

*Endwell's
Early Days*

“A Profile”

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INTRODUCTION

Nestled snug against the sloping hill, the small plot seemed to Amos Patterson a peaceful resting place. Here, at the western end of his well-loved farm, surrounded by the land he had chosen, his spirit would know rest. Such a burial spot would ever be near the community which he hoped would one day develop on the land of his choice. Perhaps its inhabitants would occasionally pause to reflect that "here lay its progenitors."

Time passed and many near and dear to the Patterson family were buried in that protected plot. Beyond that small burial ground a village developed which quickly surpassed all visions of its community forefathers. It expanded and developed each of its resources and during its rapid expansion its members seldom had time to pause and reflect on their village ancestors.

Gradually neglect came to mark the passing of years in the once carefully cared for burial ground. Weeds flourished, memorial stones were broken, bushes and briars lay all around. Several protecting trees were bent and broken. Disregarded and forgotten, the Patterson cemetery lay unnoticed by all except a few observing travelers along the River Road.

Eventually the busy community, proud as it had grown in accomplishment, came to wonder about its birth. Inevitably the quest to learn about the early history, led to a small burial ground long forgotten by the community of which it was apart. Civic pride aroused, the community was concerned. It was wrong that the village pioneers should thus be so neglected. Accordingly members of The Endwell Rotary Club volunteered to make the cemetery a source of Endwell's pride, a proper memorial for our village pioneers. The Endwell Garden Club also became interested in landscaping the restored area.

The land was cleared and the weeds and briars removed. Monuments and markers damaged through the years were reset and the fence repaired and painted. A tranquil peace, no longer clouded by neglect, again has settled on this burial ground.

Endwell's residents, satisfied that the cemetery is again receiving its overdue attention and respect, wish to continue their quest of the story of early days in Endwell. Perhaps Amos Patterson, glad that he is once again remembered, would help in this task. He might whisper across the decades and say, "Let me tell you what I know of Endwell and what I've learned as I've rested here and watched it grow."



"In the beginning Endwell was just wooded hills rising from fertile land bordered by the Susquehanna and beside the river was a narrow Indian trail. All the land itself, and much of the surrounding territory, once belonged to the state of Massachusetts. Then in 1785 or 1786 eleven of my associates and I formed a company (it was later increased to sixty men) for the purpose of buying land in the West from the government of Massachusetts. As I was especially interested in this land I came here to personally inspect it with two companions, my brother-in-law, Colonel David Pixley, and Captain Joseph Raymond, about 1785. We were the first white persons to explore this part of the country and we located here before any other persons had anything to do with it.

The large tract of land which our company bought, and which was known as the Boston Purchase, included parts of the counties of Broome and Tioga which are between the Chenango River on the East and the West Owego Creek on the West. The tract extended northward from the Susquehanna River about twenty-five miles and it contained about 230,000 acres of land. This was divided into lots and each of the sixty proprietors took his share according to the amount of money he had invested.

After we sixty proprietors had partitioned the land among ourselves, the Legislature of the State of New York, by an act passed on the third of March 1789, confirmed to us the land as we had divided it. As far as I know the list which was given in that act is probably the only complete list in existence of the original sixty members of our Boston Purchase Company.

During the years from 1789 - 1791, I spent most of my time, except the winters, in this part of the country. At that time there were no streets nor roads, just an Indian trail leading from the Susquehanna River to the Onondaga Salt Springs. Before settlers could come, trees had to be cut and a wagon road for ox teams had to be opened. I worked hard at this task.

In 1791 I began to clear the land for a farm and I built a house of hewn logs in what is now Johnson City. But I kept longing to move a little farther west to what is now Endwell. So on the fifth of May 1797, my family and I moved to a small farm, about three miles below our first home, on the banks of the Susquehanna River. At first we lived in a small plank house about thirty rods from the river, but on the twelfth of October 1800, we moved into the spacious frame house which is still standing on the River Road. It is now one of the oldest houses in all Broome County.

In the beginning river travelers often stopped with us. In fact our home came to be an outstanding inn for its time because no alcoholic drinks were served there. People came to call our home Washingtonian Hall because the Washingtonians, a temperance group, met regularly at the inn where no liquor was served.

The remainder of my life was spent at Washingtonian Hall. They were happy, busy years. My home came to be a meeting place for the civic leaders of my time. I served as an associate judge of Broome County and I farmed on my fertile land. I became especially interested in the culture of fruit and produced a particularly sweet apple which came to be known as the Patterson sweet apple. The little creek which still flows through Endwell was named for me also.

Eventually, on the fifth of March 1817, my life came to an end and I was laid to rest beside my wife Anne in the gently sloping plot which I had selected for our family burial ground at the western end of our farm. In 1853 the family erected a large monument of Pittsfield marble to mark our resting place and I hoped that the inhabitants of the village which was growing around us would sometimes reflect and remember us. But the village was growing very fast.

My friend Elisha Hooper helped the village in its early days also. He was once a wagon shop and a blacksmith shop which dated back to around 1800. There was a hotel at the junction of Hooper Road and River Road which very fortunate as he was given a grant of land almost as large as all of Endwell by the Boston Purchase Company. He surveyed the land shortly after the American Revolution and found it to be a "favored site." He came here to settle from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in 1807. His twelve-year-old son, Philander Hooper, came with Elisha, and it was for Philander Hooper that this village was first named.

In 1825 Philander Hooper married my daughter, Martha Patterson, and they had four sons. One son, Robert Hooper, managed the general store which was located where the Davies house was—between the River Road and the Highway. The store was later bought by Frank Twining and operated by him for many years. Another son, Frank Hooper, built the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Knapp on the River Road.

About one hundred years ago a shoemaker had a cobbler's shop on the south side of the River Road and where the Arrow Electrical store is now there later burned. In the early days most activity centered around the eastern end of the village and the important road was the River Road, not the George F. Highway.

Our population began to move up Hooper Road rather early. Some of the Hoopers and a family by the name of Dunning had big farms in that area. In 1848 the Erie Railroad was built and they had a depot on Hooper Road at the crossing. On May 31, 1849, the first railroad car passed over the road and there was a grand, ceremonious opening on June 1, 1849. By the depot was a big creamery. In fact Hooper became the center of a large farming trade. The Erie Depot on Hooper Road became a shipping point for dairy products, poultry, and meat.

One interesting place on Hooper Road was Carmel Grove which was up by what is now Country Club Road. Carmel Grove was where the religious camp meetings were held. On Sundays the trains stopped at Hooper's Crossing every half hour and the trolleys made frequent trips bringing people from Binghamton to Carmel Grove. George Learn used to drive a horse drawn stage up Hooper Road to Carmel Grove and he charged the passengers five cents a ride.

The land for Carmel Grove was given by the Brink family. Captain William Brink (not a relative of the Homer Brink family) was one of the early settlers and he came to town about 1840. Captain Brink was a real, hardy, old fellow. He suffered many hardships which were supposed to have given him a wonderful durability of constitution. He proved it by living to be eighty-two years old. One story about Captain Brink said that when he was seventy-two years old, he held off a bear with his hands and teeth until a friend came and knocked the animal out with a hatchet.