

## The Auburn Seminary Centenary Pageant 1918

BY ED ROSSMAN

In the fall of 1918, as the First World War was drawing to a close, Auburn Seminary was preparing to celebrate its centenary on October 7-10. An important part of the celebration was to be a pageant designed by Pageant Master William Chauncy Langdon. This ambitious spectacle had ten parts, involved 200 performers, and required a thirty-piece orchestra. The pageant would relate in words, gestures, and music the drama and history of the Seminary during its first century.

Four parts of the pageant were musical and symbolic, in which the performers would act in pantomime. Six other parts would be dramatic, in which the performers would reenact critical episodes of the Seminary's history. The spectacle might last three hours, and would be performed on campus on each of the three afternoons—the 8th, 9th and 10th—of the celebration. The performers included faculty and their spouses, staff, students, and townspeople. Special music was written for the spectacle, though the pageant hymn, *The Church's One Foundation*, would provide a consistent theme throughout the musical parts.

Unfortunately the pageant could not be staged during the October celebrations. The influenza epidemic was starting to make itself felt in Auburn, and many prospective guests had to decline. Conscription was claiming more and more young men, and this finally made it impossible to assemble thirty musicians for the orchestra. The spectacle had to be cancelled for the

centennial celebration; but it seems to have been staged the following year, in 1919, during the warm season.

An undated, uncaptioned photograph in the Preservation Committee archive shows a group of costumed performers posed in front of the Seminary's Morgan-Dodge library. There are fewer than two hundred performers in the picture, but enough to give an idea of what the spectacle was like. The postwar pageant was shortened. It still had four musical parts, but only three dramatic scenes. It might take a couple of hours to perform.

The first musical pantomime, *The Foundations of Reformed Protestantism*, shows Calvin holding high the word of God for the citizens of Geneva. The second, *Aletheia Eleutheria* (the motto of the Seminary), shows personifications of Andover and Princeton Seminaries sanctioning the young newcomer, Auburn. The third, *The Light that Lighteneth*, involves seminary students and missionaries ministering to the people. Finally the fourth musical movement, *The Glory of Fulfillment*, presents the trio of a triumphant America

carrying on high the national flag, Calvin upholding the Bible, and the Seminary brandishing the Torch of Truth, accompanied by many angels. This must have been a sight to behold!

Three dramatic scenes follow each of the first three musical parts. They include 1) the Settling of the Military Tract; 2) the proceedings of the Synod of Geneva; and 3) the Opening of the Seminary, featuring the starting of construction of the Seminary building with help from local convicts. Mr. Langdon did not have modern technology at his disposal. If he had, the Seminary Pageant would probably have been staged at night, and would have much resembled the thundering Mormon Hill Cumorah Pageant, staged not far from here, near Rochester.

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## Grandaughter of former president of Auburn Theological Seminary Visits Willard Chapel

Mrs. Ann Burch came to visit on December 14, 2016 and shared her memories of growing up at the Seminary with us. Mrs. Burch's grandfather was Rev. George Black Stewart, second president of the Seminary, serving from 1899–1926 (in the portrait at right). Below, Mrs. Burch (left) and docent Joan Smrtic look through old photographs and reminisce about Mrs. Burch's childhood at the Seminary.



### UPCOMING Events

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**APRIL 2, 2017**  
Peter Griggs, classical guitar

**MAY 7, 2017**  
Martha Gallagher, harp and singing

**OCTOBER 5, 2017**  
Chefs' Night  
Sacred Heart

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Direct all comments, inquiries and ideas to:  
Community Preservation Committee  
17 Nelson Street  
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315.252.0339  
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## Grant S. Miller, Class of 1936, Auburn Theological Seminary

We thought it might be interesting to spotlight a Seminary graduate who went on to have an impact on the local and regional community. Since CPC also has a number of his personal possessions, we are able to relate to him as more than just a name in a list of Seminary graduates from 80 years ago.

Grant S. Miller grew up in Rochester. He graduated from Kodak High School in 1926 and earned a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Rochester in 1931.

He began his studies at the Seminary in the fall of 1933 and was awarded a Bachelor's Degree in Theology in May 1936. His degree proudly sits on the fireplace mantle in our Archive Room. From his transcript, it's apparent he was an outstanding student, earning mostly As during his three years of study.

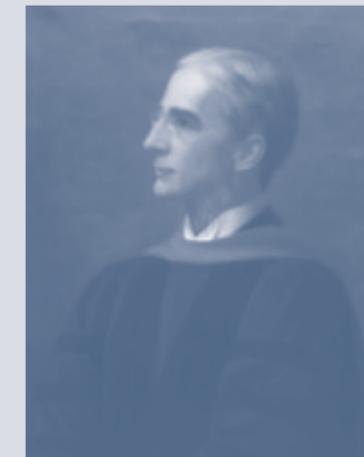
Each matriculating student at the Seminary was required to take an oath dedicating oneself to serious study and appropriate behavior. Below is Rev. Miller's oath dated October 11, 1933:

"Deeply impressed with the sense of the importance of improving in knowledge, prudence and piety, I solemnly promise in a reliance on divine grace, that I will

faithfully and diligently attend to the instructions of this Seminary, and that I will conscientiously and diligently observe all the rules and regulations specified in the plan for its instruction and government, so far as the same relate to the students; and that I will obey all the lawful regulations and readily yield to all the wholesome admonitions of the professors and trustees of this Seminary, while I shall continue a member of it."

*Grant S. Miller*

After graduating, Rev. Miller held pastorates at the First Presbyterian Churches in Clyde, NY (1936-42) and in Waterville, NY (1942-53). Then he was called to the old Westminster Presbyterian Church in Auburn and served as its pastor from 1953-68. In 1968 the old Westminster Presbyterian Church merged with the Second Presbyterian Church to become the new Westminster Presbyterian Church. He stayed on for one year as Assistant Minister until the fall of 1969 when he assumed the pastorates of the United Methodist Churches of South Onondaga and Cardiff. His pastoral relations with the Presbyterian



Thank you to Henry B. Wightman Jr. for donating this framed oil portrait of his Great Grandfather, Henry Mathias Booth D.D., First President of the Seminary from 1893-1899.



Church were dissolved at that time.

While in Auburn, he moderated and served on various Presbyterian and regional church-related councils and committees. He was active in the Auburn Y Athletic Club. He died in 1998 at the age of 90.

Rev. Miller and his family were long-time supporters of the Community Preservation Committee and Willard Memorial Chapel. In addition to the items mentioned above, we have notes from some of his sermons (some hand-written, others typed) and a few programs from services he led at his various churches. Also, we have a number of volumes from his personal library.

## Pageant continued from Page 1

A contemporary reader might enjoy the first dramatic scene, the Settling of the Military Tract. It shows Colonel Hardenbergh as a kind of Ward Bond Wagon Master/ Mill Owner organizing the early settlement of Auburn. He lords it over everyone with supreme confidence. A widower, he acquires a new wife, Martina Brinkerhoff of Gettysburg, in about ten minutes. He offers to free his slave, Harry Freeman, and his wife Kate, IF Harry will continue to clear the last ten acres of his 40-acre tract. This action may be meant to finesse the delicate

issue of slavery in early New York State.

Other parts of the Seminary Centennial included banquets, speeches, and the publication of Librarian John Quincy Adams's History of Auburn Theological Seminary, about which more will be discussed at a future time.

A copy of Langdon's The Centennial Pageant of Auburn Theological Seminary 1818-1918 is available for perusal in the History Room of Seymour Public Library.

# The Old Erie Canal Heritage Park at Port Byron

BY MIKE RILEY

A new park and preservation project has been rising along the New York State Thruway in Port Byron. Those who have driven along the Thruway have seen the large brown sign which marked the site of Lock 52, an Enlarged Erie Canal Lock. This lock was one of 72 which stepped the canal up from the tide water at the Hudson to the shores of Lake Erie in Buffalo. Near the lock is the old Erie House, a former hotel and tavern built on the bank of the old canal. This new Park has brought together the lock and Erie House into one park that is accessible from both the NYS Thruway and Port Byron.

The Old Erie Canal Heritage Park was an idea way back in 1958 when the new Thruway was built through the northwest corner of Port Byron. The local chamber of commerce was upset that the state had not built an exit into the village, so they asked for a canal museum to be built next to the lock. Nothing came of these requests. The lock has sat as a memorial to the canal, but was off limits to visits.

As mentioned, sitting just east of the lock was the Erie House. This building had remained within one family since its construction in 1895, with the last surviving daughter dying in 1993. When the building and land was auctioned in 1994, a number of groups vied for the house and its legacy as a canal side tavern. The house was purchased by S.C.O.W., the now defunct State Council on Waterways, and plans were made to create a canal park and museum around the Erie House and Lock 52. In addition to SCOW, the Canal Society of New York State looked to the old Rochester, Syracuse, and Eastern Interurban power house as a possible museum and archives. It was the hope that if this triad of sites could be pulled together, a large and significant Erie Canal park and museum could be built. Access to the park would be from the east bound Thruway lanes only and from Route 31, which passes through Port Byron. This would place the park on the route of the new Erie Canalway Trail, a cross state recreational path that attracts thousands of people each year to the

banks of the old and new Erie Canals.

However things were not to go as hoped. The Canal Society made an offer on the power house, which was rejected. Entrées to the owner of a nearby drydock site, which lay in the middle of the triangle of sites, was also rejected after it was learned that SCOW had received a grant to help with the building of a parking lot along the Thruway. The owners of the land and building wished to hold out for more money. SCOW was unable to meet the financial challenges of rehabilitating the Erie House, and a meeting was held between SCOW and the Canal Society. The land and building were sold to the Canal Society. Plans for the power house and drydock were shelved and all the focus was placed on the Erie House and parking lot with direct access to the Thruway.

Thus began a 10 year project on the part of the Canal Society to work with the New York State Thruway, the New York State Canal Corporation, and the grant funders to get the park built. It was immediately clear that the 2.3 million grant from Congressman Walsh would not be enough to build the entire park. A wet area of land was deemed as "wetlands"; and this brought into play the Army Corps of Engineers who determined that any parking lot and park plans had to take into account and use the wetlands. Another issue was a Federal Highway regulation that said that people traveling on the

Thruway cannot have any opportunity to exit the Thruway, even if on foot, unless they pass through a toll plaza. Although it was pointed out people have open and easy access through open gates at all the travel plazas along the highway, this interpretation was strictly enforced, and the rule was that no one could have the opportunity at Port Byron. This killed the plans for the Route 31 access and for some in the community who thought it might be nice to welcome Thruway travelers to Port Byron if they wished to walk into the village.

The solution was big and expensive. A welcoming or visitors' center would have access to both the Thruway and Route 31, and as any traveler entered the building, they would receive a token that would prohibit their movement to the other road. It was never reasoned out



why someone who was driving along the Thruway would choose to leave their car in a parking lot and then walk away down Route 31, but rules are rules. The Visitors Center did solve an issue by becoming a place for an information desk, gathering place, gift shop, and bathrooms.

All solutions come at a price. The 2.3 million would not cover the costs of the proposed park. Although many efforts were made to find funding, the millions of dollars were not forthcoming. As the months and years passed by, it began to look as if the park would be an idea stuck on paper, left to exist only in cardboard boxes in someone's garage. The change came when the Canal Corporation and the Thruway decided to take on the project as a historical stop or even a texting stop area under promotion along the highway. It is also possible that the Thruway decided to build the park as a yin to the yang that was being proposed at Barge Canal Lock 13 Park in the Mohawk Valley area of the State. The Port Byron Park could show people what was, whereas the E-13 Lock Park could show what is. And since the E-13 Park was on the

westbound lanes, both sides of the Thruway would have access to an Erie Canal Park.

With the Thruway as the lead agency, the old plans were pulled out of the boxes, dusted off, updated, and bid out. The park was to be built in three phases, with the parking lot and trails through the lock as the first phase, the rehabilitation of the Erie House, mule barn, blacksmith shop and other buildings as the second phase, and the construction of the all new Visitors Center as the third phase. The total price will be around 10 million dollars. Construction was wrapped up by August 2016 of Phase 1.

When the park is open, it will feature the new Visitors Center, a modern building that will house the gift shop, bathrooms, offices, welcoming area, information on historical sites, and some displays. This building will serve as the gateway from both the Thruway and Route 31. If people choose to enter the rest of the park, they will walk through and around Lock 52 and then up to the restored Erie House tavern / hotel. While the lock will focus on the canal, the Erie House is an opportunity to speak about immigration, local businesses, the region around Port

Byron, and what it was like to live and work along the canal. The building has room for changing exhibits to keep things fresh and new. Nearby, the restored blacksmith shop and mule barn offer additional exhibit space.

In early September, it was announced that the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance would staff and open the Park for an 8-week period, closing in November. After that it is expected that the State will put out a request of proposals for those who might wish to run the park in 2017.

Everyone who is involved with history and tourism should realize that this park does offer all the Cayuga County tourism and historical sites a great opportunity. Since it is located on the New York State Thruway and its main focus is history, the travelers it will attract will be people motivated to seek out historical and tourist spots. It should be a good place to advertise all local attractions. And since much of the history of the county can trace some attachment to the Erie Canal, making connections should be easy.

## 1840 Dulles House Grand Opening

Dr. Paul and Elizabeth Koenig hosted a ceremonial ribbon cutting at their 1840 Dulles Inn on June 11, 2016. It was a memorable day for History's Hometown, Auburn, New York.

Over 150 invited guests welcomed and honored members of the Dulles, Woodruff and Henderson families, who once resided at 67 South Street in Auburn.

Dr. Paul and Elizabeth Koenig and members of the Dulles family were presented with a City of Auburn Proclamation and recognition of Local Historic Landmark status by Auburn Mayor Michael Quill; State of NY Historic Landmark status was recognized by Pamela Kirkwood, a representative of NY State Assemblyman Gary D. Finch; 13th District Cayuga County Legislator, Timothy Lattimore presented a Cayuga County Proclamation to the Koenigs and Dulles family members.

1840 Dulles Inn was blessed by Reverend

John Vaughn, Executive Vice President of the Auburn Theological Seminary. Speakers included Dr. James Dulles Seymour, nephew of John Foster Dulles; Sybilla Avery Cook, niece of Janet Avery Dulles; Janet Hinshaw-Thomas, granddaughter of John Foster Dulles, and Dorothy Wickenden, Executive Editor of "The New Yorker," author of *Nothing Daunted: The Unexpected Education of Two Society Girls in the West* and great-great-niece of Edwin Delevan Woodruff.

Keynote Speaker was Dr. Peter Usowski, native Auburnian and currently CIA Director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Cutting the ribbon on the front porch of 67 South Street included all speakers: owners

Dr. Paul and Elizabeth Koenig, Marion Seymour, niece of John Foster Dulles and two great-grandchildren of John Foster Dulles, Layla and Hisham. The day concluded with tours of 1840 Dulles House followed by dinner that evening for the principal guests of the ribbon cutting in the Community Room at Willard Chapel, graciously hosted by Dr. Paul and Elizabeth Koenig.



# Snapshots in Time: Auburn Theological Seminary

## The Past

The Auburn Theological Seminary was chartered in 1818 by the Synod of Geneva and located in Auburn, New York. Construction was begun on the first building (Main) in 1820, and the Seminary opened in 1821. The first graduating class (1824) had seven students. The Seminary was chartered as an educational institution for pious and dedicated students and would remain a male institution for nearly a century.

At the time of the Seminary's charter nearly 200 years ago, Auburn was a prosperous town of about 2,000, larger than Syracuse, Rochester or Buffalo and situated on the edge of the frontier moving west. By locating the Seminary here, it was hoped that some of the graduates would stay on to lead the churches being established in the region. The plan worked, and then some. The Seminary would ultimately supply ministers not only for upstate New York, but for the rest of the United States, and would even send missionaries overseas. 1880 – 1920 were probably its best years.

Over time, additional buildings were added to the campus: Dodge-Morgan Library, Morgan Hall, Willard Memorial Chapel/Welch Memorial Building, the President's House and the Silliman Club House. Also, a number of houses were erected on the campus to be used for residences or programs.

The Seminary had its financial ups and downs throughout its existence, but remained open for 118 years. The first female graduate, Ida Thorne, received her diploma in 1917, thus opening the door for other female students. Auburn was one of the first theological schools in the country to admit women, African-American and Asian students, and the first to establish a

summer session and a school of religious education. Faculty and students participated in the great social movements of the time: abolition, women's suffrage, temperance and reforms that aided the poor.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and students' desire to attend big city seminaries hastened its end. In 1939 the decision was made to close the Auburn campus and move Auburn Theological Seminary, as a separate entity, to the campus of Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

## The Present

The Auburn Theological Seminary is now generally known as Auburn Seminary and is located on Riverside Drive in New York City. Auburn Seminary's mission today is to prepare religious officials with the skills, tools and support to be leaders in movements for social justice in local communities, on the national stage and around the world.

CPC's connection with Auburn Seminary was recently revitalized. In June, the Seminary's Executive Vice President, Rev. John Vaughn, attended the ceremony recognizing the 1840 Dulles Inn at 67 South Street as an Historic Landmark by the City of Auburn, Cayuga County and New York State. While in Auburn, he visited Willard Memorial Chapel and the Harriet Tubman Home as well.

In August, researchers from the present-day Auburn Seminary spent two days poring through CPC's archives and gathering information from community sources concerning the original Seminary and Willard Memorial Chapel. Dr. Sharon Miller, Director of Research & The Center For the Study of Theological Education, and Susan Milamed, Vice President,

Philanthropic Partnership, were excited to have the opportunity to explore the documents CPC has on-site. Several times they were heard to exclaim "Look at this!" or "This alone is worth our trip!" We'll be excited to see how they incorporate what they've discovered into the ever evolving history of Auburn Theological Seminary.

## The Future

In 2018, the Auburn Seminary in New York City plans to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the chartering of Auburn Theological Seminary in Auburn. There are discussions about including CPC and Willard Memorial Chapel in this celebration, so stay tuned!

### Student Life at the Auburn Theological Seminary in Auburn in the early years (1820s):

Board was \$1.00 per week and could be paid in produce, if necessary. \$5.00 per year was the expense for firewood, as well as the expense of "washing and lights as in other villages." Students were often supported by charitable societies or generous individuals and were not charged for their rooms.

### By the late 1930s:

No charge was made for room rent or tuition. Students rooming in Morgan Hall paid \$50 each per year for electric, water and steam heating. Students living in Morgan Hall had their meals at the Silliman Club House at a rate of \$6.50/week.

A probable annual budget for a Seminary student in 1936 (not including expenses of a personal nature):

Student Association Dues	\$ 4.00
Heat, light, water at Morgan Hall	50.00
Board at Silliman Club House (\$6.50/wk x 30.5 weeks)	198.25
	<hr/>
	\$252.25

# Meet Our Board of Directors

## Arthur Price – Chairman

Arthur Price retired from New York State Electric and Gas after 38 years where he was employed as a Gas Engineer. Art is interested in baseball and served on the Board of Directors of the Babe Ruth Baseball league. He enjoys skiing, painting restoration, restoring, buying and selling classic cars.

## Kathleen Walsh Infanti – Vice Chair

Kathleen Walsh Infanti has had a solo law practice since May 2009. Prior to that time, she practiced law with the firm of Scolaro, Shulman, Cohen, Fetter & Burstein, P.C. in Syracuse, New York. Kathy obtained her Juris Doctor in May 2002 from Syracuse, University College of Law.

Kathy was born and raised in the Auburn area and worked as a secretary and paralegal in Cayuga County for more than 15 years prior to obtaining her legal degree.

In addition to serving on the Community Preservation Committee, Kathy has also been a mentor with the Y pals program in Auburn since 2010 and also serves as a member of DoVES (a charitable organization created to offer financial assistance to organizations that provide services to women and children victims of domestic violence). Kathy enjoys reading, golf and spending time with family and friends.

## Nancy Hussey – Secretary

Nancy Hussey, an alumna of Syracuse University College of Law and McGill University, is the Principal Court Attorney, Trial Part for Hon. Thomas Leone, Cayuga County and Family Court Judge, Acting Supreme and Surrogate Court Judge since 2006. Previously she served as Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Auburn and engaged in the private practice of law.

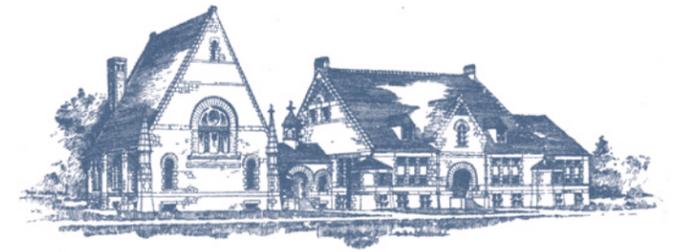
In addition to serving as Secretary to the Board of Directors of the Community Preservation Committee, she is also a member of the City of Auburn Public Power Agency. She previously served as a Board Member and President of the Cayuga County Arts Council and as a member of the City of Auburn Youth Council.

## Frederick P. Falsey – Treasurer

Fred Falsey worked for 35 years in the environmental science field. Recently, he retired from the Onondaga County Department of Water Environmental Protection. Fred enjoys all of his free time.

Fred has been a long time resident of Auburn. He serves as treasurer of the Cayuga Community College Alumni Association. He also volunteers for the Great Race; he oversees the canoe staging area during the race and has done this for many years.

Fred enjoys reading and old movies. He is a science fiction fan, especially, stories depicting an optimistic future. He enjoys hanging out with family and friends.



## Thomas Colvin

Tom Colvin is a retired commercial banker with a 40 year career working in the CNY area. Tom is a decoy collector/dealer and umpires girls' high school softball. He enjoys history and is especially interested in preservation. Tom attended Onondaga Community College and Empire College before entering the work force.

## Lisa Giacona

Lisa Giacona worked for 4 ½ years as a freelance court reporter and then for 30 years as an official court reporter with the State of New York here in Cayuga County.

Lisa retired in September of 2015 and is enjoying being able to spend as much time as possible with her husband and twin 16 year old daughters.

In addition to serving on the Community Preservation Committee she is a member of the Parish Council for Sacred Heart.

## Dr. Richard Stankus

Richard P. Stankus, PhD, MD, has been involved in preservation of historic buildings for the past 30 years. He has restored (and resided in) two historic homes in the South Street Historic District of Auburn, New York. He is a current member of the City of Auburn's Historic Resources Review Board and the Cayuga County College Board of Trustees.

## Nina Yantch

Nina is currently an accounting associate at East Hill Family Medical (a Federally Qualified Health Center) who works closely with the Chief Financial Officer and auditors providing assistance with accounting duties for the agency.

Previously, Nina was self employed as the VP and Office Manager of Yantch Plaster and Stucco Systems in Auburn, New York with her husband. The company is a plastering construction contracting business that serves commercial and residential customers.

Nina has a AA degree in Fashion Merchandising from Bauder Fashion College in Miami Florida and AAS degree in Business Administration from Cayuga Community College in Auburn, New York and is currently working on completing her Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Empire State College.