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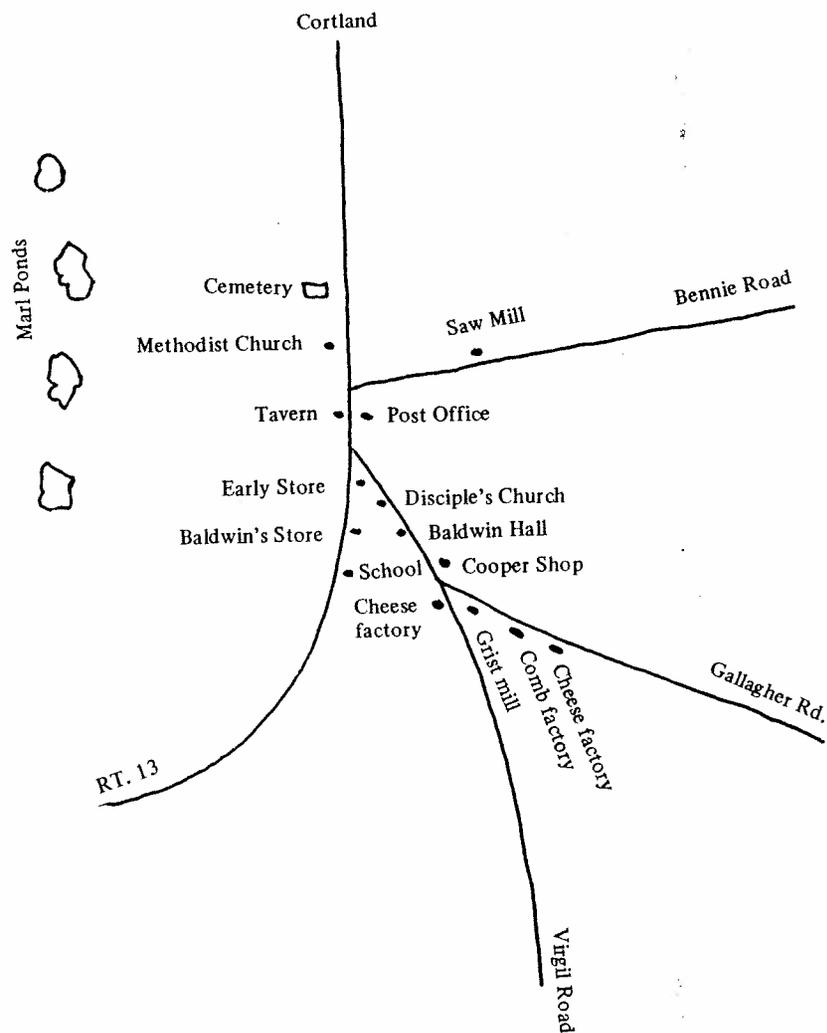
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CORTLANDVILLE

SESQUICENTENNIAL

1829 - 1979

Wilkins/Printers
4000 WEST ROAD
CORTLAND, NEW YORK



South Cortland

SOUTH CORTLAND

Herbert G. Davis

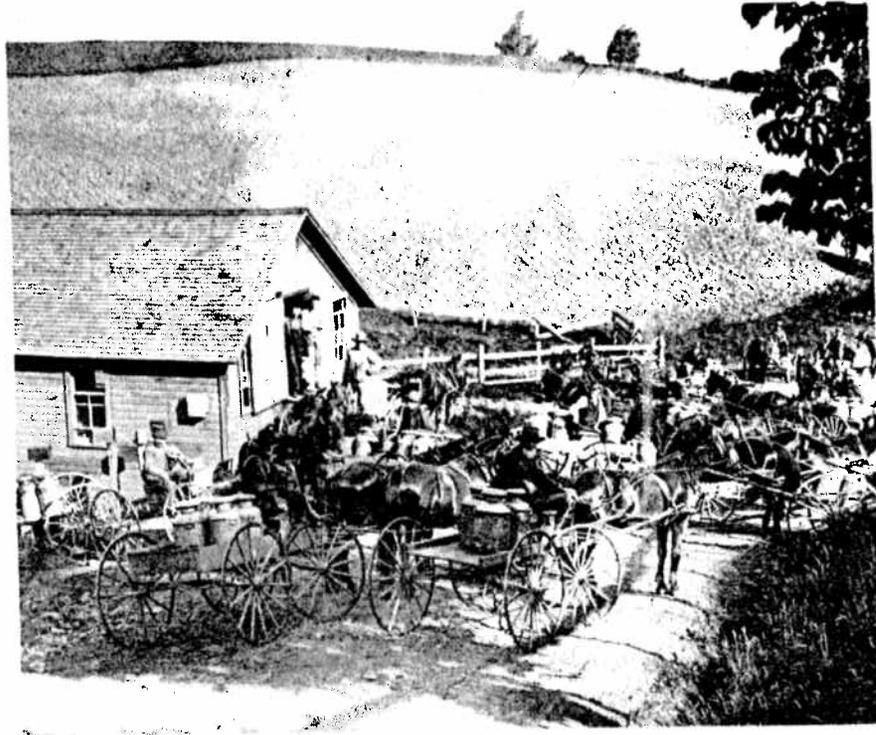
The small hamlet of South Cortland, situated about two and a half miles southwest of the city of Cortland, seems to have gotten its start when Nathan Rowley settled there in 1822. He built a large two story house where he opened a tavern. His son, Philemon Rowley, joined him in 1826 and opened the first store in 1831 personally drawing goods for his store from Albany. A second store was opened in 1832 by a W. Sturtevant. A few years later, Mr. Rowley sold his store to David Sanders who used it as a weaving shop.

A post office was soon opened with Nathan Rowley as its first postmaster. South Cortland continued to have its own post office until after the Civil War. In these early years a newspaper, the "South Cortland Luminary," was published for a while and Mr. Rowley started a stage route between Cortland and Owego running two four horse stages with business apparently very good.

In 1834 Gilbert Edgecomb built a grist mill near the junction of the South Cortland-Virgil Road and the Gallagher Road, the remains of the mill pond and raceway still being visible today along the road on the present Davis property. This mill was sold to A. P. Rowley who ran it until 1883. About this same time Mr. Edgecomb built and operated a saw mill on Big Brook off the Bennie Road.

Further up the Gallagher Road on the Davis property a cheese factory was in operation until about 1877. A second cheese factory was later built in 1898 on the southwest side of the South Cortland-Virgil Road just above the creek on the Davis property. The base to the separator is now used as a stepping stone at the Davis home.

Another early industry was a comb factory built by a Mr. Foote on the site of the present Wm. Moore home on the Gallagher Road.



South Cortland Creamery -- about 1900

A source of considerable income to the inhabitants of South Cortland came from the marl ponds to the north of the hamlet. White bricks, lime for fertilizer and whitewash were all produced from the marl lime of these ponds with records of its use as early as 1819. In winter ice was often harvested from these same ponds.

South Cortland also has the distinction of having its own cranberry bog where cranberries are still harvested each fall on the farm of Richard Osbeck.

The first church was organized in 1839 and a building was erected in 1840 next to the store on the South Cortland-Virgil Road. This "Disciples" Church was active until about 1864. A Methodist Church was later erected on the site of the present Grange Hall. That church too eventually closed and was remodeled and used as the first Grange Hall. This building burned in 1925 after which time the present Grange building was erected.

A point of interest for many years was the watering trough located in the center of the South Cortland-Virgil Road near its junction with Route 13. When the road was rebuilt in the 1930's it was moved to its present site on the south side of the road.

We find the census record of 1860 showed the population of the hamlet to be 161. A one room school, District 13, provided an education for its young people and a community cemetery, a resting place for its deceased. It is no wonder that the early citizens looked forward to their community continuing to be a thriving business center.

But times change and today South Cortland is just the place where Route 13 widens for the approach to the Smith Corona factory and the Cortlandville Mall.

Present residents there can still recall Baldwin Hall on the South Cortland-Virgil Road next to the present Oak's barn, then the Disciples Church and then the store on the corner. Further to the west was another store owned by Ralph and Charles Baldwin which later became the William May grocery and frozen food locker plant. They speak of the Bidwell home on the north side of the road as being an old tavern and inn, and recall that in its last days the post office was located in the house at the junction of Bennie Road and the South Cortland Virgil Road. And so the years pass.