding the couple moved to New Rochelle, N.Y. from where Louis went to work in New York City as a maintenance man in an eighty-story building which had some identification with the Y.M.C.A. During the ensuing years, Louis took courses in construction work and in a number of the sciences.

While at his employment in New York, Louis met Mr. Silas H. Paine who in 1902 had made a gift of over one thousand acres of land and his hotel at Silver Bay to the Silver Bay Association to be used as a religious conference center. Mr. Paine offered Louis a job as assistant superintendent and after a trip to Silver Bay, taking the Hudson River night boat to Albany (fighting cockroaches all night long in his stateroom) the O & H railroad to Fort Edward, a branch railroad line to Lake George and the SS Horicon to Silver Bay, he agreed to take the job and soon hereafter moved his family which now consisted of his wife and two children. The year was 1913 and one year later he was made superintendent.

In 1918, following the death of their son, Mr. and Mrs. Paine provided money for the establishment of a boys' preparatory school at Silver Bay. The school would be operated during the school year, September to June and the SBA would utilize the buildings and grounds the remaining months. There were approximately 100 boys in the school and they received both academic and practical instruction in construction work, in fact, the boys assisted as part of their school work in the building of the first home occupied by the superintendent. This part of the schooling was under the supervision of Mr. Spelman and in later years he taught algebra, chemistry, physics and general science. Although the school was exclusively for boys, an exception was made when the Spelman daughter, Katherine, was permitted to attend. One other exception was later made but lest the situation get out of hand, the two girls were sent elsewhere to complete their high-school education. The Great Depression of the thirties took its toll and in 1935 the school was forced to close its doors.

The Spelmans had six children: Mrs. Mildred Mohrman, now deceased; Mrs. Katherine Proctor of West Hartford, Conn.; Wallace, a retired state trooper and George, a doctor, both of San Bernardino, Calif.; Irving, an electrical engineer in Morristown, New Jersey; and Louis, Jr. who resides in Silver Bay and is employed by Warren County. Following the death of his first wife who was the mother of all of his children, Louis married Emma Grieder who had been an employee of Silver Bay. She passed away in the late fifties.

During his years at Silver Bay, Mr. Spelman met many summer residents and for many years he arranged summer rentals and provided general maintenance services. He also designed and constructed a number of homes in the area. Following his retirement in 1958 he took a number of courses in real estate work and became a duly licensed real estate broker. Currently he is in the real estate business at his home on Route 9N.

Mr. Spelman twice ran for town justice but was beaten by slight margins. He has been active for many years in the Hague Baptist Church and June, 1973 he was honored by cub scouts from the entire Adirondack District on the occasion of his thirty years spent in scout work.

Last year he made his first trip to his old home town in Germany where he was able to find his grandmother's house but there were none of the residents who remembered him.

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THE FUTURE OF THE ADIRONDACKS

International Paper Company's Chairman of the Board, J. Sanford Smith, a Friend's Point summer resident for more than thirty years, was the guest speaker at the annual meeting of the Lake George Association in late August. In his speech, Mr. Smith discussed the future of the Adirondack region with particular emphasis on the economic outlook for the residents and industry.

IPC operates plants at Corinth and Ticonderoga providing employment for almost 2,000 people with a payroll of almost \$30 million. It is the largest landowner in the state with 280,000 acres of forest lands. Several hundred people are employed to manage the forests and harvest wood from them. The two mills were supplied with 258,000 cords of roundwood and chips last year from New York sources. If these 258,000 cords were loaded on to trucks at one time, the truck line would stretch bumper to bumper from Glens Falls to Montreal - 220 miles.

The Adirondack area is completely dependent on two industries - the recreation and forest products industries. The recreation industry is highly seasonal and many of its jobs are marginal in terms of pay while employment in the pulp and paper segment of the forest products industry is steady and well paid. But even with such employment, Adirondack counties are in trouble. The unemployment rate is double the state av-

erage; in Hamilton County it is four times the average. Quoting Professor Paul Eberts of Cornell University, Mr. Smith points out that there is twice as much poverty in the rural areas as in the suburbs and that the rural population has the "highest infant mortality rate, the highest suicide rate, the worst housing and the second highest homicide rate." And again quoting from Professor Eberts he concludes: "If some types of new investment don't happen in rural areas to reverse the increasing inequalities and gaps between them and their urban industrial counterparts, then rural areas can only look forward to increasing relative deprivation."

New York which ranked number one in wood production in 1850 and seventeenth in 1900, now ranks thirtieth. This long-term decline has now reached the point where not enough wood is being harvested to supply the area's wood products industry and the importation of wood from outside the area is becoming cost prohibitive.

Within the Adirondack Park are 6,000,000 acres - 3,500,000 of these are privately owned; 2,500,000 are State Land, mainly in forests from which no wood fiber can be harvested. What is needed is an increase in the production and harvesting of wood in this area. This would bring about a resurgence in the wood products industry and this in turn would become an important factor in reversing the area's poverty trend. To do this, Mr. Smith proposes:

1. A more intelligent management of private forest lands.
2. Local, state and national tax policies which encourage long-term forest management.
3. Every tree should be used at its highest value.
4. A constitutional amendment which will permit the exchange of state and private lands where more effective utilization will result.
5. That consideration be given to

the harvesting of wood in the State preserve which is presently prohibited by Article XIV of the State Constitution. (The forest preserve in the Adirondack Park contains 50% more saw timber than does the private land within the Park - but none of it can be utilized.)

All this can be done, Mr. Smith assures us, without detriment to the natural beauty of the area, recreational opportunities, production of game and wild life, or to our water-sheds.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Hague Historical Society held its meeting on November 20 with a good turnout of members and guests including many members of the Loner-gan family.

Mr. Wilford Ross played a tape recording of good quality with his recollections of Graphite, much of it in rhyme. Mr. Ross, who is now 84 years old, was two years old when the graphite mines were first opened. His father, Amos, a farmer in the area, went to work in the mines at wages of \$1. per day. During haying season he was given a leave of absence. Later he became night foreman and his salary was increased to 40¢ an hour. Working ten hours a day seven days a week, he managed to earn \$28. a week.

The Town of Graphite had a population of about 400. It maintained a two-room schoolhouse with two teachers and about 60 pupils. There were three saloons, a pool hall, and Echo Mountain Hall, operated by Tom Loner-gan, where movies were shown.

The 80 men working in the mines were able to extract about 60 to 70 cars of ore each day. About 30% of this was graphite and this was then taken to Ticonderoga for refining. The mill in Ticonderoga had been refining graphite brought in from New Jersey for ten years before the discovery of graphite in Hague.

The next meeting will be on December 18th. Miss Lona Bartlett will be in charge of a program on Christmas Seals and antique Christmas cards.

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CHRISTMAS PARTY

Under the sponsorship of the Town Youth Program, there will be a Christmas party at the school on December 16th at 6:30 P.M. All children of pre-school age through eighth grade are invited with their parents. There will be movies, candy and soda. And, Santa Claus has promised to be there.

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