

THE SHERBURNE INN: ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE  
AND THE FEASIBILITY OF ITS REHABILITATION

A Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a typical problem found in small communities throughout the United States: how can an abandoned, historically significant building be preserved and reused in an economically responsible manner. It focuses on the Sherburne Inn, a vacant representative of the Georgian-Revival style built in 1917, which stands at the center of the village of Sherburne, a middle-to-low-income community of approximately 1,400 people in central New York.

Through the use of traditional methods of historical research, this thesis proves the historic significance of the Sherburne Inn as it relates to its site and the broader history of the village. The village developed as a way station for travelers journeying on the turnpike, canal, and railroad networks that traversed New York State during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth centuries. The influx of transients these transportation systems brought resulted in the development of a lucrative hotel industry in the village. One of the first inns to be constructed was on the present-day site of the Sherburne Inn in 1803, and since that time, a temporary lodging establishment has continuously occupied the site. The Sherburne Inn represents both the village and the site's history.

The community profile and market study compiled from census data, community reports, and direct observation for this thesis indicates that the most appropriate reuse for the Sherburne Inn is as a restaurant and conventional rental housing. It shows that, although the building is located in an economically depressed area where job opportunities and the potential for social mobility are limited, access to recreational and community activities, educational opportunities, and healthcare make the village a desirable place to live. Thus, rental housing in the inn is appropriate. A restaurant is appropriate given the spending characteristics of area residents.

Finally, this thesis shows that it is economically feasible to rehabilitate the Sherburne Inn for the proposed uses. The comparison of the cost of construction, the

expected rental income, and the annual expenses indicates that the developer of this project can expect a return on their investment. Critical to the success of the project are the state and federal historic tax credits, which amount to a significant percentage of the developer's equity investment.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY SKETCH

Bryan David McCracken was born in Hamilton, New York in 1985 and attended Sherburne-Earlville Central School, graduating in 2004. He graduated from Alfred University with degree in History in 2008. He enrolled in the Historic Preservation Planning Program at Cornell University in 2008.

to Whitney,  
for all your love and support

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The Town of Sherburne Historian, Rose Wellman, was generous in offering her time and resources to my research on the history of the Sherburne Inn and the buildings that previously occupied its site. The Mayor of Sherburne, William Acee, provided an abundance of information on village demographics, community planning, and initiatives to redevelop of the Sherburne Inn. Furthermore, their enthusiasm for the project was encouraging.

Finally, I extend my gratitude to the community members that I informally consulted for this project; their suggestions, critiques, and encouragements were invaluable.

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## PREFACE

While my official work for this thesis began nearly two years ago, my interest in the Sherburne Inn peeked almost two decades earlier. One of my earliest memories of the building is from elementary school: I rode past it everyday on the school bus and from my elevated position—I would stand on the seats sometimes to make myself even taller—I could see the details of the building, the crisp white columns against the dark-red bricks, large windows, and expansive porticos. The building captivated my imagination, and I started drawing pictures of houses inspired by its ornamentation.

One of my most vivid memories of the inn is not of its ornament but of its deterioration. I remember staring at the moss growing on the roof of the north façade's late-20<sup>th</sup>-century porch addition and thinking how “awesome” it was that the building was alive. I didn't realize that I was admiring an early sign of decay. This was in the early-1990s; the restaurant was still open.

I dined there throughout my childhood without realizing that the business was failing and that the minor signs of deferred maintenance were only masking the building's overall decline. The restaurant closed my junior year of high school, and I left the area to attend college the following year. It was during breaks that I began to think about my childhood muse once again. Every time I returned home new signs of the building's rapid deterioration were apparent: another broken window blocked by a haphazardly applied piece of plywood, pigeon excrements piles beneath the porticos, and fragmented pieces of a delaminated wood column leaning on the north façade. Its condition saddened me. I began imagining what I would do with it if I owed it; if I had the financial resources to restore it; if I had the ability to change its future, I would.

When I started the thesis process, it seemed that my primary objective was to preserve the Sherburne Inn for the betterment of the community, restoring a village icon and a source of pride. After countless hours of research, writing, and editing, casual conversations with village residents, rifling through community surveys in which people

described their memories of the building, and sleepless nights filled with thoughts of the inn, I realized that I subconsciously selected the topic in an attempt to save a piece of my childhood.

## INTRODUCTION

Almost every urban center in the United States is dotted with vacant buildings with historical significance. Once serving important roles as city halls, schools, office buildings, fire halls, hotels or private residences, many of these buildings became functionally inadequate or obsolete as the communities evolved and changed, resulting in their abandonment. Deterioration ensued and the buildings were transformed, seemingly over night, into a visual and economic blight on the community.

This blight impacts the surroundings in varying ways depending on the physical, social and economic position of the empty buildings. In small cities, towns, and villages, the negative effects are especially noticeable. The relatively small number of total structures is unable to mask the derelict structure. Every building is known and vacancies are apparent. Signs of deterioration—peeling paint, broken or boarded-over windows, failing mortar joints, biological growth, etc—act as neon signs alerting the community to the gravity of the situation. For small communities, the abandonment of even a single building can have devastating economic, aesthetic, and social consequences.

Demolishing the abandoned building is often viewed as the only appropriate recourse, however, this position has several intrinsic problems. First, demolition represents a considerable expense that is far greater than the cost of stabilization and protection, a process known as “mothballing.” This expense consists not only of the cost of the physical removal of the structure but also the “opportunity cost” of demolition and redevelopment cost, i.e. the installation of a parking lot. Second, the community loses a tangible connection to its past. Historic buildings serve as physical representations of a community’s achievements and as links between a community’s current population and its antecedents. Third, the community loses an economic and social asset, as preservation projects tend to stimulate the local economy by creating jobs, increasing

spending at local establishments, and spawning redevelopment of other community assets. Furthermore, it promotes social development by giving the community a rallying point that can boost local morale, especially in economically depressed areas.

The purpose of this thesis is to make a social and economic case for retaining and reusing a vacant historic building in a small town. The argument will be made through the case study of the Sherburne Inn, a three-story, brick-clad, Georgian-Revival building constructed in the village of Sherburne, New York in 1917. This building is a literal and figurative center of the community, as it is located in the center of village and has played a central role in community activities since its construction. Its present vacant, vandalized, and deteriorated condition represents a foregone economic opportunity.

The village of Sherburne is a community of 1,450 people located equidistant between three major urban centers, Binghamton, Syracuse, and Utica, in the township of Sherburne on the northern border of Chenango County. The center of the village and downtown district is the intersection of NYS Routes 12 and 80, two major rural routes, with the first forming North and South Main Street and the second forming East and West State Streets. The downtown district is made up of approximately twenty commercial buildings of varying ages, the earliest from 1840s and the newest from the 1970s, which form a one-city-block sized commercial cluster. Residential development in terms of secondary streets and single-family dwellings is concentrated on the east side of Main Street. The village is bounded on its west side by railroad tracks and the Chenango River.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it benefited from its connection to New York State's major transportation networks. These networks, which included turnpikes, canals, and railways, allowed for the importation of raw materials and the exportation of finished goods. In addition to the village's role as an exchange point for material goods, it became a popular stop for individuals utilizing the various transportation systems. People flowed into the village. Many required temporary lodging; hence a lucrative

hostelry industry emerged during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other travelers found the town appealing enough they stayed permanently, changing the physical and social character of the community in the process. The history of the turnpike, canal and railroad systems in the village and their relation to the physical and social development of the community and the hostelry industry is explored in chapter one.

A notable example of the success of the local hotel industry, the Sherburne Inn was built in 1917 to replace another hotel razed by fire. It was well patronized for the first three quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Newspaper articles from this period regularly reported celebrity guests, elaborate events, and fine cuisine and service. Hotel aficionados heralded the Inn as the best hostelry on the DL&W railroad line. However, its popularity waned during the last quarter of the century. Guests dined at the Inn's restaurant less frequently and the vacancy sign rarely left the front window. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Inn was closed and the building was abandoned. As the history of the Sherburne Inn site—the southwest quadrant of the Village downtown—begins shortly after the settlement of the area by white homesteaders, it is divided into two sections: the history of the district prior to the construction of the Sherburne Inn, which addresses the history of the first three hotels established on the site, and the history of the present Sherburne Inn. These sections comprise chapters two and three.

The primary goal for this study was to retain an architecturally and culturally significant landmark for the small community of Sherburne. When viewed in isolation, the Sherburne Inn appears to lack any distinguishing architectural characteristics that warrant its preservation. When viewed in context, adjacent to the other brick buildings that define the village's downtown district, it becomes an integral part of the urban fabric. Downtown is comprised of four masonry buildings that anchor the four corners of the intersection. Several small-scale commercial buildings flank these imposing structures. The four anchors are the Inn, a brick Second-Empire bank building, a brick Greek-Revival commercial building, and a brick Gothic-Revival Congregationalist Church.

In addition to its function as a downtown anchor, the Sherburne Inn serves as a milestone for the progressive development of the Village's architectural aesthetic. Examples of discrete stylistic periods ranging from Federal period of the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> centuries to the Colonial Revivalist movement of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century punctuate the village landscape. This range, which serves as an indicator of the prolonged development of the Village, is superbly illustrated by the four downtown anchor building, with the Greek-Revival commercial building being the alpha and the Sherburne Inn being the omega. Furthermore, the Inn is representative of the architectural legacy of the Pratt family, a local family dedicated to improving the infrastructure and architecture of the village in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The architectural and historical significance of the Sherburne Inn is examined in chapter four.

The second objective for this study is to develop an economically profitable reuse plan that will attract the investment of commercial developers. Without some promise of a return on their investment, real estate developers are unwilling to embark on rehabilitation projects, especially in small, economically depressed towns. Economic return for this project is evaluated in a pro forma, which is used to forecasts the economic return on invested capital by comparing the total construction cost, hard and soft, to the expected income from the completed project. Expected gross income is calculated using the economic characteristics of the community, which set the rental rate for the units and some of the annual operational expenses like taxes and utilities, and the negotiated terms of the project financing. The pro forma analysis in this study shows a positive rate of return for the rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn, a project that would include the restoration of the building's exterior and the establishment of a restaurant on the first floor and apartments on the second and thirds stories at a cost of approximately 1.7 million dollars. However, the estimated return may not be sufficient enough to entice investment by a typical investor. This pro forma is developed in chapter six.

A third objective of this effort is to raise awareness of preservation-related issues in the community. In 1982, much of the Village of Sherburne's downtown and portions of its residential neighborhoods were designated as a historic district and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. As the Sherburne Inn is a contributing building in this district, it is eligible for a 20% Federal tax credit and a 20% New York State tax credit for the cost of a certified rehabilitation project. The financial impact of the historic rehabilitation tax credits is analyzed in chapter six. Other contributing buildings located in the district are eligible for the same or similar tax credits. Few village residents and property owners are fully aware of the historic status of their properties, however, and fail to utilize this tax advantage when renovating or restoring their buildings.

Creating a rehabilitation plan that is responsive to the needs and character of the community is a fourth goal of this study. The success of any project is generally determined by how well it fits within the context of its surroundings. Therefore, it is important to explore the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the community in which the project is located in order to gain a broad understanding of the contextual factors affecting it. The village of Sherburne is primarily a residential community comprised of low- to moderate-income households and individuals. There are only a few businesses operating in its downtown and peripheral industrial nodes and most residents travel approximately one-half hour to their places of employment. Through personal observations and the examination of census data, and community and county reports, a community-profile that outlines population information, amenities, and recreational assets will be developed in chapter five. An appropriate reuse plan for the Sherburne Inn will be generated from this profile.

A fifth objective of this project is promoting preservation as a way in which the Village of Sherburne can further its economic and social goals. In the *Village of Sherburne Downtown Strategic Plan* of 2005, improving the appearance and condition of the downtown streetscape and stabilizing the economy are identified as important

benchmarks. Through the proper implementation of preservation programs—for example, by joining the Main Street Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation—these benchmarks could be achieved. Throughout the country, in small towns such as the Village of Sherburne, preservation programs have successfully revitalized struggling communities, reestablishing a sense of community pride and economic stability and vitality, in many cases where other non-preservation related programs have failed.

While most of the aforementioned objectives have alluded to this project's final goal, it is important to identify it clearly: the sixth objective of this project is to catalyze the revitalization of the Village of Sherburne. Since the mid-1970s, the community has been in a steady state of decline. This decline is epitomized by the condition of the Sherburne Inn, viewed by many community leaders and village residents as a symbol of the community. While there is no guarantee that the rehabilitation of the Inn will spawn the economic recovery of the village, it is the goal of the author to galvanize reinvestment in the community through the examination of one building's latent potential.

Two initial questions guided research for this thesis: is the Sherburne Inn architecturally/historically significant, and is its rehabilitation economically feasible. Both of these questions had one clear goal, developing an argument for the preservation of the Sherburne Inn. Focusing on historical significance first, the history of the Inn was examined, and a social argument for its preservation was developed. This research also informed the opportunities and constraints history presented for any rehabilitation project. Research began with the study of the present Sherburne Inn building. Using traditional methods of historical research, information was gathered from two local repositories: the Sherburne Historical Society, and the Sherburne Public Library, both located in Village of Sherburne. At the Sherburne Historical Society, Rose Wellman, Sherburne Town Historian, provided primary source materials related to the history of the Inn, including newspaper clippings covering nearly a century, photographs from its

construction, subsequent renovations, and social events, and Inn-related memorabilia like menus, postcards, and cocktail napkins. In addition, Wellman provided contemporary newspaper articles that summarized the Inn's history. Cathleen Erath at the Sherburne Public Library provided period photographs and postcards of the building. Obituaries, articles, and advertisements pulled from [Fultonhistory.com](http://Fultonhistory.com), an online repository of historic Central New York newspapers, provided information on obscure individuals that played integral roles in the history of the Sherburne Inn. Kroch Library, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections at Cornell University contained information on Verne Swan, architect of the Inn.

From these findings, research expanded into the history of the inn site. It appeared that several inns had been constructed and destroyed there prior to the construction of the present building, suggesting a significant relationship between the site and the hotel industry. Again, established practices of historical research were used to study this history. The aforementioned repositories in Sherburne provided an abundance of primary and secondary source information. Wellman again provided newspaper clippings, photographs, memorabilia, and journals documenting the site's development from the files at the Sherburne Historical Society. She also contributed contemporary newspaper articles that summarized the site's history. Period photographs and postcards depicting the buildings that formerly occupied the site were provided by the Sherburne Public Library. Books gathered at Olin Library at Cornell University chronicled the early history of the site.

In order to develop a broader context for the history of the site, the history of the village was considered using the hotel industry as a research armature. Primary and secondary sources from local repositories were again used to study some of the village's history. Research expanded outside these sources, however, with most of the information for this section coming from the local history collection in Cornell University's libraries, and the Digital Sanborn maps 1867-1970 and David Rumsey Map Collection databases,

both electronic repositories of historic maps. The library contained secondary-source texts on the transportation systems and industries that shaped the history of the village. The map collections provided illustrations of its physical organization and development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Information on the history of Sherburne in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was found at the Chenango County Historical Society. In general, secondary sources were used to establish the chronology and identify the key events in the village's history, and primary sources were used to expand upon the narrative of these events and develop their relationship to the histories of the village and Sherburne Inn site.

To answer the second question, the social and economic characteristics of the community were examined to determine the most appropriate direction for a reuse plan. With a specific project in mind, the economic constraints affecting it could be identified and examined. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to develop a community profile and assess the feasibility of the building's rehabilitation in this section. Wayne Patafio, Executive Director of CHIP (Chenango Housing Improvement Program), a local low-income housing non-profit, and the Chenango County Planning and Development provided County studies and reports that examined the current socio-economic characteristics of the county. Community reports that described the current housing characteristics for the county were also found at CHIP. William Acee, Mayor of Sherburne, and the Village of Sherburne supplied information specific to the village, including municipal reports and a downtown revitalization plan. Acee also provided an architectural study of the Inn prepared by Crawford and Stearns, Architects and Preservation Planners, two cost estimates prepared Crawford and Stearns and SMR Associates, and a "Restore New York Communities Grant" application prepared by the village in 2009.

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORY OF SHERBURNE

According to the writings of Sherburne's first historians, these words reverberated in the Chenango Valley during the Villages settlement: "To God our voices raise, And loudly chant the joyful strain; That rock of strength oh let us praise! Whence free salvation we obtain. Let all who now [sic] his goodness feel. Come near and worship at this throne. Before the Lord, their Maker, kneel, and bow in adoration down."<sup>1</sup> Known as "The Hymn of Sherburne," the recitation of this song by the settlement's first inhabitants inspired the New York Legislature in 1795 to use the title as the source for the township's name.

Shortly after its settlement in 1791, Sherburne was connected to eastern urban centers by the developing turnpike system. These roads brought an influx of people to the area who needed temporary accommodations; the first wood-framed building in the village of Sherburne was an inn constructed on the site of the present day Sanford Park around 1801. Thus, the significance of the hotel industry to the community was established early in its history. In subsequent decades, Sherburne became a stop on both the Chenango Canal and the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, leading to the development of several temporary-lodging facilities. The Sherburne Inn, one extant example of this industry within the confines of the village, represents a tangible link to this significant aspect of the community's past.

This chapter will focus on creating a historical context for the Village of Sherburne and the Sherburne Inn using relevant primary and secondary sources. Sherburne's history prior to 1890 is well represented in several sources. With the

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Williams and Helen Cardamone, *Cherry Valley Country* (Utica, NY: Earl Widtman and the Brodock Press, Inc., 1978), 57. The story of the village's naming was first recorded in Joel Hatch's *Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Statistics of Early Settlers and the 'Olden Time' in the Town of Sherburne, Chenango County, N.Y.* in 1863.

exception of one cursory book of “reminisces” by a past village historian published for the village’s bicentennial in 1996, the secondary sources related to the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries are nonexistent for the village. Since the focus of this project was to develop a reuse plan for the Sherburne Inn and not to write the definitive 20<sup>th</sup>-century history for the Village of Sherburne, few primary sources were reviewed when assembling this portion of the paper. However, future research into this topic is highly recommended.

### **Pre-history, Settlement, and Early History**

Any discussion of the history of the area would be remiss without beginning with the Native Americans, as white settlement and development was dependant on them relinquishing their lands. As was the case for most communities throughout Central New York, the Oneida Nation, a member of the Iroquois Nation, inhabited the Chenango Valley and the lands that would become the Village of Sherburne first. Evidence of their occupation was frequently unearthed as settlers cultivated the land throughout the Chenango Valley; caches for the storage of maize, or corn, flint arrowheads, stone chisels, hatchets, and pestles, and the remains of a gravel embankment were among the first such discoveries.<sup>2</sup>

The Oneida relinquished their rights to the lands that would become the Village of Sherburne on September 22, 1788, with the execution of the Governors Purchase, alternately know as the Clinton Purchase, by Governor George Clinton and the Oneida Nation at Fort Schuyler. This gave a significant portion of Oneida lands west of the Unadilla River to the State of New York. Surveyor-General Simeon De Witt began surveying the following year<sup>3</sup> and by 1791, the lands were subdivided into twenty

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<sup>2</sup> James H. Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties, New York, with Illustrated and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers, 1784-1880* (Syracuse, NY: Truair, Smith & Bruce, 1880), 450.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, *Cherry Valley Country*, 57.

townships and marketed for sale.<sup>4</sup> In subsequent decades, the northern townships of Nelson, Eaton, Madison, Hamilton, Lebanon, Georgetown, and the northern and southern portions of Brookfield formed Madison County. One northern township, Sangerfield, became a small portion of Oneida County. The southern townships of Otselic, Smyrna, Sherburne, the northern and southern portions of Norwich, Plymouth, Pharsalia, McDonough, Preston, New Berlin and Columbus formed Chenango County.

The first white settlers to migrate to the village of Sherburne came in search of purchasable land in 1791, but their pursuit of land began several years earlier. In 1785, twenty families from Kent, Connecticut, immigrated to Duanesburgh, then in Albany County, to settle on lands owned by the Hon. James Duane.<sup>5</sup> Duane, an influential delegate at both Continental Congresses, the first federal District Judge of the New York State, and a mayor of New York City, owned nearly 50,000 acres of land in that area. Administering the lands like a feudal lord, Duane divided his holdings into 100-acre parcels known as “great lots” and leased them to farmers for short periods of time at a rate of \$15 per annum.<sup>6</sup> Chafed by this semi-feudalistic arrangement, the company of Connecticut settlers resolved to move en masse to the recently opened territories of the Clinton Purchase.<sup>7</sup>

In June 1791 an expedition of five representatives from this party, including the author of the first history of the Village of Sherburne, Joel Hatch, ventured to the Chenango Valley in search of arable land available for purchase. They identified approximately 6,000 acres in the southwest quadrant of the ninth township as the ideal

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<sup>4</sup> John Gomph, *“Sherburne Illustrated”: A History of the Village of Sherburne, New York. Its Scenery, Development and Business Enterprises* (Utica, NY: Thomas J. Griffin, 1896), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, 450.

<sup>6</sup> George Rogers Howell, *History of the County of Schenectady, NY, From 1662 to 1886, with Portraits, Biographies, and Illustrations.*, ed. by John H. Munsell (New York: W. W. Munsell and Company, Publishers, 1886), 161.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, 450.

location for a settlement and sent a delegate, Nathaniel Gray, to New York City to procure the land. However, William S. Smith, a land speculator, purchased the 9th township prior to Gray's arrival in New York City, so Gray had to negotiate the sale of the desired lands with Smith rather than purchasing it at auction as originally planned. The parties agreed on a sale price of \$1.25 per acre. Cornelius Clark, another one of the five representatives, resurveyed the land in the summer and fall of 1792, dividing the land into twenty parcels, each with equal areas of high and low land. Between 1793 and 1794, the twenty families settled on their allotted parcels.<sup>8</sup>

The settlement developed steadily. Within the first year, the township erected several log cabins, established a sawmill, and built a ten-mile road to connect the newly established settlement with the Unadilla River. This road would later become a portion of the Cherry Valley Turnpike, an important transportation corridor that connected the burgeoning community to several eastern settlements. (Its history is considered in greater detail in subsequent pages.) The community organized church meetings, the first being held at the newly constructed sawmill, and established free schools, with the first classes being held in local residences. In 1794, the area's first gristmill was constructed. The following year the New York State legislature officially recognized the township. During the first seven years of inhabitation, the town's population experienced "phenomenal growth,"<sup>9</sup> from a generous estimate of 150<sup>10</sup> people in 1793 to 1,282 in 1800.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, 450.

<sup>9</sup> Gomph, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, 450-52. This estimate was derived from the list of first inhabitants documented in the *History of Chenango and Madison Counties, New York*. As this description only includes the exact number of five of the original families and merely lists the heads of households for the remaining fifteen, the author of this thesis found the average size of the five families and used it to extrapolate the size of the other families, approximating the number of original settlers.

<sup>11</sup> Gomph, 8.

The Village of Sherburne, the urban center of the township by the same name, was incorporated in 1830, but the documents pertaining to the incorporation were lost in a fire in 1863.<sup>12</sup>

### **19th Century Boom: Turnpikes, Canals, and Railroads**

Transportation systems played an integral role in the development of the Village of Sherburne. The Cherry Valley Turnpike was the Town of Sherburne's first direct link to established urban centers in the eastern portions of New York State. Chartered by the New York State legislature in 1799, the First Great Western Turnpike Company made improvements to the existing fifty-two mile road from Albany to Cherry Valley, then the largest commercial center west of the Hudson River. In return for constructing and maintaining these rural roads, the company received the right to charge tolls. In 1801 the Second Great Western Company received a charter to turnpike the road from Cherry Valley to the burgeoning settlement at Cooperstown and thence to Sherburne, where it would terminate at its intersection with the Chenango River.<sup>13</sup> Incorporating Sherburne's road to the Unadilla River, this new east-west extension of the turnpike navigated the valleys between the two settlements. Today, this sinuous road forms a portion of NYS Route 80 and the entirety of East and West State Streets in the Village of Sherburne.

A final branch of the Cherry Valley Turnpike, which would link Cherry Valley and connect to Cazenovia and Manlius, was proposed by 1803. John Lincklaen, the Holland Land Company agent in Cazenovia, organized the Third Great Western Turnpike Company and secured a charter from the New York State legislature to construct the road. Work began in 1805, and by 1811 the sixty-nine miles of road connecting Cherry Valley to Manlius via Cazenovia was complete. This new section of road branched from the route of the Second Western Turnpike Company to Sherburne at Cherry Valley,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, *Cherry Valley Country*, 2-3.

taking a more northern route that was parallel to the existing road. This new road connected to the Genesee Road, a major east-west thoroughfare of the period that originated in Utica and was the principle route of pioneers immigrating west, in Manlius.<sup>14</sup> The section of turnpike from Albany to Manlius, which encompassed the projects of the First and Third Great Western Turnpike Companies, was known as the “Cherry Valley Turnpike,” and the section from Cherry Valley to Sherburne was known as the “Southern Branch.”<sup>15</sup> The branches of the Cherry Valley Turnpike, labeled “Great Western TPR,” are illustrated in figure 1.

The construction of the Second Great Western Turnpike, and the traffic it brought, had a significant impact on the developing Town of Sherburne. The selection of the road’s terminus and route determined the physical site of the present Village of Sherburne. As the settlement of Sherburne developed, two population clusters located in close proximity to each other vied for the role as the township’s center: Sherburne Quarter, located north of the present village, and Sherburne West Hill, located on the western side of the Chenango River.<sup>16</sup> When the turnpike was completed in 1802, its route ran south of the Quarter, terminating on the east bank of the Chenango River and intersecting an established north/south road that negotiated the Chenango Valley. This intersection became the center of the Village of Sherburne and is represented in Figure 1. An inn, located on the southeast corner of the intersection, was the first structure to be built on the site of the future township center in ca. 1802, and at least one structure from the Sherburne Quarter settlement was moved to this location, as well.<sup>17</sup> As the Chenango River was not bridged during the construction of the turnpike, Sherburne West Hill was

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Benedict, *My Recollections of Sherburne in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Sherburne, NY: Chenango County Historical Society with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts administered by the Chenango County Council of the Arts, Inc. Decentralization Program, 1996), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Gomph, 14.

not included in the route.<sup>18</sup> The center of the present Village of Sherburne is still concentrated around this intersection, with the Sherburne Inn occupying one of its quadrants. The influence of these two early settlements is memorialized in the names of two local cemeteries: the Quarter and West Hill Cemeteries.<sup>19</sup>

Second, the completion of the road had the desired result of linking area farms to regional markets, and allowing for a regular stage coach service. Prior to its construction, farmers in the western territories of New York State had limited means of transporting surplus goods to eastern markets. With the completion of the turnpike road, farmers driving wagons laden with farm goods could be at market within a few days. As Sherburne was the entrance to this portion of the turnpike system, a great deal of traffic flowed through the village en route to market. In addition, a regular stagecoach service carried passengers to the village, which, in combination with the farm traffic, bolstered the local economy, urban development, and population growth.<sup>20</sup> For the Town of Sherburne, the decade following the completion of the turnpike showed a population increase of one-hundred percent, from 1,282 in 1800 to 2,520 in 1810.<sup>21</sup>

The increased traffic led to hotels, taverns and inns punctuating the landscape. In fact, the first building to be constructed on the site of the future village center was an inn, built by Asa Foote on the southeast corner of the intersection near the site of the present-day Sanford Park in ca. 1802.<sup>22</sup> In following year, Samuel Stebbins established an inn on the southwest corner of the intersection of the north-south road, later Main Street, and the

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<sup>18</sup> Williams, *Cherry Valley Country*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> William McCalpin, *A Map of the State of New York. Compiled from the Latest Authorities; Including the Turnpike Roads Now Granted as also the Principal Common Roads Connected therewith. Intended as well for the Student in Geography as a Directory to the Traveller* (Oxford, NY, 1808).

<sup>20</sup> Williams, *Cherry Valley Turnpike*, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Gomph, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Julian D. Button, *Sherburne Pictorial Album* (Sherburne, NY: Bigger's Commercial Printing, 1993), 27.

Cherry Valley Turnpike, later State Street.<sup>23</sup> This wood frame building, known later as the Medbury House, was the first of four inns constructed on the site and a predecessor of the Sherburne Inn. The site's history is discussed in greater detail in chapters two and three. In short, the Medbury House was one of the "public house[s] at every mile or two on the road, where the traveler would see teams resting under the sheds and teamsters smoking at every door."<sup>24</sup>

The second major transportation system to impact the Village of Sherburne was the Chenango Canal, which connected the village to the Erie Canal in Utica and the Susquehanna River in Binghamton. Following the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, New York State authorized the construction of nine lateral canals, each stemming from the Erie, to expand the scope of the transportation network.<sup>25</sup> While contemplated in the 1820s, legislative authorization for these was not handed down until 1834. Excavation and laying of the masonry locks for the Chenango Canal begin in 1833, however, and by 1837, the ninety-seven miles of canal and one hundred and sixteen locks were completed, at a cost of \$1,737,703. Figure 2 shows the approximate path of the canal, the villages through which it flowed, and its relationship to the Chenango River. The canal brought immediate financial and logistical benefits by greatly facilitating the transportation of goods to and from Sherburne. Hatch's early history states:

"The market was at Albany. Such was the condition of the roads in the primitive days of the settlement, that it usually required from nine to thirteen days to perform the journey, with loaded teams. For every cwt. [hundredweight], the cost of transportation would be from seventy-five cents to one dollar fifty cents, besides freight from New York city [sic] to Albany. Now, even from New York, the expense is only from twenty-

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<sup>23</sup> Smith, 452.

<sup>24</sup> J. D. Ledyard, President of the Third Great Western Turnpike Company, *Cazenovia Republican*, quoted in Williams, *Cherry Valley Country*, 23.

<sup>25</sup> Emily Williams and Helen Cardamone, *Canal Country: Utica to Binghamton* ([s.l.], Willams, 1982), 2-3.

five to fifty cents, leaving a savings to the people, of from fifty cents to one dollar on every cwt. [hundredweight] exported or imported.”<sup>26</sup>

As previously noted, any surplus goods from the region had been transported by turnpike to eastern markets, which was an expensive and time consuming process. Thus, most surplus produce was processed locally in numerous breweries, distilleries, and dairies. The canal made the eastern markets readily accessible and the shipment of goods outside of the region inexpensive, time effective and profitable. The success of the canal was evidenced by one report of a local agricultural society; the Chenango Agricultural Society reported that 1,035,256 pounds of cheese were shipped from Norwich docks in 1849. In general, canal freighters carried hay, corn, oats, potatoes, hops, apples, eggs, pianos, hop poles, empty firkins, wagons, leather, tallow, limestone, iron ore, pig iron, whiskey, kettles, furniture, crockery, salt, plaster, steam engines, coal, and many other agricultural and industrial goods.<sup>27</sup>

Although the canal expedited the transportation of goods and materials to market, the journey still took several days. This kept the inns and hotels in the village economically viable. The “Hopson House,” was built by L. R. Hopson between 1834 and 1836 in response to the construction of the canal. “It was a stopping place for the east and west lines of stages” on the Cherry Valley Turnpike, as this east/west mode of transportation remained in operation during this period. However, it was the canal that provided the majority of its patrons. The Hopson House was “a popular putting up house for the numerous teamsters from all points of the compass.”<sup>28</sup> In addition, the Medbury House and at least two other hotels operated in the village during this period as well.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Joel Hatch, *Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Statistics of the Early Settlers and the ‘Olden Time’ in the Town of Sherburne, Chenango County, NY* (Utica, NY: Curtiss & White, Printers, 1862), 60-61.

<sup>27</sup> Williams, *Canal Country*, 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Button, 198.

<sup>29</sup> Gomph, 31

Sherburne experienced considerable expansion of its industrial sector following the completion of the canal. With raw materials such as coal, cotton fiber, and wool readily available via the Susquehanna River, cotton textile mills, foundries, and potteries developed in the Village, many of them becoming regionally and nationally renowned. Hart & Sons Pottery, established in 1841, relied on the canal to import the clay used to manufacture stoneware from Amboy, NY, and export finished goods to eastern and western markets. Other businesses that profited from the canal include a furniture and undertaking business established in 1842, a harness shop established in 1858, the Blanchard and Kenyon Sash, Door and Blind Company, and the Birch Foundry.<sup>30</sup>

Population growth and ethnic diversification were additional benefits of the construction and operation of the Chenango Canal. Between 1830 and 1835, the Town's population increased from 2,520 to 3,108.<sup>31</sup> Some of this growth was attributed to some of the "large foreign element"<sup>32</sup> that immigrated to the region to build the canal staying and settling.<sup>33</sup> The 1850 United States Census reported one Irish, twenty-seven English, and fourteen Germans residing in the Town.<sup>34</sup> Skilled masons hired to construct the canal's fine stone locks were among the new settlers. Evidence of their presence in the village can be seen on the rear walls of the Empire Block and Quinn's Market on East State Street in the village, where it appears that walls destroyed in an 1840 fire were repaired with finely dressed stone.<sup>35</sup>

The practicability and profitability of the Chenango Canal declined during the mid-19th century. After the enlargement of the Erie Canal in the 1870s, larger ships and

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<sup>30</sup> Smith, 457.

<sup>31</sup> Gomph, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Hatch, 62.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Lucy A. Breyer, "Statement of Significance, Continuation Sheet," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, Sherburne Historic District, Chenango County* (Albany, NY: Division for Historic Preservation, 1982), 3.

heavier loads navigated New York State's canal system. This included the Chenango Canal, which, unlike the Erie, was not re-sized to accommodate the increased size and weight of the newer vessels. This led to the deterioration of the locks and the erosion of the canal walls, which resulted in increased maintenance costs and decreased use. Furthermore, the 1870 introduction of a railroad line linking Binghamton and Utica rendered the canal a time-intensive redundancy; freight could now move from the Susquehanna to the Erie in three hours rather than three days, and at no greater cost. The Chenango Canal officially closed after the 1877 season<sup>36</sup> and through the stagnation of the water, became a figurative and "literal stench in the nostrils of those it once benefited."<sup>37</sup>

Although the railroad had a devastating impact on the Chenango Canal, its impact on the village was much more positive. Formed in 1866, the Utica, Chenango and Susquehanna Valley Railroad Company began the construction of a railway that would connect the major railroad hubs of Utica and Binghamton following a path parallel to the Chenango Canal and passing through the Village of Sherburne.<sup>38</sup> It was completed in 1867, which caused "more rejoicing, if the could be possible, than the advent of the canal."<sup>39</sup> This company was absorbed by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad in 1870, and its route became known as the Utica Branch of the DL&W Railroad.<sup>40</sup> Sherburne's position on this railroad line ensured its prosperity in the late-19th century, as it directly connected the community to the major economic and industrial centers of the period, primarily the cities of Utica, Binghamton, Syracuse, Buffalo, and New York.<sup>41</sup> Economic growth ensued during this period; property values increased, old

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<sup>36</sup> Williams, *Canal Country*, 2-3

<sup>37</sup> Smith, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>39</sup> Gomph, 20.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 19 and Smith, 94.

industries prospered, and successful new industries developed. By the time of Sherburne's centennial celebration in 1896, the village had five churches, eight hotels, an opera house, sash & blind and carriage factories, cotton, planing, grist, and saw mills, a newspaper, (the *Sherburne News* is still in operation today), several blacksmiths and factories, a plethora of harness and wagon shops, numerous mercantile businesses, warehouses for the storage of hops, and a pottery.<sup>42</sup> Village success during this period is further illustrated by the organization of the Sherburne National Bank. Started as the Joshua Pratt & Co.'s Bank by Joshua Pratt in 1862, this State Bank was organized in anticipation of the flow of capital into the area for the construction of the railroad. Within three year it was absorbed by the national banking system.<sup>43</sup>

The H. Ross & Co.'s Cotton Mill exemplified the economic and physical growth that transpired during this period. Organized as a stock company in 1862, during the transitional period between the decline of canal activity and the acceleration of railroad activity, it profited from the routing of the DL&W through Sherburne.<sup>44</sup> The cotton mill was the largest manufacturing establishment in Chenango County when it opened in 1863 and the county's largest employer: approximately a hundred laborers of which seventy-five percent were women.<sup>45</sup> The mill's development left a lasting impact on the physical character of the village. The mill building punctuates the northern end of North Main Street and the mill houses, constructed along a one-way street on the east side of the mill building, comprise a significant proportion of the houses at the north end of the village.

The development of a tourist economy is another important change associated with the introduction of the railroad. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sherburne made the

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<sup>42</sup> Gomph, 40-53 and 75-110.

<sup>43</sup> Gomph, 53.

<sup>44</sup> Today, the three-story, brick mill building is one of the large vacant buildings in Sherburne. Coincidentally, Jim Webb, owner of the Sherburne Inn, is the present titleholder of the cotton mill building as well.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, 457.

transition from simply a necessary rest stop to a tourist destination. People rented rooms in the village's hotels in order to "spend the summer amid the grandeur of [the] scenery and the relaxed atmosphere of [the] quiet little village."<sup>46</sup> Individuals were also attracted by the Spring House, built in 1883. This resort hotel was located approximately two miles east of the Village and boasted the "celebrated White Sulfur Springs" as "one of [its] most attractive features,"<sup>47</sup> capitalizing on this period's belief in the therapeutic qualities of sulfur water. According to one report, some guests came from as far away as New York and Brooklyn. In the village, the influence of these more metropolitan tourists was demonstrated in the construction of the Sherburne Opera House in 1892. Designed by a Utica based architect, M.H. Hubbard, this three-and-one-half-story, Queen-Ann Style building housed three store fronts on the ground floor, a five hundred seat auditorium on the second floor and a lodge and banquet hall on the third floor. One indicator of its metropolitan influence was the inaugural performance by the New York Philharmonic on February 20, 1892.<sup>48</sup>

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, eight hotels were reportedly operating in the Village of Sherburne, most were located on Water Street adjacent to the railroad station.<sup>49</sup>

### **20th Century Bust: Industrial and Agricultural Decline**

The prosperity of the 19th-century continued into the first decades of the 20th. Between 1900 and 1920, significant improvements were made to the Village's infrastructure. A municipally owned and operated electric power plant was established in 1908, and electric lines were installed throughout the Village. Interestingly, one of the first buildings to be electrified was the Hotel Daniels, the predecessor to the Sherburne

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<sup>46</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Rebuilding the Area," *Sherburne News*, 23 December 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Gomph, *Sherburne Illustrated*, 99.

<sup>48</sup> Gomph, *Sherburne Illustrated*, 79.

<sup>49</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sherburne, New York*, 1892. See figure 3.

Inn, in 1908. A network of rural roads were constructed by local contractors to accommodate the proliferation of automobiles, the Village's streets were paved in brick in 1913, and concrete sidewalks were installed in the business district. Improvements were made to the municipally owned and operated water supply system, and a local telephone system was in operation.<sup>50</sup>

Infrastructural improvements and changes arose from the prosperity of the local economy during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Production and output at the cotton mills increased, especially in response to the demands of World War I. Although the industrial sector was important, however, the majority of its economic output came from the agricultural sector. A lot of that took the form of hops production, which had become an important cash crop during the second half of the 19th century. Hop farmers were considered among the community's elite. The profitability of hop cultivation is epitomized by the large Queen-Anne Style home and farm constructed in 1890 along South Main Street by Thaddeus S. and Jacob B. Rowland, local hop growers.<sup>51</sup> Although many of the agricultural buildings associated with this farm were removed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate the expansion of Sherburne's independent electrical power plant, the large two-and-one-half story "farm house" remains as a testament to the importance of hops in Sherburne and Chenango County. Other cash crops cultivated in the area included cabbage, peas, beans, and potatoes.

Not all areas of agricultural production operated at a profit. Dairies began to experience economic hardships during this period. Because of overproduction, milk prices plummeted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and farmers formed milk cooperatives in an attempt to secure better prices. These difficulties foreshadowed the economic decline in

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<sup>50</sup> Benedict, 15-24.

<sup>51</sup> Gomph, *Sherburne Illustrated*, 75.

the agricultural sector in future decades, as dairy cattle are linked to the growth of crops for fodder.<sup>52</sup>

The enactment of local prohibition laws had a minor impact on the village's hotel industry. The village preemptively went "dry" in October of 1913, prior to the enactment of federal prohibition laws in 1920. Starting in early 1911, articles relating to temperance and liquor licensing appeared regularly in the *Sherburne News*. A vote on May 10, 1913, determined that pharmacists were the only vendors legally permitted to sell liquor in the village; the sale of liquor by saloons, storekeepers, and hotels was to be outlawed starting October 1, 1913. On October 2, 1913, a journalist in the *Sherburne News* wrote:

"Sherburne is still dry. The American Hotel, the Doane Hotel, [also known as the Central Hotel,] and the Chenango House have all closed up their bars and dining rooms and will not take anymore boarders or lodgers. We understand that the Sherburne House will close its doors as soon as recent guests of the hotel leave for their homes and contracts for the boarding men now employed on the road are fulfilled."<sup>53</sup> It seems that this journalist was exaggerating the situation. First, some of the area's hotels operated on a seasonal basis, like the Spring House, opening at the beginning of May and closing at the end of September,<sup>54</sup> explaining some of the closings. Second, the inflammatory tone of this article is reminiscent of the journalistic style of the period's yellow press, suggesting its true purpose as propaganda. It seems that it attempts to persuade the public to reverse the decision due to its adverse affect on the local economy. Regardless, most hotels did not close entirely but rather operated as "dry" businesses during this period. Prohibition remained in effect until the village reconsidered the issue of liquor licensing in 1915. On February 9, 1915 the town voted to partially repeal the prohibition laws enacted in 1913.

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<sup>52</sup> Benedict, 34.

<sup>53</sup> *Sherburne News*, 2 October 1913.

<sup>54</sup> Gomph, *Sherburne Illustrated*, 99.

Voters rescinded the right of pharmacists to sell liquor and permitted hotelkeepers to distribute alcohol in their establishments.<sup>55</sup>

Federal prohibition laws of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s had a more lasting effect on the Sherburne's hotel industry. Some area hotels closed during the period between 1920 and 1933. At the beginning of the 1910s, the number of guests at the Spring House peaked at 250; patronage significantly decreased during the prohibition era, resulting in its closure and demolition. The American Hotel also closed during this period and the building was reused as a gas station and car agency.<sup>56</sup> In 1939, this structure was razed.<sup>57</sup> When the 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map was updated in 1937, only two hotels were denoted in the village: the Central Hotel and the Sherburne Inn.<sup>58</sup> The Hopson House was already gone by this point, being demolished sometime between 1900 and 1906.<sup>59</sup> One hotel on West Main Street was removed and replaced by a mill owned by Thomas P. Gaines.<sup>60</sup> By 1937, the Chenango House's reported use was a bakery.<sup>61</sup>

Widespread economic decline in Sherburne began in the 1950s. The introduction and proliferation of automobiles in the early century led to passenger train traffic diminishing and eventually ceasing operations. The former Ross & Co.'s Cotton Mills (since turned into the Utica Knitting Mill) closed in 1953 resulting in the loss of nearly

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<sup>55</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Sherburne Goes Dry," *Sherburne News*, 24 February 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Benedict, *My Recollections*, 23.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>58</sup> The National Register Nomination for the Sherburne historic district notes that a "third story was added [to this building] during Prohibition so that it would legally qualify as a hotel." Breyer, "Statement of Significance," 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sherburne, New York, 1900.*, and *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sherburne, New York, 1906.*

<sup>60</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sherburne, New York, 1926.*

<sup>61</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sherburne, New York, 1937 update of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sherburne, 1926*

250 jobs.<sup>62</sup> In 1966, the mill building was rehabilitated as the headquarters for the hospital division of the Chesebrough-Ponds Corporation, however this venture was short-lived.<sup>63</sup> The Jerrold Corporation, formerly the TACO Corporation, a manufacturing company that had established a plant in Sherburne in the 1940s, experienced a recession in sales during the late 1970s and relocated to Ontario, Canada, in 1982.<sup>64</sup>

With the disappearance of industrial and manufacturing jobs from the village, only agricultural jobs remained, and their number had decreased. Continued low milk prices caused many dairy farms to close and the production of cash crops ceased. The expanding economy of the 19th and early-20th century severely contracted during the second half of the century.<sup>65</sup>

Despite these devastating blows to the local economy, local residents remained optimistic about the future. The concluding remarks of Robert J. Benedict in *My Recollection of Sherburne in the 20th Century* accurately summarize the recent history of the Village and the character of the community: “Sherburne has been jolted by changes, struggling with accommodation, and been mired in complexity, yet is alive and vigorous, and [we] hold in grateful remembrance the inherited legacy of our forefathers ever determined to transmit it unimpaired to posterity.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Benedict, *My Recollections*, 49.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 53 and 74

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 41 and 53.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 47-76.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 76.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF THE SHERBURNE INN SITE

One of the themes identified in the previous chapter was the parallel economic and social development of the village and its hostelry industry. Within the first five years of its settlement an inn was constructed to harbor travelers, and as advancements in technology brought new transportation systems to the area, additional inns and hotels were constructed to accommodate the increased demand. One clear indicator of the influence and importance of this industry was the repeated reconstruction of the Sherburne Inn site.

The present Inn is actually the fourth residential structure to be constructed on the southwest corner of the intersection of Water Street, presently State Street (NY-RT80), and Main Street (NY-RT12). The first was built shortly after the completion of the Southern Branch of the Cherry Valley Turnpike in ca. 1802. This inn was moved and replaced by the Medbury House before 1830. After its destruction in a fire in 1880, the debris of the devastated building was removed and a large, wood-frame residential hotel known as the Sherburne House was constructed in 1881. It in turn was destroyed by another fire in 1915, and the present building, the Sherburne Inn, was completed in 1917. The history of the site's development, destruction, and redevelopment illustrates its significance in the community.

#### **Stebbins Inn and The Medbury House**

As noted in the previous chapter, the first inn in the newly founded village was constructed by Asa Foote in ca 1802. Located on the site of the present day Sanford Park near the southeast corner of the village's main intersection, this inn served the traffic

introduced to the area by the Cherry Valley Turnpike's Southern Branch.<sup>67</sup> It is assumed that the demand for temporary lodging in the village was not met by this inn, and as a result, Samuel Stebbins constructed the village's second inn, or tavern, less than a block away from the first in 1803.

In that year, Samuel Stebbins, a Revolutionary War veteran, migrated from Hartford, Connecticut to Sherburne<sup>68</sup> and constructed a modest two-story inn on the site where the Sherburne Inn presently stands.<sup>69</sup> It was operated in partnership with Bela Scoville and was frequented by teamsters journeying on the toll road.<sup>70</sup> After selling the tavern to John Guthrie in 1809, Stebbins served as Sherburne Town Clerk from 1823 to 1829. After Guthrie's tenure of operation, interest in the tavern was transferred to Gardner Babcock<sup>71</sup>. An early settler of the village, Mary Haverly Lathrop, described the tavern during Babcock's proprietorship as follows:

"This hotel was kept by Gardner Babcock, was two stories in height and had a piazza across the east front of the lower story. This was enclosed about 2 ½ feet from the floor and wooden seats were built against the low screen with the exception of the passageway to the front hall and barroom. The roof was supported by posts that were utilized in the time of high water before the canal was built, by the farmers who came across the flats to the village in boats which were tied to the ready-made anchors, while their owners were busy in town. I was told that often in the spring the water was deep enough for the boats to be brought quite up to the front door of the hotel. This property was either sold or rented to a Mr. Morris; Mr. Babcock moving into a house on North Main Street. Mr. Morris did not occupy the premises very long when Mr. U.T. Harvey bought the stand and moved the better part to the back of the lot and built on a new front which was three stories, the upper one for a ballroom. Thus the whole thing was so changed that there was nothing left to remind one of the earlier hotel, only the barns and sheds used by the stage coaches passing daily up and down the valley from Binghamton to Utica."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Button, *Sherburne Pictorial Album*, 27

<sup>68</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: The History of the First Hotel on this Corner," *Sherburne News*, 1 August 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Medbury House," *Sherburne News*, ca. 2002.

<sup>70</sup> Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, 458.

<sup>71</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: The Hotel Corner," *Sherburne News*, 2 August 2002.

<sup>72</sup> Mary Haverly Lathrop, quoted in Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Medbury House," *Sherburne News*, ca. 2002.

In addition to recording the physical character of the building, Lathrop's description reflects on the chain of ownership and the evolution of the buildings on the site.

According to Lathrop's account, at some point prior to 1830, U.T. Harvey acquired the property from a Mr. Morris, at which time he moved the original tavern to the southwest corner of the lot, constructed a new three-story inn, and named it the Sherburne House, which would later be called the Medbury Hotel. The second inn on the site was in operation.

After migrating to Sherburne from New Berlin, NY in 1842, George Medbury purchased the Sherburne House and rechristened it the Medbury Hotel. During his ownership, the east façade of the hotel was extensively remodeled. A photograph from ca. 1868<sup>73</sup> shows a two-story, Greek-Revival-Style portico crested by a simple balustrade. A later photograph of the Medbury House, ca. 1870,<sup>74</sup> depicts a three-story, Italianate-style portico with a second-story balcony fronting the hotel.<sup>75</sup> The renovation of the hotel's façade coincides with the introduction of the railroad to the Village in 1868. Presumably, the reconfiguration and reordering of ornament was an attempt to compete with the Village's other hotels vying for business of railroad patrons. Medbury operated the hotel for over thirty years, selling it to Griswold and J.R. Smith in 1875. The partnership sold the hotel to W. L. Daniels after owning it for three years. Daniels renamed the business in honor of himself; it was referred to as Hotel Daniels or Daniels House.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> See figure 4.

<sup>74</sup> See figure 5.

<sup>75</sup> Julian Button, *Sherburne Pictorial History* (Sherburne, NY: Bigger's Commercial Printing, 1993): 66.

<sup>76</sup> Wellman, "Do You Remember: The History of the First Hotel on the Corner."

On September 21, 1880, fire destroyed a significant portion of the downtown commercial district, including the Medbury Hotel. An extensive account of the fire was published in the Saturday, September 25 edition of the *Sherburne News*:

“About 10:20 Tuesday evening September 21, 1880 fire was discovered in the barn of Thomas Whalen, at the rear of his establishment on South Main Street, some 100 feet south of the Medbury House and directly north and adjoining Charley Crowell’s blacksmith shop... The flames immediately communicated with the shop adjoining and the Whalen and Reynolds building and it was easy to see that they were doomed to the devouring element. But as there was quite a stiff west by north-west breeze blowing at the time it was hoped that the building north and the Medbury House would be saved, with strenuous efforts, for a few minutes, were made to that end. But for a few minutes only, for the building, being of wood and dry, burnt like tinder... At this point the wind carried the cinders to the wooden tower of the Congressional Church, which stood on the east side of South Main Street, about six rods from the burning buildings... In two hours from the first breaking out of the flames the north end of the Medbury House fell over and fortunately, inward, leaving the entire district described, except the Coats and Colwell building, a mass of ruins...”<sup>77</sup>

In total, the fire destroyed three commercial buildings, including Reynolds grocery, Whalen’s Saloon, and the Medbury House, the Congressional Church, and multiple ancillary buildings including a harness shop, and several barns and sheds.

### **Hotel Daniels**

Reconstruction of the devastated commercial district began a few weeks after the fire. By October 2, the proprietor of the leveled saloon, Thomas Whalen, had removed debris from his ruined business and begun constructing a temporary structure to house his restaurant and saloon. On November 27, *Sherburne News* reported that Whalen was operating his “new hotel.”<sup>78</sup> Presumably, the saloon and restaurant depicted in the 1887 Sanborn map of the village were the first floor business of the two-and-one-half story

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<sup>77</sup> *Sherburne News*, 25 September 1880.

<sup>78</sup> *Sherburne News*, 27 November 1880.

Whalen House or Hotel; the upper floors were rentable rooms. This assumption is supported by the 1892 Sanborn map, which labels this building as the “Whalen Hotel” and the Village’s centennial publication, *Sherburne Illustrated*, which lists it among the other hotels in the village.<sup>79</sup>

The construction of a Whalen House on this site is important, as it supports the notion of the significance of the hostelry industry in the village. This hotel was built adjacent to and simultaneously with the Hotel Daniels, described below. These businesses were in direct competition with each other. Moreover, both of these businesses were constructed when at least four other temporary lodging facilities, including the Hopson House Hotel, the Chenango House, the American House, and the Central Hotel, were already in operation in village. Located on East State Street, the Hopson House was built by L.R. Hopson in response to the anticipated traffic on the Chenango Canal in ca. 1834.<sup>80</sup> It was later demolished, and the site was made into Gaines Memorial Park.<sup>81</sup> Also built during this time and for similar purposes was the Central Hotel, located on West State Street. The American House was built by James Hinman as a tenant and boarding house on the south side of West State Street, then Water Street, next to the railroad depot in 1872; it was purchase by L. D. Hopson and converted into a hotel in 1876.<sup>82</sup> Also located on West State Street, the Chenango House was considered “first-class, and any guest who... stop[ped] at this house [was] pleased with the welcome and care they receive[d].<sup>83</sup> The demand for these businesses was sustained by travelling businessmen, tourists, performers, and seasonal laborers brought to the village by the railroad.

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<sup>79</sup> Gomph, 110.

<sup>80</sup> Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, 458.

<sup>81</sup> Benedict, *My Recollections*, 18.

<sup>82</sup> Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, 458.

<sup>83</sup> Gomph, *Sherburne Illustrated*, 101.

The community's involvement in the redevelopment process of the hotel site illustrated the profound significance of the property to the village. Rather than allowing the property's owner to dictate entirely the future of the site, community members actively participated in the planning process; influencing both size and architectural design of the building. Under the direction of village supervisors, planning for the redevelopment of the inn began in January 1881. During a meeting at the Village Fireman's Hall, at that point located next the Congregationalist Church on East State Street, community members expressed their desires for the hotel site to owner W.L. Daniels. In general, the community envisioned a large residential hotel that could accommodate the influx of "families who were apt to visit the area and spend the summer amid the grandeur of our scenery and the relaxed atmosphere of our quiet little village."<sup>84</sup> These visitors presumably arrived from Binghamton and Utica aboard the passenger-train extension of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad introduced to the village in 1868. In addition, an architecturally modern building would serve as a testament to the success and vitality of the village. Plans for the new hotel were finalized through subsequent meetings and negotiations; modern amenities including gas lighting and steam heat were incorporated into the design in order to attract patrons and denote the modernity of the hotel and village.<sup>85</sup>

Construction of the new hotel began in the spring of 1881. Carpenters completed the first floor of the Stick-Style hotel by May, and the newly christened Hotel Daniels officially opened in September. According to one 1915 newspaper description, "the [Hotel Daniels] was a four-story frame building with a slate roof. . . the top floor. . . was sometimes used as a ballroom and the hotel was claimed to be the best appearing on this line of the DL&W Railroad [Delaware, Lackawanna, and Northern Railroad]."<sup>86</sup> Figure

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<sup>84</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Rebuilding the Area," *Sherburne News*, 23 December 2004.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Sherburne News*, 10 March 1915.

6 depicts the hotel as it appeared in 1896. At the grand opening celebration in December, the community honored Daniels for supporting the village and rebuilding the hotel.<sup>87</sup>

After the hotel re-opened in 1881, ownership of the establishment was repeatedly conveyed to new owners throughout the next thirty-five years. At some point following the initial incorporation of the new hotel, Daniels partnered with Henry Griswold. This partnership sold the hotel to Gillette Lowe. In turn, Lowe's estate sold the establishment back to Henry Griswold and his new partner, J.G. Smith, in May 1891; Smith transferred title to Harvey Trass later that year, creating the firm Griswold and Trass. After his death in 1892, Griswold's partnership with Trass dissolved and his widow assumed operation of the hotel with a new partner, Dr. W.S. Fish, the village dentist. By 1894, Dr. Fish was the sole owner of Hotel Daniels, changing the establishment's name back to the Sherburne House in 1901.<sup>88</sup>

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the hotel proprietors experienced financial problems. Dr. W.S. Fish and Helen M. Fish forfeited the "lucrative hotel business" to their creditors in July 1906. In January 1907, the Sherburne House sold for \$11,750 at public auction to Harvey Trass, former co-owner of the establishment. Within a year of this purchase, Trass sold the property to Roger A. Ryan.<sup>89</sup>

During this turmoil, however, the hotel itself was kept up to date. Under the direction of Harvey Trass, new plumbing and water closets were installed throughout building in 1907. Electrical light fixtures were installed in the reading room and barroom of the hotel in 1908, the same year the municipally owned electrical plant was established in the Village, making it one of the first establishments in the village to be electrified. Lighting within the hotel remained a hybrid of gas and electrical fixtures until the building burned in 1915.

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<sup>87</sup> Wellman, "Do You Remember: Rebuilding the Area."

<sup>88</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: The Many Owners and Proprietors of the Hotel," *Sherburne News*, 10 February 2005.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

The temperance movement and the enactment of prohibition laws in the village of Sherburne directly affected the services provided by the Sherburne House. As noted in the previous chapter, the village experimented with prohibition in the 1910s. A village vote in May 1911 established a law that banned the sale of alcohol by all establishments and individuals except for pharmacies. The then-current owner of the Sherburne House, Michael Farley, appealed this decision, but the appeal was denied, and the inn's bar closed when prohibition was instituted in October.<sup>90</sup> In February, 1915, this law was amended, permitting hotelkeepers to sell alcohol and rescinding the rights of pharmacists. One month later a fire destroyed the Sherburne House.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, when the Sherburne Inn reopened in 1917 it did not serve alcohol and remained dry until 1941, at which time the hotel's reading room was renovated into a bar and grillroom.

The *Sherburne News* published an extensive account of this latest fire:

"This village was visited by the greatest fire that has occurred in a great many years on Monday morning March 1, 1915 when the Sherburne House burned to the ground. The first two people to see the fire were Floyd Buell and William Cunningham at about 9:30am... The fire was in the attic of the four-story building and was therefore hard to get at. Mr. Cunningham ran into the hotel and gave the alarm that he building was on fire and then ran up to the attic. He said the fire was next to the chimney, near the roof and that if he had a pail of water he could have put it out in time. By the time he went downstairs to get the needed water and return the whole attic floor was ablaze and full of smoke... A first it was thought it would be as disastrous a fire as the one of 1880 and aid was summoned from Norwich, but before it left the city it was recalled and told that it was not needed. As the fire burned form the top down, rather than the bottom up, it was not considered as dangerous to the nearby buildings. The wind was in a favorable direction to blow it towards the Civil War Monument [located to the east], rather than the buildings to the west and the south... The fire started about 9:30 and by noon the building was practically burned to the ground... The cause of the fire was believed to have been a faulty chimney and much sympathy was expressed to the owner."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Sherburne Goes Dry," *Sherburne News*, 24 February 2005.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> *Sherburne News*, 4 March 1915.

A series of photographs taken during the fire illustrate its progression. It began in the fourth story of the building and quickly descended to the third, second and first stories. The rapid course was attributed to the building's wood-frame construction and absence of a fire-suppression system.<sup>93</sup>

The hotel businesses on the Sherburne Inn site experienced periods of phenomenal success and moments of devastating disaster during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Constructed by Samuel Stebbins in 1803, the first inn was regularly patronized by teamsters and stagecoach passengers travelling on the Cherry Valley Turnpike. Travelers on the Chenango Canal and the DL&W Railroad celebrated the accommodations and services at the Medbury House, the second hotel built on the site following the removal of the first. This establishment was destroyed in a fire in 1880. The community rallied behind the redevelopment of the site, and by end of the following year, a new hotel and the third on the site, opened. Known first as the Sherburne House, later the Hotel Daniels, this hotel was declared one of the best in the region and vacationers travelled considerable distances to stay in its rooms. The destruction of this hotel in a fire in 1915 starts the next chapter in the history of the site.

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<sup>93</sup> Button, 204-207.

## CHAPTER III

### CONSTRUCTION AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE SHERBURNE INN

The redevelopment of the Sherburne Inn site following the 1915 fire paralleled the site's redevelopment after the 1880 fire. The plan for the site was again influenced by the input of the community, and the construction of the new inn building proved initially to be a boon for both the new owners and the community. After several decades of successful operation, however the reorganization and redirection of transportation systems and changes in travel patterns brought instability to the hotel industry in Sherburne. The Sherburne Inn ceased renting rooms in the 1980s, just operating the first floor restaurant. Eventually, even the once profitable and well-patronized restaurant began to fail. Consecutive owners attempted to rejuvenate the struggling restaurant business, but these attempts were ill-fated. Mortgage foreclosures and tax problems scarred the economic face of the building; inappropriate and insensitive renovations, deferred maintenance, and physical deterioration did the same to the building's once stately brick exterior and elegant interior.

#### **Planning and Construction**

The destruction of the Sherburne House due to the 1915 conflagration challenged the community's identity. From the time of the earliest development on the site, Sherburne residents equated the vitality of the town with the beauty and success of the hotel. The Sherburne News published an account of the public's opinion on September 23, 1915: "Nearly all former townspeople who visit here remark about the vacant lot where the Sherburne House formerly stood. They all seem to think that this look gives Sherburne a black eye as it does not look as though we were progressing, to allow such a thing to remain on our principal corner. It would be a great thing for some of our public-

spirited people to buy this site and do something with it.”<sup>94</sup> This perception was one indicator of the market-driven reality that the redevelopment of the site needed to be expedited. Cleanup of debris from Sherburne House was completed in the spring of 1915; Charles Houck purchased the charred remnants of the Sherburne House and began sorting through the ashes, removing valuable metals and other salvageable or usable materials in April.<sup>95</sup> Preparations for the construction of a new hotel did not begin until the following year.

Redevelopment began with the sale of the site. Personally unwilling or financially unable to redevelop the site, Michael J. Farley sold the property to Dr. William Little for \$4,000 and moved to Utica, NY. Little immediately began assembling the necessary instruments to establish a new hotel, hiring an architect to draft plans for the new building by February 10, filing articles of incorporation, with a capital stock of \$30,000, for the formation of the Sherburne Hotel Company with the Secretary of State by March 9, and securing funding for construction by the beginning of May.<sup>96</sup>

Two philanthropic sisters, Carrie E. Pratt and Grace Pratt Newton helped finance the project. As one of the founding directors of the Sherburne Hotel Company, it is assumed that Carrie Pratt funneled her family’s financial contributions through it. Their father, Joshua Pratt, organized the first bank in Sherburne, and constructed the Second-Empire, brick building at the northwest corner of Main and State Streets directly north of the Sherburne Inn site to house it. Upon his death, Pratt bequeathed a substantial inheritance to his daughters, which they used to finance projects throughout community. One was the brick, Gothic-Revival Sherburne Public Library, designed by the celebrated New York City architect, Edward Tilton, who is also responsible for numerous Carnegie

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<sup>94</sup> *Sherburne News*, 23 September 1915.

<sup>95</sup> Rose Wellman, “Do You Remember: After the Fire,” *Sherburne News*, 17 March 2005.

<sup>96</sup> Rose Wellman, “Do You Remember: Rebuilding of the Sherburne House, Building of the Sherburne Inn,” *Sherburne Inn*, ca. 21 March 2005.

libraries and the United States Immigration Station at Ellis Island.<sup>97</sup> Constructed in 1909, this library was built to house the village's book collection, formerly housed in the local high school.<sup>98</sup> Interestingly, this building shares several other connections with the Sherburne Inn. Griffin and Peirce,<sup>99</sup> a construction company based in Utica, NY, built both projects and Verne Swan, a Sherburne-born architect, designed the Sherburne Inn and the 1938 south-wing addition to the Sherburne Public Library.<sup>100</sup>

Verne Sturges Swan, architect of the Sherburne Inn, is not a nationally or internationally recognizable architect; however, his work is significant in Central New York generally and the Village of Sherburne specifically. Prior to receiving his Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell University in 1921, Swan studied at Valparaiso University, a Lutheran university in Indiana, and Ohio State University,<sup>101</sup> where he was honored with the Warren Prize in Architecture. He also spent a year studying architecture, city planning, and art at the Art University at Paris.<sup>102</sup> Upon graduating from Cornell University in 1921, he was awarded the Charles Goodwin Sands Memorial medal, a merit-based award for exceptional works in architecture.<sup>103</sup> In honor of Swan, Cornell University's School of Art, Architecture and Planning established the Verne Swan '21 Scholarship for undergraduate students studying architecture in 1999.<sup>104</sup>

Swan's 1916 commission for the Sherburne Inn was executed prior to his attendance at Cornell. An article published in the *Sherburne News* seems to allude to

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<sup>97</sup> "Sherburne Library," *Utica Herald Dispatch*, ca 23 August 1909. [www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com) accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Breyer, "Statement of Significance," 4.

<sup>99</sup> "Sherburne Library," *Utica Herald Dispatch*.

<sup>100</sup> Breyer, "Statement of Significance," 4.

<sup>101</sup> "Verne Sturges Swan, 78, Retired Architect, Dies," *Utica Daily Press*, ca 29 April

<sup>102</sup> "Studying in Paris, Verne S. Swan is One of 300 U. S. Students of Art," *The Utica Observer*, 11 April 1919. [www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com) accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>103</sup> Verne Sturges Swan, *Verne Sturges Swan papers, 1919-1957*, Kroch Library Rare and Manuscripts, Cornell University.

<sup>104</sup> *College of Architecture, Art, and Planning Student, Faculty and Staff Handbook, 2007-2008* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University), 22.

this. It describes Swan as “a Sherburne boy... [who] has spent the last few years in the west studying and working at architecture and his ability... is a source of much pride to his friends.”<sup>105</sup> The article does not refer to him as trained architect associated with a specific architectural firm. The “studying” the article references is assumed to be the work he conducted at Valparaiso University and Ohio State University. It seems that his architectural training received prior to enrolling at Cornell and the caliber of his work, evidenced by his receipt of an award at Ohio State University, were sufficient enough to land him the Sherburne Inn project. He married Jane Carpenter in 1922 and the couple settled in Utica, NY, where Swan became an associate at an architectural firm owned by Frank C. Delle Cese.<sup>106</sup> It is assumed that Swan drafted the plans for the Sherburne Public Library addition in this office.

Although he gained the reputation of being “a church architect”<sup>107</sup> for his numerous religious commissions, one of his secular works is arguably his most distinguished and everlasting, the restoration of the Fountain Elms for the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica. Working with the director of the Institute’s Museum of Art, Richard B. K. McLanathan, in 1960, Swan directed the restoration of four rooms in the Italianate-Style residence to their 1850s appearance using original blueprints and the papers, bills, letters and books of the Munson, Williams, and Proctor families. These rooms became the exhibition space for the museum’s decorative arts collection<sup>108</sup> to which Swan posthumously contributed. Some items, including wooden ware, coverlets,

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<sup>105</sup> *Sherburne News*, 10 February 1916.

<sup>106</sup> “Verne Sturges Swan, 78,” *Utica Daily Press*.

<sup>107</sup> “Christ Church Contract to Bowers,” *The Otsego Farmer*, 25 July 1957.

www.fultonhistory.com accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>108</sup> “Go Back in Time At the Fountain Elms,” *Observer Dispatch*, 9 October 1960.

www.fultonhistory.com accessed 15 February 2011.

rugs, rose-medallion china and ceramic ware, were bequests; others like a Shaker settee and chair, and a 18<sup>th</sup> century mirror were purchased from his estate.<sup>109</sup>

In addition to his accomplishments in the field of architecture, Swan was an accomplished and respected violinist, violin maker, and collector. His hand-crafted instruments were featured in area newspapers; one ca. 1960s article celebrates his recreation of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century, five-stringed, violin relative called the quinton.<sup>110</sup> Local galleries exhibited his instruments and music collections.<sup>111</sup> He served on the board of directors of the Viola Da Gamba Society of America, an organization “dedicated to the... revival of viola-playing in the United States.”<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, most of the archival materials related to Swan housed at Kroch Library, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, at Cornell University relate to his interest in violins and not his work as an architect.

The Sherburne Inn is presumably one of Swan’s earliest commissions, which might suggest a sense of trepidation in his design especially considering his incomplete formal training. This was not the case. His confidence and skills as an architect were clearly demonstrated. According to the *Sherburne News* published on February 10, 1916, Swan’s preliminary concept for the design incorporated many of the features found in the building today. The article states: “the plans call for a three-story brick building and are complete in every detail and call for a hotel that will be an adornment to the village... The building will set back much further from the street than the former hotel and will have a wide, broad verandah on the east and [north] sides.”<sup>113</sup> In the most rudimentary

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<sup>109</sup> “Art Show Opens at Fountain Elm,” *Weekly Observer*, 1 March 1970.  
www.fultonhistory.com accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>110</sup> “The Quinton Stirs Air in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Room,” *Utica Observer Dispatch*, ca 1960s.  
www.fultonhistory.com accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>111</sup> “Folksong Fest Tonight,” *Utica Observer Dispatch*, 12 November 1967.  
www.fultonhistory.com accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>112</sup> *Journal of the Viola Da Gamba Society of America, Vol. 2* (Edgewater, MD: Viola Da Gamba Society of America, Inc, 1965), 2.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid. Sherburne News*, 10 Feb.

way, this description identifies the character-defining features of the building: the tapestry brick cladding, the wide verandahs, and the broad setback. As construction began in May, the *Sherburne News* expounded on their earlier description of the plans:

“ . . . the new hotel will be 65ft by 90ft and will be three stories high, of Colonial Type, flag roof with slag covering; the walls to be of tapestry brick on hollow tile. On the outside a wide verandah will extended around the east and north sides. There will be hot and cold water in every room and nice bathrooms distributed throughout the building. In fact the structure will be most modern in every way.”<sup>114</sup>

These features are described in greater detail in the building’s “Architectural Description” in the following chapter.

Labor problems plagued the construction site. Once the board-formed, concrete foundations were poured, masons began constructing the terra-cotta tile walls and installing the brick cladding. By mid-July, these workers struck over the poor wages and long hours. Rather than consenting to the workers’ demands, the Utica-based construction company, Griffin and Pierce, hired different bricklayers to complete the job. The brick cladding was completed by the end of September despite ongoing problems with the masons.<sup>115</sup>

Following the completion of the roof in mid October, the installation of interior finishes and systems progressed rapidly. Carpenters installed windows and trim, and plasterers and painters finished the interiors. For all intents and purposes, the Sherburne Inn was ready to reopen by March of 1917.<sup>116</sup> Figure 7 shows the building as it looked at the time of its completion.

The community celebrated the opening of the new “adornment”<sup>117</sup> to the village with a grand opening party. The announcement the *Sherburne News* published inviting

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<sup>114</sup> *Sherburne News*, 16 May 1916.

<sup>115</sup> Rose Wellman, “Do You Remember: Continuation of Building Sherburne Inn,” *Sherburne News*, 31 March 2005.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Sherburne News*, 10 February 1916.

all community members to the celebration illustrates the building's significance at the time of completion. The announcement states:

“On Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> the Sherburne Inn will have its opening. A complete course dinner will be served in the evening... A committee from the LVIS [Ladies Village Improvement Society] will assist as hostesses of the evening and will show persons through the hotel. The Business Men's Association, desiring to show their appreciation of Sherburne's new hostelry, have arranged for the first band concert of the season [to be held at the opening]... The pavement on East State Street will be reserved for dancing. Old Sherburne is very proud indeed to invite her many friends from neighboring towns to unite with us Tuesday evening to celebrate the opening of our new Inn... Everyone is indeed grateful and appreciating of this beautiful addition to our pretty village. And to those who have made such a building possible, Sherburne extends her deepest thanks.”<sup>118</sup>

The author's description of the lavishness of the event, endearing remarks, and desire to display the building to the broader region suggests the role the building would serve in the community as a center of civic activity, a symbol of its identity, and a source of pride. The Inn was a popular venue for special events, such as New Year's Day dinners, and a desired destination for train patrons and transient motorists. In fact, the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century silent-film actor, Charlie Chaplin, stayed at the Inn for a week in the spring of 1918.<sup>119</sup>

### **Profitable to Penniless**

Originally hired by the Sherburne Hotel Company to manage the new establishment in 1917, sisters Edith Baker Colton and Florence E. Baker purchased the business in 1921.<sup>120</sup> The involvement of two pairs of sisters, the financiers of the inn's construction and the managers of operation, in the early history of the inn is significant considering the time period. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the political and financial rights of women were still severely limited; they were unable to vote, thus unable to

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<sup>118</sup> *Sherburne News*, ca. June 1917.

<sup>119</sup> Rose Wellman, “Do You Remember: Sherburne Inn Continued,” *Sherburne News*, 14 April 2005

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

directly control a political society, and for some, unable to own property, including inheritances, thus limiting their independence and ability to shape their economic futures. For the Pratt/Newton sisters to finance this and other monumental projects in the community, they had to successfully navigate a male-driven society. The same is true of the Baker/Colton sisters; their successful operation of a lucrative hotel business was atypical during this period. It is important to note that the sisters purchased the inn a year after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920, which granted women the right to vote.

After they purchased the inn in 1921, the Colton/Baker sisters oversaw significant alterations and additions to the building's exterior. In an effort to increase the number of patrons the Inn's restaurant could serve—originally the main floor dining room could only accommodate seventy-five individuals—and to provide an “out-of-door” dining experience, a portion of the verandah facing South Main Street was enclosed “in a glass framework, with as little wood as possible for an unobstructed view, with the ability to be opened to make it virtually an open air room for the dining patrons” in 1923.<sup>121</sup> This alteration is further described in the “Architectural Description” in chapter four and is illustrated in figure 8, a ca. 1926 promotional postcard for the Inn.

In 1922, John Colton, husband of the Edith Baker Colton, in partnership with a local mechanic company, Clark and Crandall, converted the livery stables associated with the Sherburne Inn into a garage. Ten years later, a conflagration destroyed the garage on October 7, 1932. This blaze reminded some villagers of the others on the site, dating back to the first in 1880, and led to the second significant change to the building's exterior, the construction of a concrete-block, steel-girder-roofed garage to replace the fire-damaged, wood-framed building.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> *Sherburne News*, 13 October 1932.

Auxiliary operations and industries developed in the community to service the Inn. A hotel garden, located on Classic Street in the Village, supplied the restaurant with fresh vegetables. A hotel farm, located north of the Village on Route 12B, raised Jersey cows to provide fresh dairy products to the restaurant. Local poultry farms provided fresh turkey and chicken, and the Inn purchased ice harvested on local ponds.<sup>123</sup>

In 1941, Edith Baker Colton sold the lucrative business to David Mix, who made an important change to the operational structure of the Inn. Born in Sherburne, Mix gained experience in the hotel industry through his association with the Hotel President, the largest hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. After returning the area, he purchased the Sherburne Inn and “modernized”<sup>124</sup> it, converting the lobby into a bar and grill. A critic of the time described it “as the handsomest Grill anywhere hereabouts. Semi-circular booths unfold at the eastern end of the Grill with other booths along the side walls and individual tables between. Both the booths and the brilliantly-fitted bar of matched mahoganies are upholstered in alternating ivory-white and red leathers. Surveying this broadly cheerful scene is a huge fireplace surmounted by an English mantel. The Grill boasts a complete kitchen of its own.”<sup>125</sup> This renovation ended the Inn’s status as a “temperance” hotel. Overall, the inn under Mix’s ownership was “describ[ed]... as the most attractive and satisfactory establishment in Central New York.”<sup>126</sup> In 1952, Mix sold the Inn to Robert M. Ready,<sup>127</sup> son of the chairman of the executive committee and vice president of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, Frank A. Ready.<sup>128</sup>

While studying hotel management at Cornell University, Ready visited the village of Sherburne with his locally born classmate, James Dinneen, and “dabbled with the idea

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<sup>123</sup> Wellman, “Do You Remember: Sherburne Inn Continued.”

<sup>124</sup> “Sherburne Inn Completely Modernized,” *Sherburne News*, 27 November 1941.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>128</sup> Robert W. Dana, “Syracuse or Colgate Fans Can Dine Well,” *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, 4 October 1953.

of operating the inn,” the “possibilities” of which he felt “were not being fully used.”<sup>129</sup> It was Ready’s belief that “a small town hotel . . . should become as much a part of the community as possible. The community’s products, it’s [sic] people, and even something of that indefinable atmosphere which distinguishes one community from another should all center in a small town inn.”<sup>130</sup> Through his administrative experience gained at the McAllister Hotel in Miami and the Commodore Hotel in New York, Ready understood that recreating the Waldorf in Sherburne would not attract the broad range of patrons. Rather, he decided to capitalize on the “small town charm”<sup>131</sup> of the Village, marketing the inn to a clientele seeking an escape from the atmosphere of larger cities. He tailored the restaurant’s menu to reflect the traditional cuisine of area residents and redecorated the public and private spaces to create an informal, restive atmosphere. These improvements, in combination with his management philosophy and goals, seemed to “pay off in increased patronage . . . The Sunday dinner tradition [was] revived, with many guests eating theirs on the long dining porch. Guests on business in the area, who formerly stayed only overnight, tend[ed] to make the hotel their headquarters . . . for a week while they cover[ed] surrounding territory.”<sup>132</sup> However, after only two years of ownership Ready sold the inn to Harvey Young.

Young’s tenure at the Sherburne Inn began nearly a decade before he purchased it from Ready. After graduating from Syracuse University and serving two years in the United States Army during World War II, Young returned to Sherburne to manage the Sherburne Inn for David Mix in 1946, a job he kept even after Mix sold the business to Frank Ready in 1952. After graduating from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) with a professional degree in restaurant management in the early 1950s, Young purchased

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<sup>129</sup> John Urbaner, “In Father’s Footsteps: Sherburne Inn Operator’s Father Heads the Waldorf,” *The Observer Dispatch*, 8 June 1952.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

the Sherburne Inn in 1954. In 1962, Young purchased the Chenango Hotel in the City of Norwich<sup>133</sup> and sold the Sherburne Inn to Orville T. Cronk, an undertaker from Long Island vacationing in the area, and his wife, Elsie. Unhappy with their impulsive purchase, this couple sold the inn back to Young the following year. He operated both hotels simultaneously until 1965, when he sold the Chenango Hotel to the C&U Telephone Co. A year later this building was demolished.<sup>134</sup> The Inn prospered during Young's ownership; it "attracted patrons from as far away as Ithaca, Cortland and Syracuse"<sup>135</sup> and was "known all over New York State as having the finest food and accommodations in the area."<sup>136</sup> In 1976, he sold the business to Richard Melloy, a resident of Norwich, ending his nearly thirty-year tenure at the Inn.

Melloy implemented an intensive program of building renovations and business modifications to modernize the inn's appearance and expanded upon its "long-standing reputation for fine food and services in a gracious atmosphere."<sup>137</sup> However, many of the changes failed to generate the growth Melloy envisioned. The Rathskellar, a new bar introduced in the basement of the Inn and marketed toward a younger constituency, failed to generate a sustainable income and closed. Similarly, when he converted the concrete-block garage built during the Colton ownership into a banquet hall, it failed to increase the number of large events hosted at the Inn.<sup>138</sup> When Melloy sold the property in 1981, the new owners, Harry and Susan Young (unrelated to Harvey Young) leased the concrete block banquet hall to the United States Postal Service to be used as the village

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<sup>133</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Continuing the History of the Sherburne Inn," *Sherburne News*, 28 April 2005.

<sup>134</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: The Sherburne Inn Under New Ownership," *Sherburne News*, 21 April 2005.

<sup>135</sup> Rae Miller, "Lifestyle," *Evening Sun*, ca. July 1976.

<sup>136</sup> Wellman, "The Sherburne Inn Under New Ownership."

<sup>137</sup> Miller, "Lifestyle."

<sup>138</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Next Owners of the Sherburne Inn," *Sherburne News*, 12 May 2005.

post office.<sup>139</sup> Also during their ownership, the hotel rooms closed, and the business and building began showing marked signs of distress.

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, consecutive owners attempted to revitalize the once prosperous and profitable establishment, wanting desperately “revive the ‘old days’ and old traditions at the Inn,<sup>140</sup> however, each incarnation—as the Sherburne Inn, Sherburne Village Inn, or the Bullthistle Inn—failed to develop into a sustainable business. The difficulties of reestablishing a successful business in the Sherburne Inn building was highlighted by the quick succession of owners during this period. After seven years of proprietorship, the Youngs sold the Inn to Douglas G. and Mildred A. Meagley, husband and wife, and C. Norman Meagley in 1988. This trio, after attempting to rejuvenate the vitality of the business with little success subsequently sold it in 1989 to Russ and Ann Walters, and John Meekins.

The Walters/Meekins partnership enthusiastically embarked on the renovations that would recreate “the ‘old days’ when the inn was the main meeting place in the village.” Receiving an Economic Development Loan of \$40,000 from the Village, they began a “three-year, four-phase plan that [would] cover every aspect of restoring the Inn to its former beauty, both in the building and the service that patrons receive.”<sup>141</sup> The phased plan included repairing “roof leaks and plumbing problems [which had] caused extensive water damage; the ceilings on the first and third floors have patched sections.”<sup>142</sup> The partnership’s ambitious plans to recapture the historic essence of the inn proved futile, however, as the gavel fell at the Chenango County Courthouse on March 4, 1993. Unable to generate enough income from the restaurant to repay creditors,

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

<sup>141</sup> Rose Tenney, “Sherburne is Getting a “New” Inn,” *Mid-York Weekly*, 6 April 1989.

<sup>142</sup> Brian Murphy, “Sherburne Inn Owners Bringing Back the Hotel’s ‘Heyday’,” *Chenango Valley News*, 2 March 1989.

pay taxes and utilities, and continue renovations, the partnership lost the business to bank foreclosure.<sup>143</sup>

Rob Peebles, the last proprietor to operate a business in the inn building, acquired the property at an auction in November of 1994 with the determination to recreate the success of Jack London's, his restaurant in Sidney, New York. Reporting on the activities of the auction, the town's concern for the deteriorated building was captured in a newspaper article. It states, "most of the people attending the auction were reliving their memories of days gone by, when the Sherburne Inn was the place to go to celebrate the milestones in life. Many of these people expressed concern that the eventual buyer would destroy a part of the town's history..." Prior to finalizing his bid and solidifying his purchase, Peebles was asked to address public concern by articulating his plan for the Inn. To the crowd's satisfaction, Peebles reported his intent to create a full-service restaurant and commitment to saving the local landmark.<sup>144</sup> Nearly sixteen months after the auction Peebles opened the Bullthistle Inn, with the Reading Room Pub.<sup>145</sup>

The Bullthistle Inn was unstable financially from the beginning. Unable to secure a conventional bank loan for the purchase price of \$65,000, Peebles underwrote the purchase with credit cards.<sup>146</sup> Due to the building's history of financial problems, banks were excessively cautious about extending loans to projects related to the property. Peebles experienced similar problems as he attempted to finance renovation to the first-floor restaurant space. Again Peebles was unable to secure a bank loan, so he financed the numerous repairs through help from local businesses, who extended him store credit, credit cards, and loans from friends and the Village of Sherburne.<sup>147</sup> Most of Peebles'

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<sup>143</sup> Kathy O'Hara, "Bank Acquires Sherburne Inn," *Evening Sun*, 5 March 1993.

<sup>144</sup> Rose Tenney, "Historical Landmark in Sherburne Falls to Auctioneer's Gavel," *Mid-York Weekly*, 24 November 1994.

<sup>145</sup> Rose Tenny, "The Bullthistle Inn is Open for Business," *Mid-York Weekly*, 14 March 1996.

<sup>146</sup> Kathy O'Hara, "The Return of a Landmark," *Evening Sun*, 24 March 1996.

<sup>147</sup> Andrew Larrison, "Bullthistle Inn a Fresh Choice," *Hamilton Tribune*, ca 1997.

repairs were concentrated in the interior spaces, with the first floor being almost entirely renovated. Work on the second and third floors consisted of the removal of interior finishes, mechanical systems, and wall patricians except for the central, structural, shotgun corridors in preparation for the reorganization of inn rooms, which would decrease the number of rental units from seventeen to twelve or fourteen.<sup>148</sup> The condition of the interior spaces is briefly discussed in the architectural description in chapter four.

By January 2002, the Bullthistle Inn had closed. As with the previous restaurants, revenues could not support the building's operational and renovation costs. Negotiations to sell the inn to a Manhasset, Long Island investor, James Nizzo had begun by August. However, the deal fell through when banks once again refused to finance the investor's extensive renovation plans, which would have included the restoration of the inn's rentable rooms. At this time, it was noted that the roof of the inn was in poor condition.<sup>149</sup>

Although Peebles attempted to correct the building's numbered problems, his efforts did not include the most fundamental and necessary of repairs, preventing the intrusion of water through the roof. By the spring of 2005, water was poring into the building, causing further destruction of the second and third floor—in some places rotting holes in the floor—and destroying the work Peebles had completed on the first floor. In an effort to protect the building from further damage, local businessman Jim Webb helped Peebles finance its reroofing.<sup>150</sup> When this did not have the desired effect of enticing a buyer and the likelihood that Peeble's would loose the property to tax sale grew more eminent, Webb "proceeded to take title and pay several years of back taxes and a

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Christian Vischi, "Sherburne Inn To Get a New Roof As Part of Renovation Plan," *Evening Sun*, 9 October 2002.

<sup>150</sup> Rose Wellman, "Do You Remember: Ron Peebles in Residence," *Sherburne News*, 19 May 2005.

mortgage loan that was owed to the village” in December of 2006.<sup>151</sup> According to Webb, this act was merely “to protect his investment,” and no further renovations were planned.<sup>152</sup>

A year prior to Webb’s acquisition of the building, the Sherburne Inn was included in the Village of Sherburne Downtown Strategic Plan as an item of special concern. It was noted that “the revitalization of the downtown as a whole is largely limited by the state of the Inn... the renovation and the reuse of [it] could have tremendous positive benefits for the community and downtown.” In an attempt to facilitate this end, the Syracuse based firm of Crawford and Stearns Preservation Architects and Planners was commissioned to assess the condition of the Inn and prepare preliminary recommendations for its reuse. Their findings were published in report titled “Architectural Assessment & Reuse Recommendations for the Sherburne Inn,” which was included in the Strategic Plan as an appendix. Outlined were several potential reuse options, including an inn, mercantile/office, apartments, and a multi-use scenario, and varying cost estimates that were dependent on the type of use, and the extent and quality of the work to be conducted. This report has not had its intended result as of April 2011.

In the fall of 2009, the Village of Sherburne applied for a “Restore New York” grant to finance a partial restoration of the inn. Aimed primarily at the renovation of the first-floor restaurant space, the restoration of the exterior, and the construction of a handicap-accessible ramp, the application for \$344,000, which would have been matched by both public and private funds, was denied according to Village mayor, William Acee, “because the village didn’t actually own the building.”<sup>153</sup> The Sherburne Inn remains vacant and continues to deteriorate while Webb waits for a prospective buyer.

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<sup>151</sup> Melissa deCordova, “Deal to Restore Sherburne Inn Falls Through,” *Evening Sun*, 6 October 2009.

<sup>152</sup> deCordova, “Deal to Restore.”

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Sherburne Inn was a viable business; the restaurant was well patronized and guests regularly stayed in the building. In fact, it was celebrated throughout Central New York for “having the finest food and accommodations in the area.”<sup>154</sup> Yet the business started to decline and the building began to deteriorate by the end of the 1970s. The doors to the rentable rooms were closed permanently in the early 1980s, and the once successful restaurant showed marked signs of distress by the end of the decade. Several individuals attempted to revive the business with little success. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the restaurant was closed and the building was abandoned.

There are two conclusions to be drawn from the comparisons of the history of the Sherburne Inn and those of the Village of Sherburne and the other hotels on the inn site. First, the economic trajectories of the inn and village paralleled each other during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like the inn, the village showed clear signs of economic stability during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Improvements were made to local infrastructure, there were numerous agricultural and industrial jobs, and the population increased steadily. However, this began to change by mid-century as manufacturers began to leave the area, and the profitability of agricultural production continued to decrease. It appears to the author that this decline in part shaped the history of the inn during the last quarter of the century.

Second, the hotels on this site were symbols of the community. Situated on one of the most prominent corners in the village, the buildings on this site defined the character of the community to visitors and often shaped their first impressions. For this reason, village residents began to equate the success and vitality of this site with that of the village. After a fire destroyed the Medbury/Sherburne House in 1880, for example, village residents inserted themselves into the redevelopment process to ensure the new

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<sup>154</sup> Wellman, “The Sherburne Inn Under New Ownership.”

hotel would be “a credit... to the village.”<sup>155</sup> They wanted to use the prominence of this site to project to visitors the vibrancy of the village. A second example is the village residents’ belief that the character of the community had been sullied by the destruction of the Sherburne House/Hotel Daniels in a fire in 1915. They felt that the vacant lot was “a black eye [on the village] as it [did] not look as though we were progressing, to allow such a thing to remain on our principal corner.”<sup>156</sup> The Sherburne Inn was built to heal this figurative wound in 1917, becoming a symbol of the village’s resiliency, modernity, and beauty.

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<sup>155</sup> Wellman, “Rebuilding the Area.”

<sup>156</sup> *Sherburne News*, 23 September 1915.

## CHAPTER IV

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

To the casual observer, the Sherburne Inn is architecturally insignificant. Many view it as an oddly shaped, three-story box with deteriorated porches and windows. They overlook the subtle details of the dark-red-brick cladding, the stately proportions of the porticos, and the regularity of the windows and fail to see or do not fully understand the significant architectural and historical relationships it has with other buildings in the community. For these reason, this chapter examines the architectural significance of the Sherburne Inn.

In the first section of this chapter, the physical characteristics and integrity of this historic resource will be examined in an architectural description. This study will be directed by a series of questions: what are the resource's character-defining features; what is the resource's degree of integrity; how does the resource relate aesthetically and physically to its surroundings. The focus of this section is to describe the subtle beauty of the Inn.

The second section will argue that the Sherburne Inn is significant based on its architecture and its architectural and historical relationships to other buildings in the community. Built in the Georgian-Revival style, the Sherburne Inn building is a unique representative of an early-20<sup>th</sup> century architectural style in the village. It is an important architectural anchor in the downtown district, a benchmark in the chronology of the community's progressive development, and a surviving example of its typology. Finally, it is an example of the Pratt family's architectural legacy.

## **Architectural Description**

The Sherburne Inn is located at the corner of South Main and West State Streets in the village of Sherburne. Constructed of structural clay tile clad in dark-red brick, this representative of the Georgian Revival Style consist of three stories above a board-formed concrete basement and raised brick-clad watertable. Its plan is H-shaped. The roof is not visible from street level, giving the building a rectilinear, box-like massing. The north and east facades face West State and South Main Streets respectively. The north façade is the primary façade. This facade consists of five vertical bays with a projecting centered single-story, three-bay portico. The east façade has seven vertical bays, five central bays flanked by single-bay projections, and a single-story, five-bay portico recessed between the two projections. The south and west facades reflect the bay delineations of the north and east facades respectively but do not have porticos. Figures 9-12 depict the north, east, south, and west facades respectively.

Fluted, Doric, wood columns and pilasters set on watertable-height, brick-clad platforms and support the wide entablatures of the porticos. Unless otherwise noted, all facades are regularly fenestrated with double-hung, six-over-one wood-sash windows typical of the Georgian-Revival style. The regularity of the running-bond-brick-pattern cladding is interrupted by other brick patterns at significant points across the building's facades. A Flemish-bond patterned frieze offset by rows of soldiers-bond patterned bricks tops the north, east and south walls. Courses of soldier-bond patterned bricks divide the watertable and the first story and the first and second stories. The same brick pattern delineates the sills and lintels, which are accented by a cast-stone keystone.

The primary entrance consists of paired, upper-half glazed, lower-half paneled, wood doors with a seventeen light transom and is centered beneath the north portico. A brick-clad, watertable-height patio abuts this portico on its east side, and a cutout in the eastern-most bay of this façade provides access to the east façade's portico from the

raised patio. Six-light, wood-sash windows set between the two eastern-most bays of the north façade's second and third stories.

A secondary entrance located beneath the northern-most bay of the east façade's portico consists of paired, upper-half glazed, lower-half paneled doors flanked by ten-light sidelights and surmounted by a ten-light transom. The three bays south of this door are punctuated by windows; a six-light, wood-sash window is set in the southern-most bay beneath the portico. In the center bay above the east-façade portico are six-light, wood-sash windows. Set in the first-story, slightly recessed wall panel of the east facing elevation of the south projection are paired windows flanked by fluted, Doric pilasters. This design detail is reflected in the cutout with fluted, Doric columns that penetrates the first story of the north projection's east facing elevation. A window is set in the wall behind this cutout. Set in second and third stories of both projections are paired windows, a feature commonly found in representatives of the Georgian-Revival style. The north and south facing returns of the south and north projections respectively have upper-half glazed, lower-half paneled doors in the second story, which provide access to the roof of the east façade portico from the interior of the building, and a window in the third story.

Most of the building's interior spaces have been significantly altered. The original floor plans of all three stories are severely compromised; the introduction and removal of walls has significantly altered the historic organization of spaces on the first floor. However, the proportions of the reading room and the dining room, located in the north and south projections respectively, remain intact. The wood framed walls that once divided the second and third stories into hotel rooms have been removed, ca. 1995, only the structural clay tile walls that form the central shotgun corridor remain intact. Some of the historic finishes survive on the first floor. The decorative brick fireplaces in the reading and dining rooms and much of the first floor's historic trim are intact. The

second and third floors are devoid of any historic finished trim, floors and plaster.<sup>157</sup>

Figure 13 illustrates the first-floor floor plan; figure 14 illustrates the second and third-floor floor plans.

Glazed panels consisting of fifteen-light French doors with ten-light sidelights and ten-light transoms enclose the three southern-most bays of the east-façade portico. This alteration was installed in 1923 and has gained historical significance of its own right. Figures 8, a ca. 1926 promotional postcard, and 10, a contemporary photograph of the east facade, depict this alteration. Other alterations include a non-historic hipped roof with supporting fluted Doric columns added to the north façade's raised patio between 1962 and 1989 and the removal of the building's historic parapet during a re-roofing campaign in 2002. The parapet consisted of cast-stone capped brick piers spanned by wood balustrades resting on a cast-stone coping.<sup>158</sup> Similar wood balustrades that historically crested the north and east façade porticos were removed at this time as well.<sup>159</sup>

The Sherburne Inn is located at the heart of the downtown district created by the intersection of NYS Routes 12 and 80 or Main and State Streets respectively, and it is one of the four masonry buildings that anchor the corners of this intersection. The north

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<sup>157</sup> Although the historic millwork of the second and third stories was removed, it was not discarded. Many of the historic door and window casings, doors, baseboards and bathroom fixtures are stored in the building and could be reinstalled.

<sup>158</sup> According to the building's present owner, James Webb, the original bricks and cast-stone coping pieces of the parapet were reserved at the time of the roof replacement with the intent of restoring this feature at a later date. (Christian Vischi, "Sherburne Inn to Get A New Roof as Part of Renovation Plans," *Evening Sun*, 9 October 2002.) Stacks of bricks and cast-stone coping were observed by the author of this study beneath an unsecured covered porch on the west elevation of the building, validating this claim. However, the location of these materials is not advantageous for this future plan, as it does not prevent their theft. The materials are readily accessible to users of the post office parking lot abutting the building's west elevation. Efforts to secure the materials should be made in order to ensure the possibility of their reuse in the future.

<sup>159</sup> The abundance of historic photographs depicting the parapet and balustrades could guide the reconstruction of these historic features.

and east facades have deep setbacks that allow for green space between the sidewalk and the building. An inverted wedge-shaped monument memorializing Josh Webb, the son of the building's present owner, stands on the east façade's setback. The wide setback is a deliberate design feature and is unlike the setbacks of the northwest- and northeast-corner buildings, which set contiguous to the sidewalk. Adjacent to the southeast-corner building, a Congregationalist Church is Monument Park, a green space in the center of the village in which stone monuments—one a Civil War soldier elevated on a pedestal and the other a truncated obelisk—honor local veterans of the Civil and World Wars. The church and the park are the principle views from the glazed portion of the Sherburne Inn's east portico. A narrow alley separates the inn building from a brick, two-and-a-half-story, Stick Style commercial building, presently known as the Big M building, on its south side. Located near the southwest corner of the Inn, the concrete-block village post office building is serviced by a village parking lot, which is accessed from West State Street, along the Inn's west façade.

### **Significance**

Interest in Colonial architecture stemmed from the Centennial celebration in 1876, when many Americans were reminded of their Colonial heritage. Firms like McKim, Meade, and White observed and recorded the decorative features of Georgian and Federal styles homes and freely interpreted their architectural elements in their residential and commercial commissions. Buildings with this design influence are collectively labeled Colonial Revival, however, there were several subcategories of this group. Georgian Revival was one. As the name implies, this style was based on the Georgian style, an English transplant brought to the colonies near the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its character defining features included classical columns and pilasters, wide often denticulated cornices, symmetrical often three- or five-rank facades, steeply pitched roofs with dormers, and roofline balustrades. Residential representatives were usually

constructed of wood and occasionally were veneered in brick; non-residential variants like smaller municipal buildings, schools, and colleges are typically masonry built. While this style was most popular from 1880 to 1950s, simplified versions are still built today.<sup>160</sup>

The Sherburne Inn is architecturally significant in the village of Sherburne as an intact example of the Georgian-Revival style from the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. Its porticos, windows, and cornice are archetypical elements of this style. The porticos are classically inspired, with ionic columns and wide entablatures; the windows are six-over-one patterned and some are paired, quintessential design features of this style but elements never found in original examples of Georgian-style architecture. Found in many urban residential and commercial examples, an alternate brick pattern creates the Sherburne Inn's ornate cornice. However, the missing roofline parapet and balustrade diminishes the visual impact of this feature.

In terms of the other buildings in the village, the Sherburne Inn is the only commercial representative of the Georgian-Revival Style. The vast majority of the commercial buildings in the village's downtown district were constructed in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Italianate, Second Empire, Gothic Revival and Stick Styles. A few examples exist from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, like the Greek-Revival commercial buildings on East State Street. Still fewer examples from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century exist, like the simplified Art-Deco Style building located on North Main Street. Additionally, there is only one other example of this style from this time period in the village, a single-family residence located less than a block away from the Inn at 18 South Main Street. The rarity of this style in the village alone warrants the Inn's preservation.

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<sup>160</sup> Gerald Foster, *American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 284-286. and Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006), 321-41.

The Sherburne Inn's architectural relationship to other buildings in the downtown district is also significant. Four masonry buildings anchor the four corners of the main intersection of the village. They are a stone-and-brick, Greek-Revival Empire Block, a brick, Second-Empire bank building, a brick, Gothic-Revival Congregational Church, and the Sherburne Inn. As the largest non-industrial buildings in the village, these highly visible buildings define their respective blocks and act as symbols of the community for both residents and guests.

Furthermore, their architectural styles serve as tangible representations of the progressive development of the village. The brick and stone, Greek-Revival Empire Block, ca 1840, represents a period of rapid development growth brought on by the introduction of the Cherry Valley Turnpike and the Chenango Canal to the village during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These transportation systems increased pedestrian and commercial traffic and made the village into a rural transportation and commercial center. Following this period of dramatic growth, the village experienced a period of economic stability. This period is represented by the Gothic-Revival Congregationalist Church, 1858 and 1880, located on the southeast corner. At that time, many residents had an expendable income with which they could finance the expensive construction of a brick church. Prior to this church's construction, all churches in the village were constructed of wood. As noted in chapter two, the original church burned in 1880; however, it was rebuilt in same style and thus, still serves as a representation of this period. The Second Empire bank building, 1880, located on the northwest corner, represents another period of economic growth during last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad was introduced to the village in 1870, it brought people, raw materials and money, bolstering local industries, raising property values and initiating a widespread building campaign of Italianate- and Second-

Empire Style residences and commercial buildings.<sup>161</sup> Finally, the Sherburne Inn, 1917, located on the southwest corner, represents the village's continued prosperity during the first decades the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Sherburne Inn is surviving example of a once prolific building typology in the village: the hotel or inn. As noted in chapter one, the first inn in the village was constructed on the site of the present-day Sanford Park between 1801 and 1802, and by the time of the village's centennial celebration in 1896, there were eight temporary housing establishments operating in or around the village. None of these businesses are in operation today and only three of the buildings that once housed these lucrative businesses are still standing. Notable among the three survivors is the Sherburne Inn, as it exhibits a great deal architectural integrity. The others have been significantly altered and their historic use is virtually indiscernible.

The Sherburne Inn is also a representative of the architectural legacy of the Pratt family, considered one "of the most influential"<sup>162</sup> families in the village during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Josh Pratt, a successful merchant and banker, used his considerable wealth to finance the construction of two buildings, a bridge and other infrastructural improvements. He constructed the Second Empire bank building to house the Joshua Pratt & Co., Bank in 1880 and a Second-Empire-style residence on South Main Street. He spent \$2,000 on macadamizing South Main Street in 1904, and shortly before his death in 1906, he paid \$20,000 for the construction of a bridge over the

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<sup>161</sup> Several Second Empire commercial buildings were constructed downtown during this period. They included the Sanford Block, now the Masonic Temple, located on the west side of the bank building, the Kutschback & Bullis Block, located on the present day site of the Top Variety building on East State Street, and two blocks on North Main, presently the sited of the Service Pharmacy and Joe and Vinny's Pizzeria buildings. Only the bank building and Sanford block survive today.

<sup>162</sup> "Death of Talcott Pratt, An Aged and Highly Esteemed Citizen," *Utica Morning Herald* (20 October 1898). [www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com), accessed 15 February 2011.

Chenango River and the extension and improvement of West State Street leading to it.<sup>163</sup> After his death in 1906, Pratt's two daughters, Carrie Pratt and Grace Pratt Newton, continued his legacy of generosity, financing several public projects with their inheritances. In 1910, the sister built the Gothic Revival library building on East State Street to house the village's book collection as noted in chapter three.<sup>164</sup> They donated \$100,000 for the construction of new school and purchased a home adjacent to the proposed school site for the use of the school principal in ca. 1923.<sup>165</sup> The Pratt Newton Home, an extended care facility exclusively for elderly women, was established and endowed by the sisters' wills in 1932. Its endowment included money for maintenance costs and their father's residence on South Main Street to house the institution.<sup>166</sup> Following the 1915 fire that destroyed the Hotel Daniels, "the wealth associated with the Pratt family took over the burned site and built the modern brick Sherburne Inn."<sup>167</sup>

Several conclusions can be drawn from the architectural description presented in the first section of this chapter. First, the exterior of the building exhibits a considerable degree of architectural integrity. Most of the building's historic windows are intact, the porticos retain most of their architectural proportions and details, it does not appear that the brick cladding has been re-pointed, and the historic proportions of the building are unaltered. Furthermore, alterations to the building have either gained architectural significance of their own right, like the glazed section of the east portico, or are reversible, like the non-historic porch roof addition abutting the north portico. Second, the removal and addition of walls may have severely compromised the integrity of the

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<sup>163</sup> "Joshua Pratt is Lost to Sherburne: Aged Banker Died at His Home this Morning. Was a Public Benefactor," *Utica Herald-Dispatch* (11 August 1906), 8. and "Joshua Pratt: Aged Banker was Long Sherburne's Benefactor," *The Utica Sunday Tribune* (12 August 1906), [www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com), accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>164</sup> Benedict, 19.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 and 27.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>167</sup> Benedict, *My Recollections*, 22.

interior, however, it created an opportunity for potential developers, as the historic room configurations will not confine their floor-plan design. Third, the building's central location, setting, and architectural features make it an ideal candidate for rehabilitation.

Individually, the Sherburne Inn is architecturally significant. It represents an architectural style that is uncommon in the village, as only two examples of the Georgian-Revival style exist from the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, and its architectural elements superbly represent the character-defining features of that style. The way in which the Sherburne Inn relates architecturally and historically to other buildings in the community is also significant. It is a downtown anchor, a representative of the progressive development of the village, a tangible link the history of the hotel industry, and an example of the architectural legacy of the Pratt family. Any rehabilitation plan should have an educational component that addresses the building's significance.

## CHAPTER V

### COMMUNITY PROFILE AND MARKET STUDY

The village of Sherburne is an excellent place to live, with community organizations, public amenities and events, and a small-town aesthetic forming the basis of its appeal. However, economic barriers, like limited employment opportunities and a depressed income base, deter individuals from moving to the village and encourage inhabitants to leave.

This chapter focuses on gaining an accurate understanding of the current economic and social characteristics that make the village both a desirable and undesirable place to live. The positive and negative community characteristics effecting a potential historic rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn will be examined through this exploration as well. Both of these objectives will be accomplished through the examination of quantitative and qualitative information pulled from census data, community reports and direct observations, creating a community profile.

This chapter will also be a market study for the rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn, informing the direction of the reuse plan. It will identify the most appropriate use for the building based on the current characteristics and apparent needs of the community. In addition, it will look to the apparent future needs of the community to ensure that the reuse plan remains economically and socially viable after the initial completion of the project. This piece of the market study is especially important for the Sherburne Inn, as its history demonstrates a cycle of seemingly productive years followed by economic disaster. A well-informed reuse plan will combat this trend and produce a project that will remain economically and socially viable beyond the first few years of operation.

The community profile will focus on the characteristics of the village and town of Sherburne as they relate to the Chenango County and other comparable communities. The village of Sherburne is at the approximate geographic center of the township of the

same name, which is located on the northern boarder of Chenango County, and is its largest urban center. The township is surrounded by the townships of North Norwich and New Berlin to the south, Smyrna to the west, Columbus to east, and Hamilton (located in Madison County) to the north. Its other urban center, Earlville, lies at the convergence of four townships, Hamilton, Lebanon, Sherburne, and Smyrna, and is split into two counties, Chenango and Madison. This complicates the use of its statistical information in the development of a community profile for the town and village of Sherburne, as it includes data related to three other townships. Therefore, statistics related specifically to village of Earlville will not be included in this study.

#### **A. Population**

Within the last half century, the population in the Town of Sherburne has steadily increased. In 1960, the population totaled 3,338; in 1970, it numbered 3,578. The population increased to 3,903 by 1990 and by time of the 2000 United States Census, the population in the town of Sherburne reached 3,979. Compared to the rest of Chenango County, this population growth was unusual. Between 1990 and 2000, the population in Chenango County in general decreased .7%. The Town's increase in population is more aligned with the statewide trend, which showed a 5.6 percent increase during this period.<sup>168</sup>

Examining the population trend for a comparable township within the county further illustrates the atypical nature of Sherburne's population increase. The Town of New Berlin, approximately 11 miles west of Sherburne, experienced an 8% decrease in population between 1990 and 2000. Even the City of Norwich, Chenango County's governmental seat, had a 3.4 percent decrease in population during the same time period.

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<sup>168</sup> Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State, Inc., *A Socioeconomic and Housing Profile of Chenango County, New York*, prepared for Chenango Housing Council, March 2003, 4.

The racial composition of the town of Sherburne according to the 2000 U.S. Census is shown in Table 1. It shows that the town is predominately white, non-Hispanic, with a small percentage of African Americans and other racial groups. This profile accurately describes the composition of the village as well.

Table 1  
Racial Composition of the Town of Sherburne, 2000

	Chenango County		Town of Sherburne	
	No.	%	No.	%
White		97.6	3,956	98.7
Black or African American		.8	9	.2
Other		2.4	41	1.1

Source: *A Socioeconomic and Housing Profile of Chenango County, New York*, 7; 2000 Census

Table 2 shows the distribution of age groups in the town of Sherburne in 2000. Young ages, 25 to 34, and middle-aged, ages 35 to 59, adults comprise a significant proportion of the population as indicated in the table. These groups make up approximately 41.6 percent of the total population, which is consistent with the percentage for the county as a whole.<sup>169</sup> The same is true for the village; these groups make up 44 percent of the population. The median age of individuals in the town and village is 38 years.

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<sup>169</sup> Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, 6.

Table 2  
Age Characteristics of the Town of Sherburne, 2000

Age	Chenango County		Town of Sherburne	
	Total	%	Total	%
0 – 4	3,054	5.90	246	6.20
5 – 14	7,885	15.30	631	15.90
15 – 19	3,775	7.30	267	6.70
20 – 24	2,357	4.60	179	4.50
25 – 34	5,856	11.40	469	11.60
35 – 44	8,262	16.10	643	16.20
45 – 54	7,244	14.10	550	13.80
55 – 64	5,314	10.30	382	9.60
65 – 74	3,863	7.50	332	8.30
75 – 84	2,779	5.40	214	5.40
85+	1,007	2.00	73	1.80
Total	51,401	100.00	3,979	100.00
Median Age	38.4		38	

Source: *Chenango County Economic Development Strategic Plan, 23*; 2000 Census

The adult sex ratio in the town is 92, which means there are 92 males for every 100 females. This ratio was marginally less than the ratio for the county, which was 96, and comparable to New Berlin’s, which was 90.<sup>170</sup> For the village, the ratio is slightly lower than the town and County’s at approximately 86 percent.<sup>171</sup>

At the time of the 2000 census, the town contained 1,619 households, with nearly 40 percent of these located in the village. The average household size was 2.44 persons.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, 5.

<sup>171</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Sherburne village, New York Fact Sheet: 2000,” American Factfinder Fact Sheet, 2001. <http://factfinder.census.gov> accessed 25 March 2010.

<sup>172</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Sherburne town, Chenango County, New York Fact Sheet: 2000,” American Factfinder Fact Sheet, 2001. <http://factfinder.census.gov> accessed 25 March 2010

## **B. Labor and Income Statistics**

In 2000, the town of Sherburne had an eligible labor force, which defined as individuals above 16 year of age, of 3,006 persons. Of these, 61.6 percent or 1,853 people reported being employed at the time the census was taken. This percentage is consistent with labor force statistics for the New York State, calculated at 61.1 percent, and nominally higher than the county, calculated at 60.9 percent. According to one report, the county's percentage reflects the above average population of retired, disabled, and/or elderly individuals within it.<sup>173</sup>

Unemployment at the time of the census was recorded at 3.6 percent. The present economic climate has significantly altered this percentage. Between June 2004 and May 2005, unemployment in Chenango County fluctuated greatly, dipping as low as 4.5 percent in October 2004 and 6.2 percent in January and February of 2005.<sup>174</sup> As of January 2010, the New York State Department of Labor reported a 10.9 percent unemployment rate in Chenango County.<sup>175</sup> Some factors contributing to this percentage are the restructuring, bankruptcy, and relocation of many major Chenango County employers. In the spring of 2009, internal restructuring resulted in the downsizing of Norwich Pharmaceuticals, which cost the county a substantial number of specialized and highly paid manufacturing jobs. The collapse of the residential real estate market and the suspension of construction financing caused Lok-N-Log Home Inc., a manufacturer of upscale log homes and a major employer in Sherburne, to eliminate most of its workers, maintaining a skeleton crew to operate I-Wood-Care, a subsidiary of the Lok-N-Logs Homes, Inc. Proctor and Gamble Pharmaceutical, once a major employer in Chenango County, ceased operations in the City of Norwich in the spring of 2009, disbanding some of its employees to sister locations and firing many of its line operatives. With a

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<sup>173</sup> Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, 7.

<sup>174</sup> *Chenango County Economic Development Strategic Plan*, 31.

<sup>175</sup> New York State Department of Labor, *Unemployment Rates by County, New York State, January 2010*. <http://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/laus.asp> accessed January 2010.

considerable number of area residents having manufacturing jobs, 21.7 percent in Chenango County<sup>176</sup> and 20.8 percent in the Town of Sherburne,<sup>177</sup> the loss of these jobs had a significant impact on the unemployment rate.

Table 3 shows the distribution of employment by industry for Chenango County and the Town of Sherburne. As evidenced by the table, the industries employing the highest percentage of workers for both are manufacturing, retail trade, and educational, health and social services. In 2000, these occupations comprised approximately 55 percent of the jobs staffed by county residents and 58 percent of the jobs staffed by town of Sherburne residents.<sup>178</sup>

Table 3  
Employment by Industry, 2000

Industrial Sector/ Industry	Chenango County		Town of Sherburne	
	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture/Forestry/ Fishing Hunting Mining	883	3.9	72	4.1
Construction	1,353	6.0	97	5.6
Manufacturing	4,938	21.7	362	20.8
Wholesale Trade	580	2.6	28	1.6
Retail Trade	2,418	10.6	192	11.0
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	961	4.2	73	4.2
Information	703	3.1	78	4.5
FIRE/Rental and Leasing	1,266	5.6	122	7.0
Professional/Scientific/Mgmt/Admin/Waste Mngt Svs	1,123	4.9	62	3.6
Educational/ Health/ Social Services	5,350	23.6	448	25.7
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accom./Food Svs	1,195	5.3	78	4.5
Other Services	938	4.1	57	3.3
Public Administration	1,006	4.4	75	4.3
Total	22,714	100	1,744	100

Sources: *Chenango County Economic Development Strategic Plan*, 29; 2000 Census

The information contained in this table is also an accurate depiction of the village with the exception of two major, albeit predictable, differences. The percentage of agricultural, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining employees in the village is

<sup>176</sup> Laberge Group, *Chenango County, New York: Economic Development Strategic Plan* (Albany, NY: Laberge Group, 2006), 29.

<sup>177</sup> Census Bureau, "Sherburne town: 2000."

<sup>178</sup> Laberge Group, *Chenango County Strategic Plan*, 29.

significantly less than in the town. Nearly 70 percent of the employees comprising this group live outside of the village. In contrast, the percentage of arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services employees is significantly greater in the village than in the town, with nearly 77 percent of this group living in village. With nearly 40 percent of the town’s population living in the village, one would expect 40 percent of any one employment group to live in the village with the remainder living outside of it. It is assumed that these differences are a direct reflection of the land use characteristics of the town and village, with the former being rural, agrarian and the latter being urban, residential/commercial.<sup>179</sup>

The median household income for residents of Chenango County is significantly below the state average, with some residents making approximately three-quarters of the amount of their state-wide professional equals. On average, wages in the county are 87% that of New York State wages.<sup>180</sup> This statistic holds true for the town of Sherburne. Table 4 illustrates income distribution for New York State, Chenango County and the Town of Sherburne.

Table 4  
Household Income, 2000

Income	New York State	Chenango County		Town of Sherburne	
	%	Number	%	Number	%
Less than \$15,000	17.90	3,790	19.10	366	22.8
\$15,000-\$24,999	11.70	3,393	17.10	291	18.10
\$25,000-\$34,999	11.40	3,118	15.70	207	12.80
\$35,000-\$49,999	14.80	3,643	18.30	255	15.80
\$50,000-\$74,999	18.40	3,534	17.80	300	18.60
\$75,000-\$99,999	10.60	1,390	7.00	114	7.10
\$100,000-\$149,999	9.10	744	3.70	55	3.40
\$150,000 or more	6.20	280	1.40	23	1.40
Households	100.00	19,892	100.00	1,611	100.00
Median Household	\$43,582	\$33,650		\$31,841	
Median Family	\$51,783	\$39,668		\$39,094	

Source: *Chenango County Economic Development Strategic Plan*, 28; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

<sup>179</sup> Census Bureau, “Sherburne town.” and Census Bureau, “Sherburne Village, 2000.”

<sup>180</sup> Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, 31.

The income distribution for the village of Sherburne reported in the 2000 Census was similar except for the three groups with incomes above \$100,000. Most households, nearly 90 percent, making between \$100,000 and \$149,999 were outside of the village. Similarly, nearly 80 percent of households making between \$150,000 and \$199,999, are outside of the village. However, all households making 200,000 or more—there were only twelve—are located in the village.<sup>181</sup> This indicates that the village of Sherburne is primarily comprised of middle- or poverty-level classes with only a few wealthy households interspersed.

According to one report, Chenango County gained significantly in terms of income during the five years preceding the assemblage and analysis of census data in 2000. The *Chenango County Economic Development Strategic Plan*, drafted in 2006 by the Laberge Group, reported that the proportion of households with an annual income less than \$34,999 decreased from 52 percent in 2000 to 46 percent in 2005. It does not offer an explanation for the decrease. One might assume that this percentage is due in part to the removal of some individuals from the labor force, either through retirement or disability, and not their ascension of the economic ladder. Laberge's report further reports that the proportion of households earning \$75,000 or more increased from 12 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2005. Again, an explanation for this sudden increase is not offered. Although the data presented in the Strategic Plan focuses on Chenango County as a whole, one can assume that at least some of these economic advancements apply to the income demographics of the Town of Sherburne.<sup>182</sup>

Despite the reported economic advancement of some county residents, the proportion of Chenango County's population below the poverty level increased 2.7 percent between 1990 and 2000, from 11.7 to 14.4 respectively.<sup>183</sup> The proportion of

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<sup>181</sup> Census Bureau, "Sherburne village: 2000."

<sup>182</sup> Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, 23.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

individuals in the Town of Sherburne below the poverty level was 16.4 in 2000.<sup>184</sup> Another indication of the poverty in the county and town, 39.6 percent of students enrolled in the local central school were eligible for reduced or free lunch according to the criteria established by the Free & Reduced Lunch Program.<sup>185</sup>

### **C. Housing**

According to the 2000 United States Census, 86.2 percent of housing units in the village of Sherburne were occupied. This seemingly low figure reflects the above average percentage of seasonal, recreational, or occasional use structures in Chenango County. Nearly 50 percent of vacant units in the county are for these uses according to one study.

The distribution of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units in the village of Sherburne is almost equal. Of the 635 occupied units, 53.4 percent are owner-occupied and 46.6 percent are renter-occupied.<sup>186</sup> This is atypical for a community of its size in Chenango County. In the comparable village of New Berlin, owner occupied units total almost 73 percent while renter-occupied units total less than 28 percent. Sherburne's comparatively high percentage of renter-occupied units is more commonly found in larger urban centers. In the city of Norwich, for example, 53% of the housing stock is categorized as multi-family.<sup>187</sup>

The considerably high percentage of renter-occupied housing may suggest an abundance of multi-story housing structures; however, most housing units are or appear to be single-family homes. Nearly 48 percent of housing units in the village of Sherburne are categorized as single-family. Multi-family units comprise 44.2 percent of the village housing stock, but most of these have less than five units and presumably represent

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<sup>184</sup> Census Bureau, "Sherburne town: 2000."

<sup>185</sup> "Low-income and Migrant Student information," Schooltree.org. <http://new-york.schooltree.org/public/Sherburne-Earlville-High-062057.html>, accessed on 3/15/10.

<sup>186</sup> Census Bureau, "Sherburne village: 2000."

<sup>187</sup> Laberge Group, *Chenango County Strategic Plan*, 29.

single-family homes that have been converted into multi-family units. Renter-occupied structures with more than five units total only about 13 percent of the housing stock<sup>188</sup> and are located in four housing developments, Grace Manor, Sherburne Meadows, West Lake Village, and Sherburne Senior Housing, and in the upper floors of the downtown commercial buildings.

There are three existing housing projects that provide below market rate housing to low-income households in the village. These include Grace Manor, Sherburne Senior Housing, and Sherburne Meadows. Collectively, these projects have 101 below-market-rate apartments with 69 of them being studio and one-bedroom units open exclusively to elderly/handicapped households and the other 32 being one- and two-bedroom units open to low-income, non-elderly households. When viewed in respect to the total number of renter-occupied housing units in the village, these projects accounts for approximately 32 percent of the occupied rental stock.<sup>189</sup>

The rental vacancy rated in 5.9 percent and the average household size of a renter-occupied unit is between one and two persons. At the time of the 2000 Census, the majority of rental rates ranged from \$300 to \$749 depending on the number of bedrooms in the unit.<sup>190</sup>

#### **D. Healthcare**

A benefit to living in the town or village of Sherburne is access to an abundance of healthcare resources available through a network of general and need-specific facilities operating within Chenango County. In 2003, the number of Health Care and Social Assistance establishments totaled 106. These include fifty-three ambulatory health care

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<sup>188</sup> Census Bureau, "Sherburne village: 2000."

<sup>189</sup> Phoenix Associates, *Smyrna Rental Housing Market Housing Study*, prepared for Chenango Housing Improvement Program, 24 August 1995, 13.

<sup>190</sup> Census Bureau, "Sherburne village: 2000."

service, fifteen nursing and residential care facilities, thirty-seven social assistance programs and Chenango Memorial Hospital.<sup>191</sup>

Located in the City of Norwich, Chenango Memorial Hospital is part of the United Health Services regional health care system and one of the largest employers in the City, employing 600 people in 2005. The 139-bed facility provides limited services to the community, including emergency health care, radiology, surgical care, dental care, and short- and long-term residential care and treatment. Established in 1912, the hospital was extensively renovated in 1990 to modernize the facility and increase the quality of care it provides.<sup>192</sup>

Bassett Healthcare, which services an eight county region in central New York, offers an alternative to the services provided by Chenango Memorial Hospital. This health care provider has four hospitals and 26 health centers located throughout Herkimer, Fulton, Montgomery, Chenango, Madison, Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties. Bassett has facilities located in the City of Norwich, and the Towns of Sherburne and Hamilton and is the most readily accessible source of primary care for residents of the Town of Sherburne.<sup>193</sup>

#### **E. Education**

Numerous educational opportunities are available to school-age children and postsecondary students dwelling in the town and village of Sherburne. The town falls within the jurisdiction of the publically funded Sherburne-Earlville Central School District, with its campus located in the northeast quadrant of the village. Having one of the largest student populations within the area, the district is a compellation of six independent school districts consolidated in the mid 1970s. The districts are Lebanon,

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<sup>191</sup> Laberge Group, 93.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> "Network Health Centers," Bassett Healthcare Network.  
<http://www.bassett.org/facilities.cfm?id=116>. accessed 22 March 2010

located to the northwest of the campus, Poolville, located to north of the campus, Earlville, located to the northwest of the campus, Smyrna, located to the west of the campus, North Norwich, located to the south of the campus, and Sherburne. The student population of the consolidated school is approximately 1800.<sup>194</sup>

In addition to public schools, school-aged children living within the Town of Sherburne have access to four private schools: Holy Family, Valley Heights Christian Academy, Holmesville Christian Academy, and Milford Academy. As their names indicate, three of the private schools are sponsored by religious organizations. Holy Family is a Roman Catholic elementary school located in the City of Norwich; Valley Heights Christian Academy is a Baptist school in the City of Norwich that offers a prekindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade program. Located in New Berlin, which is 11 miles northwest of Sherburne, Holmesville Christian Academy is a small Baptist school that offers an ungraded kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade program.<sup>195</sup>

The fourth private school, Milford Academy, is also located in New Berlin and caters to a specific demographic. Originally founded as a preparatory school for Yale University in Milford, Connecticut in 1906, Milford Academy relocated to central New York due to financial difficulties in 2003. The institution now focuses on providing a superb education to athletically gifted students who require additional educational guidance prior to matriculating in a post-secondary school. Generally these students come from minority and working-class families and are, therefore, dependent on the attainment of a four-year athletic scholarship in order to attend major universities.<sup>196</sup>

An additional educational opportunity for individuals in the Town of Sherburne and Chenango County is the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego Board of Cooperative Education Services (DCMO-BOCES), which provides specialized training for school-

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<sup>194</sup> “About Sherburne Earlville Central School District,” Sherburne Earlville Central School District. [http://www.secsd.org/About\\_SE/](http://www.secsd.org/About_SE/) accessed on 03/22/10.

<sup>195</sup> Labege, 39.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 39.

aged and adult students. At its campus in Norwich, DCMO-BOCES offers training in Industrial and Machinist Mathematics, Engineering and Assembly Drawing Interpretation, Computer Numeric Control (CNC), Programming, Welding, Basic Electronics, and Precision Measurement.<sup>197</sup> It has several programs focused on exposing high school students to a broad range of careers. Known collectively as the New Visions Program, it provides a hands-on education in the fields of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Allied Health, Business Management, Banking and Insurance, Law and Government, and Teacher Education Preparation.<sup>198</sup>

The Town of Sherburne is centrally located in a region with an abundance of post-secondary schools. Twelve colleges and universities are within about an hour drive of the Town, including Colgate University, Hartwick College, SUNY Oneonta, Cazenovia College, Hamilton College, SUNY Delhi College, Binghamton University, Cornell University, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse University, LeMoyne College, and Morrisville State College.<sup>199</sup> In addition to these institutions, there are five community colleges within the same driving distance: Broome Community College, Mohawk Valley Community College, Herkimer County Community College, Onondaga Community College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College.

#### **F. Public Transportation**

Although most individuals in the studied area generally use private transportation to commute to work and leisure, a percentage of the population relies on public transportation. Chenango County Public Transit is a public bus system that operates out of the City of Norwich and provides affordable transportation on regular routes throughout Chenango County. With two regular bus stops positioned within the village

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>198</sup> "Career and Technical Education Programs," Delaware, Chenango, Madison, Otsego BOCES. [http://www.dcmoboces.com/Services\\_Inst.cfm?subpage=56](http://www.dcmoboces.com/Services_Inst.cfm?subpage=56), accessed 4/22/10.

<sup>199</sup> *Laberge*, 43.

of Sherburne, residents have access to major points of interest throughout the county, including the North Norwich campus of DCMO-BOCES, the Village of Earlville, and the City of Norwich. Once in the City of Norwich, passengers can use the regular city bus system to navigate to other locations.<sup>200</sup> In addition, the regular commuter service DIAL-A-RIDE, an on-call or on-demand bus service, allows patrons located outside of regular routes to obtain rides.<sup>201</sup>

The Village of Sherburne is connected to communities outside of Chenango County via the Couch USA bus system. These communities include Bath, Corning, Elmira, Binghamton, Utica, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Ithaca, Monticello, and New York City.<sup>202</sup> The bus stop for this service is located at the center of the village's downtown district

Town of Sherburne resident also have access to local and regional air services. Located in North Norwich, Lieutenant Warren Eaton Airport serves primarily a light aircraft clientele and provides numerous benefits to the County. These benefits include recreational flying, aerial inspections, police/law enforcement, aerial photography and surveying, career education and training, search and rescue, emergency medical evacuation, medical shipments, patient transfer, environmental patrol, forest firefighting, and traffic/news reporting.<sup>203</sup>

Furthermore, town and village residents are within fifty minutes of two regional airports: Greater Binghamton Airport and the Syracuse Hancock International Airport. Owned and operated by the Broome County Department of Aviation, the Greater Binghamton Airport is located in the Village of Johnson City and services the

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<sup>200</sup> First Transit, *Chenango County Public Transit Informational Pamphlet*, updated 24 August 2009.

<sup>201</sup> "Dial-A-Ride Services," *Chenango County Public Transit*, effective date 24 August 2009.

<sup>202</sup> Couch USA, Binghamton Ithaca/New York City Route Brochure, updated February 2010.

<sup>203</sup> Laberge, 34.

communities located in New York’s Southern Tier and in Northern Pennsylvania. Syracuse Hancock International Airport, located in the City of Syracuse off Interstate 81, is served by several major air carriers including American Eagle, Continental, Delta, JetBlue, Northwest, United Express, USAirways, and TransMeridian.<sup>204</sup>

**G. Parks, Recreation, and Community Events**

One of the greatest resources for individuals living in the town and village of Sherburne is the accessibility of New York State parks and recreational sites. There are thirty-one state forests, two state parks, one State camp ground, one State tower site, one State education center, and one State management area within Chenango County. Table 5 lists the names and types of resources in the county.

Table 5  
NYSDEC Managed State Lands

<b>FORESTS</b>	<b>FORESTS CONTINUED...</b>
Ambler State Forest	Otselic State Forest
Balsam Swamp State Forest	Perkins Pond State Forest
Basswood State Forest	Pigeon Hill State Forest
Beaver Meadow State Forest	Pine Ridge State Forest
Bobell Hill State Forest	Pitcher Springs State Forest
Bowman Creek State Forest	Red Brook State Forest
Bucks Brook State Forest	Skinner Hill State Forst
Bumps Creek State Forest	South Hill State Forest
Coventry State Forest	Whaupanaucan State Forest
Five Streams State Forest	Willey Brook State Forest
Geneganslet State Forest	<b>PARKS</b>
Hunts Pond State Forest	Bowman Lake State Park
Lincklaen State Forest	Oquaga Creek State Park
Long Pond State Forest	<b>TOWER SITE</b>
Ludlow Creek State Forest	Berry Hill Tower Site
Lyon Brook State Forest	<b>CAMPSITE</b>
Mariposa State Forest	Hunts Pond State Campground
McDonough State Forest	<b>WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA</b>
Melondy Hill State Forest	Pharsalia Wildlife Management Area
New Michigan State Forest	<b>EDUCATION CENTER</b>
Oak Ridge State Forest	Rogers Environmental Education Center

Source: Laberge, 51.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 34-5.

The state site that most directly impacts the Sherburne is Rogers Environmental Education Center, located approximately one mile west of the village on NYS Route 80. It encompasses 541-acres of the land and contains several diverse habitats, including woodlands, wetlands, plantations, meadows, and farmland, through which trails circulate. In addition, it offers programming that benefits local school, youth, and special interest groups. Generalized programming and workshops focused on environmental conservation and management, and habitat and animal identification benefit teachers wanting to incorporate environmental issues in their lesson plans. Programs tailored to the specific needs of particular organizations, like badge requirements for local Boy and Girl Scout Troops, are also offered.<sup>205</sup> In addition to its year-round programming, the Center hosts an annual Winter Living Celebration that allows visitors to participate in numerous outdoor winter activities, including snow shoeing, and cross country skiing.<sup>206</sup>

In addition to the state funded recreation centers, the Village of Sherburne maintains several parks for the use of local residents. Located in the southeast quadrant of the village, Paddleford Park has two baseball/softball diamonds, an extensive playground, pavilions for special events, and a pool. Gaines Memorial Park is located at southeast quadrant of Main and State Streets. Its bandstand provides the optimal venue for Music in the Park, an annual summer concrete series in which local and regional bands perform for the community. The Sherburne Historic Park adjacent to the high school is a wedge-shaped park in which salvaged historic structures from the surrounding area, including an early 20<sup>th</sup> century school house and steel truss bridge, have been relocated.

Like the Music in the Park program, events throughout the year promote community involvement and pride. The volunteer fire department sponsor regulars pancake breakfasts and chicken barbeques; village churches host annual community

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<sup>205</sup> Laberge, 51

<sup>206</sup> Jim Reilly, "Roger Center Explores Winter Life," *Post Standard*, 4 January 2002.

dinners, sales, and benefits; and parades celebrating holidays or special events regularly march down Main Street. Each year the community's largest event is the Sherburne Pageant of Bands, sponsored by the fire department and hosted by the local high school. Founded by Albert Whitney and Frank Miller in 1949, this jazz band, parade band, drum line, concert band, and color guard competition brings nearly 2,000 students from 30 schools and 10,000 spectators to the village for one weekend annually.

#### **H. Olfactory Nuisance**

Located adjacent to the Sherburne Inn in the southwest quadrant of the village, the Chenango Pet Foods Company has been operating in the village of Sherburne for almost a century. Its presence has benefited the community by providing jobs and large tax base. Unfortunately, it also produces an unpleasant "pet food" odor that occasionally permeates the village. While most residents are resigned to the smell, the acidity "is nevertheless a hindrance to downtown revitalization efforts as well as efforts to revitalize the neighboring Sherburne Inn."<sup>207</sup> The company and the village have collaboratively worked to mitigate the odors, but there seems to be no apparent remedy.

#### **I. Summary**

Village of Sherburne residents are primarily middle to low income, and middle aged. Most work blue-collar jobs outside of the area and are paid less than their state-wide equals. Presumably these characteristics would encourage migration away from the area, but the population has remained relatively stable in the past three decades, which is significant considering the negative population trends of the surrounding towns of New Berlin and Columbus and the City of Norwich. Amenities in the village include a primary care facility, local and regional public transportation networks, public and

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<sup>207</sup> *Sherburne Strategic Plan*, 26

private education opportunities for high school and postsecondary students, and access to village and state parks and recreation centers. The interpersonal feel of the community is an intangible amenity. Regular community meals sponsored by local organizations, the Pageant of Bands and other parades, summer band concerts and other annual events bolster this feel and reinforce a strong sense of community.

As illustrated by the aforementioned characteristics, the village is a desirable place to live despite the limited economic opportunities. Therefore, the author of this study believes that the Sherburne Inn building should be adaptively re-used as a restaurant and rental housing.

The decision to include a restaurant as part of this proposal was based on a community input survey conducted by the author. Residents generally expressed a demand for the reestablishment of a restaurant in the inn building, stating that village lacked a formal dining establishment. In reference to the desired quality of service and character of the new restaurant, Theresa Mastro, a town resident for almost 50 years, stated that it “should strive for a AAA rating [and] the enclosed porch [east portico] should make you feel special when being seated there for meals.” The new restaurant would compete with the seven existing business in village of Sherburne. They include Gilligan’s, D&D Diner, Judy’s Coffee Shop, Joe’s Pizzeria, China King, and Subway, all of which are classified as full-service-causal, fast-causal or fast-food establishments. In terms of its intended market, the new restaurant would compete directly with Lewis’ Restaurant and Cocktail Bar.

This decision is also supported by spending patterns for households within a fifteen mile radius of the inn. In 2004, residents of the studied area spent \$60 million on food away from home. They spent an additional 4.6 million on alcoholic beverages away from the home. As there are only 37 restaurants identified in this radius, it is assumed

that a significant percentage of this spending occurred outside the area. Some of this lost business could be captured by a rehabilitated Sherburne Inn restaurant.<sup>208</sup>

Two types of rental housing could be considered for a rehabilitated Sherburne Inn: affordable and conventional. As noted above, roughly a third of the village's occupied rental stock is low-income, a statistic that might suggest a saturated market. Yet, there were no vacant apartments in the below-market-value complexes and all had waiting lists of at least five people as of May 19. Thus, one could conclude that the need for affordable housing in the community is unmet and that the conversion of the Sherburne Inn for such would be ideal.

While the aforementioned conclusion is logical, two studies show that low-income housing would not garner the support of community members, and for a rehabilitation to be truly successful, community support is essential. Conducted by a Cornell University class on small businesses in 1994, a feasibility study for the reuse of the Inn reported that community members opposed the development of low-income housing. This sentiment was reiterated in the 2005 Village of Sherburne Downtown Strategic Plan. An advisory committee comprised of the village mayor, businessmen and women, and community members was assembled to guide the planning process. From a list of fifteen potential reuses—presumably one was low-income housing—three were identified for further study. These included a restaurant, hotel/inn, and small shops. Low-income housing was excluded, indicating the committee member's belief that this use was economically unviable or socially undesirable. Therefore, although low-income housing seems to be the ideal reuse option, it is not extensively explored in this thesis.

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<sup>208</sup> Thoma Development Consultants, *Sherburne Inn: Market Analysis*, prepared for the Village of Sherburne, January 2005, 3.

## CHAPTER VI

### CREATING A RESTAURANT AND CONVENTIONAL RENTAL HOUSING

As identified in the previous chapter, it is the author's belief based on the characteristics of the community that the Sherburne Inn building should be adaptively reused as conventional rental housing and restaurant space. A rehabilitation of this nature would need to be extensive given the current deteriorated condition of the building. As noted in chapter four, historic features on the interior and exterior have been severely compromised by insensitive alterations, deferred maintenance, and infiltration of water, most walls and finishes on the second and third floors have been removed, and the mechanical and life-safety systems are antiquated and need to be upgraded. The considerable costs associated with repairing these and other issues are only some of the factors to be considered when developing a reuse plan. Others include project financing, income potential, and annual operational expenses for the completed project. Ultimately, one logical question is asked: do the benefits of rehabilitation outweigh the costs? This chapter examines this question from an economic perspective, using pro forma analysis to examine the economic feasibility of rehabilitating the Sherburne Inn.

Estimated rehabilitation and conversion costs can be expressed on a per square foot or per unit basis. Those used for this project are based on two studies prepared for the Village of Sherburne by Crawford and Stearns Preservation Architects and Planners and S.M.R. Associates in 2005 and 2009 respectively. Their figures vary widely for the same types of work, with the former's being considerably higher than the latter's—in some instances by as much as 30 percent. Therefore, unless otherwise noted, an approximate average of the two is used in this study. This approach will accommodate a large margin for cost overrun, inflation, and error without being excessively cautious.

In a mixed-use project, construction costs typically vary by floor depending on the intended use. For the Sherburne Inn, the rehabilitation of the first-floor restaurant is significantly less expensive than the conversion of the second and third floors into apartments. As work on the first floor will not change the historic use, the project scope is comparatively small, with its focus being on the restoration of historic architectural details and the modernization of the kitchen facilities. The brick-and-mortar cost for this floor is estimated at \$30 per square foot.<sup>209</sup> According to Crawford and Stearns report, ten one-bedroom apartments ranging in size from 470 to 734 square feet could be accommodated on the upper floors of the Sherburne Inn. The estimated conversion cost is \$65 per square foot, or between \$30,550 and \$41,401 per unit.<sup>210</sup> This comparatively high figure reflects the necessary installation of ten kitchens and bathrooms, all new mechanical systems—i.e. electric, plumbing, heat, and fire suppression—and the work needed to address the condition issues noted in the “Architectural Description” in chapter four. Based on Crawford and Stearns’ recommendations, an additional \$6 per square foot is allocated for the rehabilitation of the basement into mechanical room, laundry facilities, and storage.<sup>211</sup> The “brick and mortar” construction costs total \$629,900. The derivation of this figure is shown in pro forma I.

Exterior expenditures include \$267,000 for the extensive restoration of the building’s brick cladding, porticos, and windows, and \$115,000 for the reconstruction of the historic parapet and balustrades. Additionally, it has been suggested by both Crawford and Stearns and S.M.R Associates that a new entrance with a platform lift be

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<sup>209</sup> Crawford and Stearns estimated the brick and mortar cost at \$40 per square foot, for a total of \$237,200; S.M.R. Associates estimated the total at \$108,000 or approximately \$18 per square foot.

<sup>210</sup> Crawford and Stearns estimated the brick and mortar cost of this conversion at \$80 per square foot, for a total of \$720,000 whereas that of S.M.R. Associated was \$32,000 per unit, for a total of \$320,000.

<sup>211</sup> Crawford & Stearns Architects and Preservation Planners, *Architectural Assessment and Reuse Recommendations for the Sherburne Inn, Sherburne, New York*, prepared for Thoma Development Consultants (15 January 2005), Appendix A.

installed on the west façade to provide handicap access to the building. The estimated cost of this addition is \$50,000.<sup>212</sup> The Sherburne Inn is currently available for purchase through a local real estate agency for \$165,000. The assumption is made here that James Webb, the current owner of property, will accept nothing less than this amount. This brings the total acquisition and hard costs to \$1,226,900.

Construction costs only account for about 75 percent of the total cost of developing a particular piece of property. The remaining 25 percent falls in the category of “soft cost.” These include professional fees, insurance, title and recording fees, taxes during construction, interest on construction loan, tax credit application fees and a project contingency fund.<sup>213</sup> For this project, soft costs total \$292,475.

The assumption is made here that a portion of the construction costs will be covered by a construction loan from a commercial lender. The funds will be available on a variable draw-down basis, meaning funds remain with the lending institution until they are dispersed at the completion of specific benchmarks in the project. Issued during the construction phase of a project, construction loans have short terms and typically have interest rates 3.5 to 4 percent above the prime rate. As of March 15, 2011, the US Prime Rate is 3.25 percent; therefore, a construction-loan interest rate of 7 percent will be used in this study. Interest only payments are made during the construction period. It is assumed that the Sherburne Inn project could be completed in eighteen months. Therefore, that duration is used in the following formula to calculate the interest: half of the loan amount multiplied by 7 percent times 18 months.

The total interest paid on the construction loan would be \$48,731. This figure is based on the loan amount of \$846,533, which is 55 percent of the total of hard and soft costs. In a talk given at Cornell University in November 2009, Doug Sutherland, a

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Lecture by Doug Sutherland, Sutherland Group, Syracuse, NY, given at Cornell University, 20 November 2009.

commercial redeveloper in Syracuse, New York, reported this percentage as the average amount most commercial lenders would be willing to lend for a construction project. In the past, 80 percent of the funds needed to develop a site were borrowed. Within the last decade, however, lending institutions have considerably reduced their contributions in an effort to limit risk. As a result, equity investments, or the amount of money contributed by a developer, have increased. Sutherland states that equity investments of 30-35 percent are not uncommon.<sup>214</sup> With 55 percent from a construction loan and 35 percent from equity, a gap of approximately 10 percent typically exists. This can be bridged by public contributions and grants—Sutherland used the example of his Franklin Lofts project where the 11 percent gap was bridged by a contribution from a local politician. A forty-one percent equity contribution of \$538,703 is used in this study.

Some of the weight of the equity burden could be carried by The Sherburne Inn's eligibility for State and Federal historic tax credits. In 1982, the New York State Historic Resource Inventory conducted a reconnaissance survey of the historic resources in the Village of Sherburne, nominating sections of the downtown and residential districts as a National Register Historic District. Known as the Sherburne Historic District, it encompasses portions of North and South Main (NYS Route 12), East and West State (NYS Route 80), Classic, Summit and Church Streets, and Park Avenue. With its period of significance spanning over a century, 1800-1930, and a range of programs, including commercial, residential, industrial and institutional, the district intends to capture the development of the Village over an extended period of time. Extent examples for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, like c. 1800 Federal-Style Residence at 14 East State Street, and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, like the 1930s I.L. Richer Feed Mill and the 1940 Firehouse/Town Hall, bookend this chronology. As the Sherburne Inn is listed as a contributing building in this district, it is eligible for tax incentive programs.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Breyer, "Statement of Significance."

Established by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the Federal Historic Tax Incentives consists of a 10% tax credit for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936 and a 20% tax credit for a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. Both are administered by the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Offices; their aim is to facilitate the rehabilitation of historic buildings by offering a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of taxes owed. The amount is based on the qualifying costs of a substantial rehabilitation.

Qualifications and regulations for the 10% tax credit are relatively flexible. The building undergoing rehabilitation must have been in service prior to 1936, and its intended use must be non-residential, which excludes private residences or rental housing. Hotels are considered commercial and qualify for the credit. The rehabilitation must be substantial, exceeding the greater of \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building—this is calculated by subtracting the portion of the purchase price attributed to land cost and the depreciation taken for an income-producing property from the purchase price and adding the cost of capital improvements. The building must be depreciable. To insure the retention of the building's original character, restrictions governing the extent and type of work conducted on the building are placed on every project and failure to abide by the regulations will result in the loss of the tax credit. The regulations include the retention of at least 50% of the original exterior walls as exterior walls, at least 75% existing exterior walls as external or internal walls, and at least 75% of internal structural framework. The building does not need to be listed as a contributing building in a historic district or individually designated to qualify.<sup>216</sup>

The qualifications and regulations governing the 20% historic tax credit are far more stringent. There is a three-part application process that first certifies the building as

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<sup>216</sup> Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, "Historic Preservation Tax Incentives" (2009), 16.

being historic, the rehabilitation as being appropriate, and the completed project as acceptable. In Part I, the building is certified as a historic structure, meaning it is either listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or listed as a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District. Properties listed individually are automatically certified and this part does not need to be filed unless multiple buildings are included in the nomination. For contributing buildings in a historic district or those in a multiple-building, single-property-nomination scenario, individuals seeking the tax credit are required to complete this part of the application. An architectural description and statement of significance are submitted to the National Park Service to make a determination as to whether the building qualifies as a “certified historic structure.”<sup>217</sup>

Part II certifies the rehabilitation. It requires a detailed description of the existing conditions and the proposed work. Here, the applicant describes any site work, alterations, and new construction planned for the building and how these changes will impact the building’s historic fabric. With the information provided, the National Park Service will determine whether the project is consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. It is important to submit this part early to ensure that the proposed work will not disqualify the project from receiving the tax credits. Any problems with the proposed work—i.e. insensitive alterations or additions that do not meet the Standards—are flagged for the applicant’s further review. Modifications addressing the concerns are typically made at this point and are resubmitted for approval. Submitted after the completion of the project, Part III is used by the National Park Service to certify that the project as completed meets the Standards and is a “certified rehabilitation.” Their acceptance of such allows the applicant to redeem the tax credits.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 4-14.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

As a contributing building in the Village of Sherburne Historic District, the Sherburne Inn is eligible for this tax credit, with approximately 95 percent of its rehabilitation costs qualifying. The excluded five percent represents the hard and soft costs associated with the construction of the rear entrance and landscaping. Additions, new construction, and site improvements do not qualify for the credits. Calculated by multiplying 95 percent of the total construction cost, or \$1,618,943, by 20 percent, the total of federal tax credits amount is \$323,789.

The assumption is made here that the developer will syndicate, or sell, these credits to gain start-up capital. Generally, this involves forming a limited liability company (LLC) that consists of the developer or affiliate as managing member and the credit purchaser as an additional non-managing member. Managing members have a small percentage interest in the company yet control most of the business affairs, arrange for the management of the property, and make most of the day-to-day operational decisions. The non-managing members have a majority percentage interest in the company and act as passive investor, meaning their role in managing the company is limited.<sup>219</sup> Typically, the market value of federal credits is \$.90<sup>220</sup> and, therefore, this figure is used to calculate their boost to the project's equity investment in pro forma II.

In 2009, the State of New York implemented a tax incentive program for historic rehabilitations, which coincides with the federal credit. It offers an additional 20% state tax credit for qualifying costs of a "certified rehabilitation." Provided the property lies in a qualifying census tract, which is defined as one in which the median income is less than

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<sup>219</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Basics: Syndication." [http://www.hud.gov/utilities/print/print2.cfm?page=80\\$^@http%3A%2Fwww%2Ehud...](http://www.hud.gov/utilities/print/print2.cfm?page=80$^@http%3A%2Fwww%2Ehud...) accessed 6 April 2011.

<sup>220</sup> David Listokin, "Powerpoint: Syndicating Historic and New Markets Tax Credits in Difficult Times," *Cornell University: Economic and Financing of Neighborhood Conservation and Preservation*, Slide 14, 14 April 2009.

\$51,961 per year, the credits are automatically granted when the federal tax credit application is approved by the National Park Service.<sup>221</sup> The village of Sherburne is located in census tract 9901, which has a median income of \$32,803. Hence, the rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn qualifies for the credit.<sup>222</sup> As with the federal credit, approximately 95 percent of the rehabilitation cost qualifies, which results in \$373,789 in credits. Again, it is assumed these will be syndicated. David Listokin, a past visiting professor at Cornell University teaching preservation economics, reported that the market value of state historic tax credits in states with these programs was significantly less than that of federal credits, around \$.60 to the credit dollar. This was due to federal taxes on state historic tax credits. An estimated value of \$.60 per dollar will be use for this study. The calculated value of the state-tax-credit equity is shown in pro forma II.<sup>223</sup>

In addition to tax-credit equity, developer equity will account for some of the construction budget. A purchase mortgage with a 20 percent down-payment requirement would be available to the developer through Jim Webb, the building's present owner. The equity investment for this loan would be \$32,000. The assumption is made here that the remaining balance of the total development cost after subtracting the acquisition costs, construction loan, and tax-credit equity would be covered by the developer. This represents approximately 12.5 percent of the budget, or \$370,835. This brings the total equity contribution to over 41 percent, a figure over five percent higher than the one suggested by Sutherland. The difference is due in part to the enactment of the state historic tax credit, which did not exist at the time of his project. Essentially, this credit

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<sup>221</sup> Kenneth Markunas, New York State Historic Preservation Office, interview by author, 1 March 2010.

<sup>222</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, Census Tract Outline Map, Chenango County: 2000. [http://www2.census.gov/plmap/pl\\_trt/st36\\_NewYork/c36017\\_Chenango/CT36017\\_001.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/plmap/pl_trt/st36_NewYork/c36017_Chenango/CT36017_001.pdf), accessed 7 April 2011.

<sup>223</sup> Listokin, slide 14.

alleviates the need for gap financing. Pro formas I, II, and III summarize the development and financing costs for this project.

The Fair Market Rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Chenango County is \$585,<sup>224</sup> so that this figure was used to calculate the income for the project's ten apartments in pro forma IV. Based on SMR Associate's suggested rate, rent for the restaurant space is set at \$4,000 per month.<sup>225</sup> Laundry facilities in the basement of the building are estimated to generate an additional \$150 in income monthly. In total, monthly income for a rehabilitated Sherburne Inn is estimated at \$10,000. This figure is multiplied by twelve months and a five percent contingency is subtracted to calculate the net annual income shown in pro forma IV.

Annual operational expenses for this project are subtracted from the net annual income, which is then divided by the developer's equity contribution to calculate the rate of return. Annual expenses include two mortgages, real estate taxes, water and sewer costs, maintenance and operating costs, and insurance. Maintenance and operational costs are calculated at \$15,700 and include water and sewer, insurance on the building, and electric in common areas. It is assumed that all other utilities, including heat, will be paid by the occupants of the building. Debt-service payments will total \$58,711, and taxes are estimated at \$26,000, a figure based on the SMR Associates report. The annual expenses for the project are detailed in pro forma V, and rate of return is shown in pro forma VI.

Through the comparison of the net income to the annual expenses incurred by this project, it becomes apparent that the proposed rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn is

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<sup>224</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Schedule B – FY 2011 Final Fair Market Rents for Existing Housing." [http://www2.census.gov/plmap/pl\\_trt/st36\\_NewYork/c36017\\_Chenango/CT36017\\_001.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/plmap/pl_trt/st36_NewYork/c36017_Chenango/CT36017_001.pdf), accessed 7 April 2011.

<sup>225</sup> William Rudy, Letter to William Acee, Mayor, "Shelburne [sic] Inn," S.M.R Associates, 29 April 2009, in Village of Sherburne, New York, Restore NY Communities Initiative Application, 29 April 2009.

feasible (see pro forma VI). There is an annual gross income of \$11,589 that, when divided by the developer's equity, produces a rate-of-return percentage of 2.9.

Pro Forma for Mixed-Use (Restaurant and Convention Rental) Conversion<sup>226</sup>

I. Development Costs

Brick and mortar

Basement: \$3/sf X 1500/sf	\$4,500	
1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Restaurant: \$30/sf X 5930sf	\$177,900	
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Rental: \$65sf X 9,000sf	\$585,000	
New Rear Entry: \$150/sf X 450sf	\$67,500	
New Platform Lift	\$20,000	
Extensive Exterior Repairs	\$200,000	
Reconstruction Historic Parapet and Balustrade	<u>\$115,000</u>	
Total Hard Costs		\$1,169,900
Soft Costs @ 25%		\$292,475
Acquisition		\$165,000
Subtotal Development Costs		\$1,627,375
Interest on Construction Loan		
(hard + soft = \$48,731 X 50% -		
\$464,104 X 18 months @ 7 %)	<u>\$48,731</u>	
Total Development Costs		\$1,704,150

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<sup>226</sup> Formatting for pro forma taken from Martha Rebecca Frish “The Feasibility of Rehabilitating the Old Gouverneur Hospital in New York City,” (M.A. Thesis, Cornell University, 1981).

II. Construction Financing

Owner Equity for acquisition	\$28,000	
Webb Mortgage for acquisition	\$132,000	
Construction Loan (55% of total development costs minus acquisition costs )	\$846,533	
Equity Investment (41%)	\$596,453	
Tax Credit Equity		
FHTC (\$.90 X \$323,789)	\$291,410	
NYSHTC (\$.60 X \$323,789)	<u>\$194,373</u>	
Total Equity from Tax Credits	\$485,783	
Developer Equity	\$370,835	
Total Construction Financing		\$1,704,151

III. Permanent Financing

Webb Mortgage for acquisition		
@ 6 percent for 30 years	\$132,000	
Permanent Mortgage		
@ 5 percent for 30 years	<u>\$846,533</u>	
Total Permanent Financing		\$978,533

IV. Annual Rental Income

Restaurant	@ \$4,000	\$4,000
10 one bedroom	@ \$585	<u>\$5,850</u>
Monthly rental income		\$9,850
Laundry		\$150
Total Monthly income		\$10,000
Times 12 months		<u>    X12</u>
Gross annual Income		\$120,000
Less 5 percent vacancy		<u>&lt;\$6,000&gt;</u>
Net Annual Income		\$112,000

IV. Annual Expenses

Webb loan debt service		\$7,920
Permanent loan debt service		
@ 6.00 percent for 30 years		\$50,791
Taxes		\$26,000
Water Sewer (\$200 per one-bedroom apartment annually = \$2,000 + 3,500 for restaurant)		\$5,700
Maintenance and operating		\$6,000
Insurance		<u>\$4,000</u>
Total Annual Expenses		\$98,411

VI. Rate of Return

Rental Income	\$112,000
Less Annual Expenses	<u>\$98,411</u>
Gross Income	\$11,589
Return on Investment (Gross income divided by Developers Equity (\$398,835))	2.9%

## CONCLUSION

The proposal discussed in the previous chapter achieves the primary goals outlined for this thesis in the introduction. First, the Sherburne Inn would be restored and preserved for future generations, and second, it would be done in an economically responsible manner. This does not mean it is an attractive investment. Although a positive return on investment is estimated, it is relatively small and may deter a developer focused on profit alone from undertaking the project. Most developers expect at least a 10 percent return on investment; the ROI for this project is 2.9. It appears that in order for this project to come into fruition a community-minded investor who understands and accepts the intrinsic value of public-service projects would need to step forward. Their focus would have to be on the betterment of the community and not maximizing profits.

The proposal also achieves many of the secondary goals of this thesis. It raises awareness of preservation topics in the community by illustrating the benefits of historic designations. As it is a contributing building in the Village of Sherburne Historic District, any substantial rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn is eligible for state and federal tax credits, which will offset some of the costs of construction. These credits comprise a significant proportion of the rehabilitation budget. Without them it seems unlikely that the project could be realized as the developer's required investment would be significantly higher and the rate of return even lower. In a powerful way, historic tax credits have the ability to bring seemingly impossible projects into fruition, something owners of designated properties should note as it presents a significant economic opportunity. Tax-credit incentive programs exist for property owners outside of the historic district as well; the ten percent historic tax credit can be used to rehabilitate commercial properties. The historic character of the village is a literal economic asset for the community and should be utilized.

This proposal reflects the economic and social characteristics of the community. The village of Sherburne is a middle-to-low-income, working-class, bedroom community for the larger urban centers of Norwich, Syracuse, Utica, and Binghamton, with a large percentage of its inhabitants travelling at least thirty minutes to their places of employment. Two seemingly incongruent reasons for this are apparent to the author: employment opportunities are limited, and Sherburne is a desirable place to live. Since the 1970s, the number of blue-collar jobs in the area has significantly decreased due to relocation, downsizing, and economic decline. Workers have been forced to travel outside of the area to find employment. One would assume that the population would be negatively impacted by this trend, with large numbers of residents relocating to be closer to their places of employment. However, census data indicates that the population has remained constant. The author believes this is due to the availability of public amenities and services, and the interpersonal feel of the community. Workers are willing to live farther from their jobs to enjoy these attributes. Apartments would allow more people to live in the community, and a restaurant would be an additional amenity.

Some of the benchmarked goals of the *Village of Sherburne Strategic Plan* would be achieved by this proposal. A rehabilitation of the Sherburne Inn would greatly improve the appearance of the village streetscape by placing a vacant and deteriorating building at the center of the village downtown district back in use. Although there is no guarantee that these improvements would initiate a community-wide reinvestment, it is the hope of the author—and many village residents—that this would occur.

The first floor's proposed use does present some risk to the overall success of the Sherburne Inn rehabilitation. Rental income from the restaurant makes up a considerable proportion of the overall annual income for the building and without it there would be insufficient funds to service the mortgage loans, taxes, maintenance, and operational expenses. This could jeopardize the whole rehabilitation project. Therefore, considerable discretion needs to be taken in the selection of an occupant for the restaurant

space. A model candidate would be an established business with a large patron base wanting to relocate to the Sherburne Inn or a subsidiary restaurant of a successful parent establishment. Both of these would have the independent draw to attract patrons from outside of the area and, thus, generate the necessary income to pay the rent. Ideally, the first floor tenant would be secured prior to the start of the construction phase of the project.

An alternative use for the first floor would be as the village post office. Its current location on the west side of the inn places it behind several building, which creates problems in terms of connectivity and traffic flow. With no street presence, it feels disjointed from the rest of the downtown district and the inadequate parking area adjacent to it is rife with circulation issues that permeate out into the rest of the village. The relocation of the Post Office into the Sherburne Inn and the demolition of the building that currently houses it would solve both of these issues. Moved from its occluded location, its new location would reflect the figurative role it plays in the community as “a local gathering point” and a major draw for many people into the downtown.<sup>227</sup> In addition, demolition of the old Post Office would allow for more parking for residential tenants in the rehabilitated Sherburne Inn and improve circulation in the existing parking lot. Again, the project developer should ensure that the Post Office would relocate prior to initiating construction.

Another alternative use for the Sherburne Inn that has been largely rejected by community officials and residents is low-income housing. As noted in chapter five, this reuse approach has been discarded by both Cornell University students in a small business class in 1994 and the advisory board to the planning company that drafted the *Sherburne Downtown Strategic Plan* in 2005. However, this use fits with the

characteristics of the community and allows the developer to use the low-income housing tax credit as defined in section 42 of the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

In short, this thesis has attempted to relay the significance of the Sherburne Inn and provide one possible option for its reuse. It is clear that the building is underutilized and its continued deterioration is a detriment the village's economic and aesthetic development. Its rehabilitation would be highly beneficial, as it would preserve a tangible link to the community's collective history, improve the appearance of the downtown, encourage local spending, and potentially prompt community-wide reinvestment. For these reason, the Sherburne Inn should be viewed as community asset and not a blight condemning the village's future.

## Illustrations

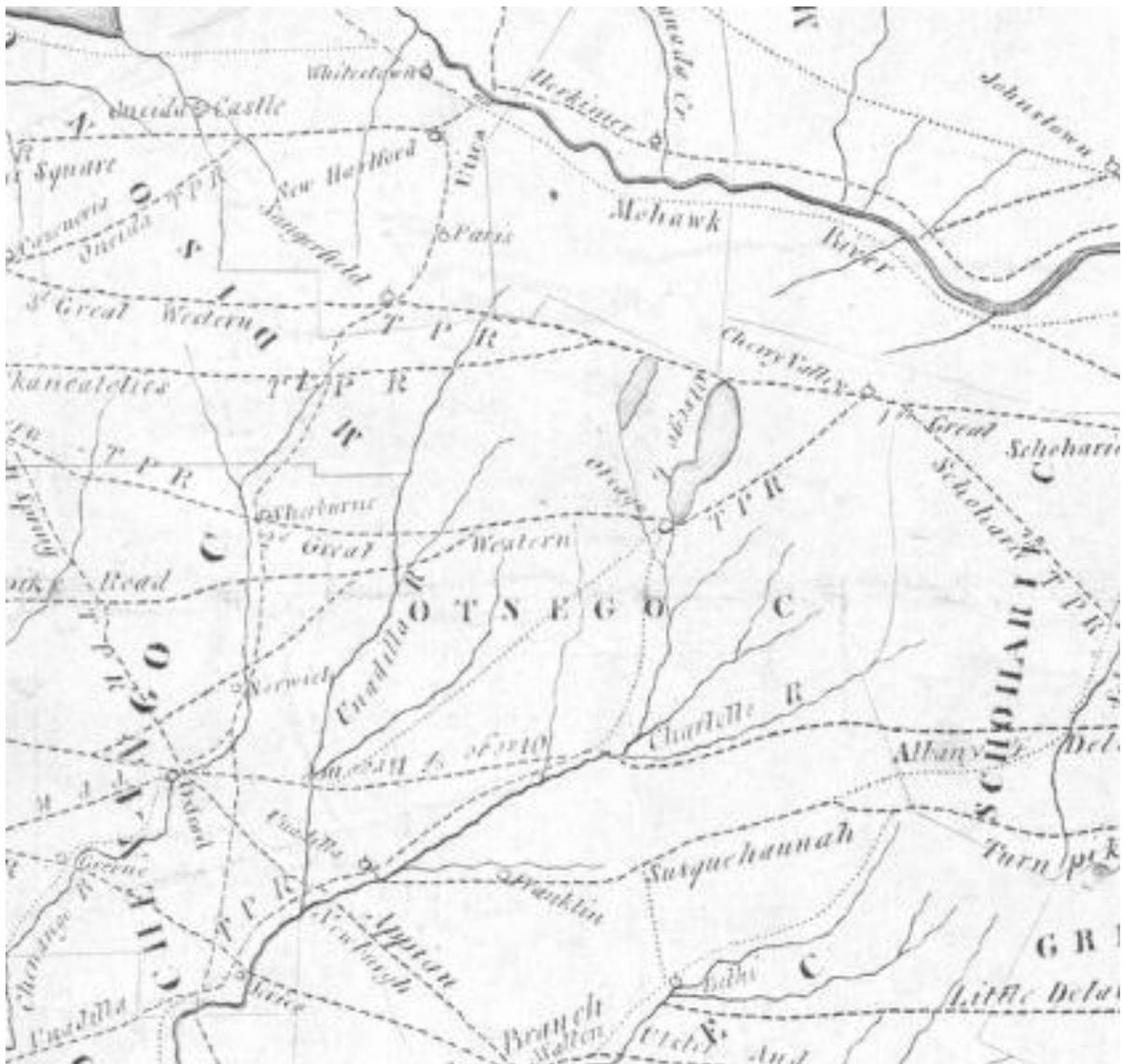


Figure 1: Detail of Chenango County taken from an 1808 map of the turnpikes and common roads in New York State.  
Source: New York Public Library Digital Gallery

Note: This map inaccurately shows the turnpike extending west of the Chenango River.



**Chenango Canal 1837-1878**

Figure 2: Chenango Canal map, Chenango County, New York  
 Source: McFee, Limestone, Locks and Overgrowth, iv.

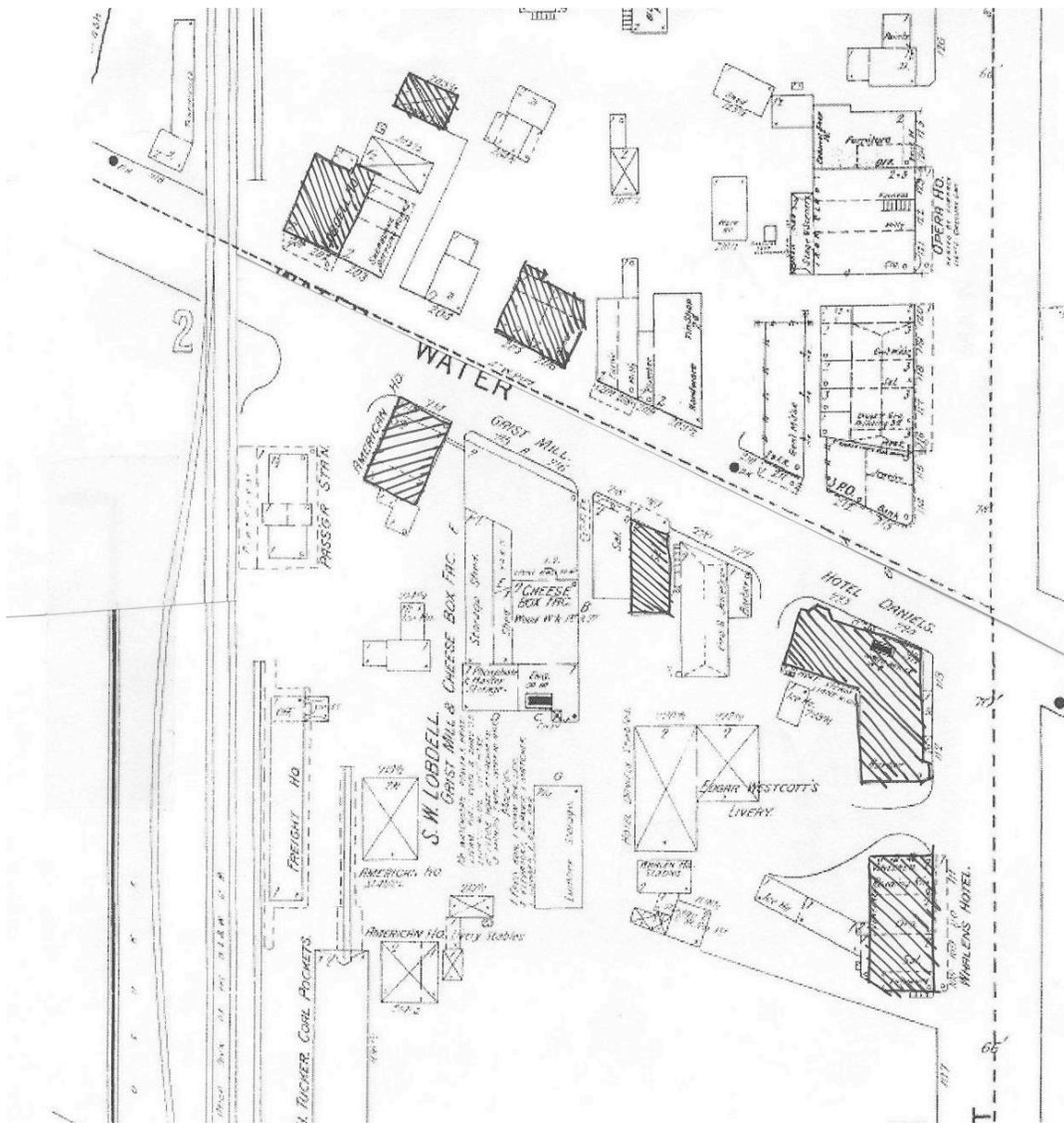


Figure 2: Map of hotels along Water (West State) Street in Sherburne, New York, 1892.  
 Sources: Author, *Sherburne Illustrated*, and *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1892.

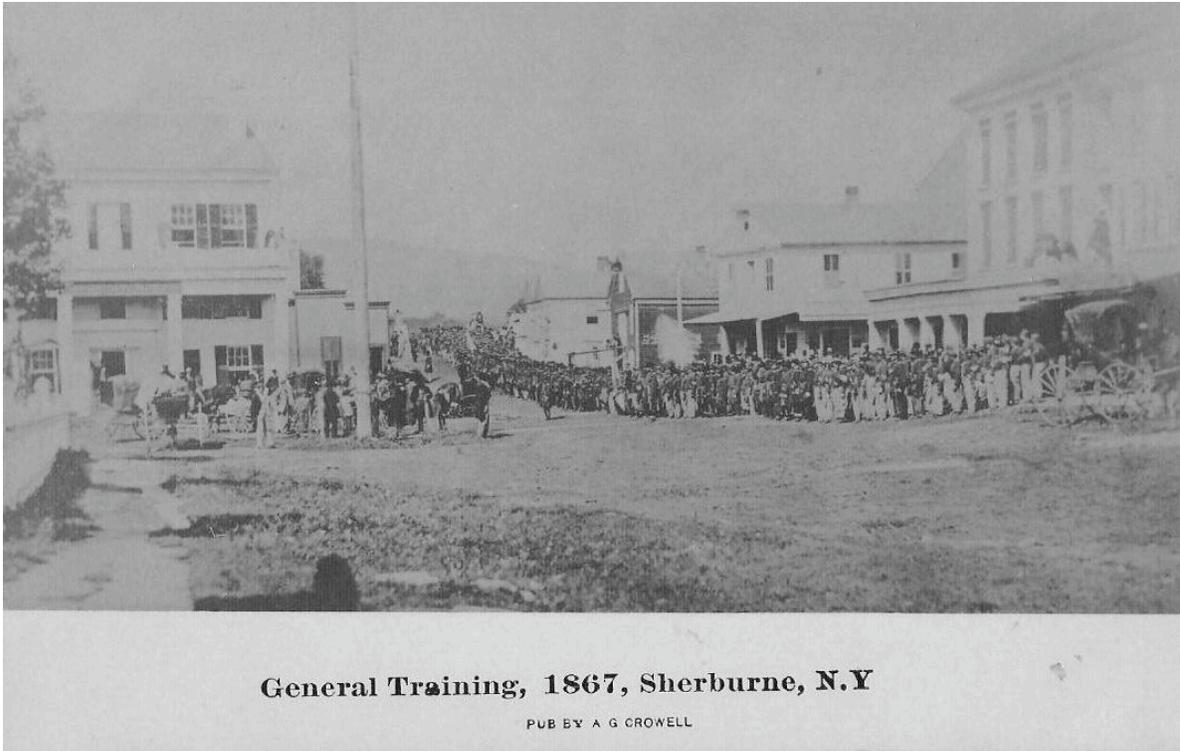


Figure 4: Picture postcard: Medbury House, Sherburne, New York, ca 1868  
Source: Medbury House file, Sherburne Public Library, Sherburne, NY

Note: This picture postcard depicts the earliest known photograph of the Medbury House, which is the building on the left side of the image, and documents the building's appearance prior to its ca. 1870 renovation.



Figure 5: Picture postcard: Medbury House, Sherburne, New York, ca 1870  
Source: Medbury House file, Sherburne Public Library, Sherburne, NY



Figure 6: Picture postcard: Sherburne House/Hotel Daniels, Sherburne, New York, 1896  
Source: Sherburne House file, Sherburne Public Library, Sherburne, NY



Figure 7: Photograph: Sherburne Inn, Sherburne, New York, ca. 1917  
Source: Sherburne Inn file, Sherburne Public Library, Sherburne, NY



Figure 8: Postcard: Sherburne Inn, Sherburne, New York, ca. 1926  
Source: Sherburne Inn file, Sherburne Public Library, Sherburne, NY



Figure 9: North Façade, Sherburne Inn  
Source: Author, April 2011



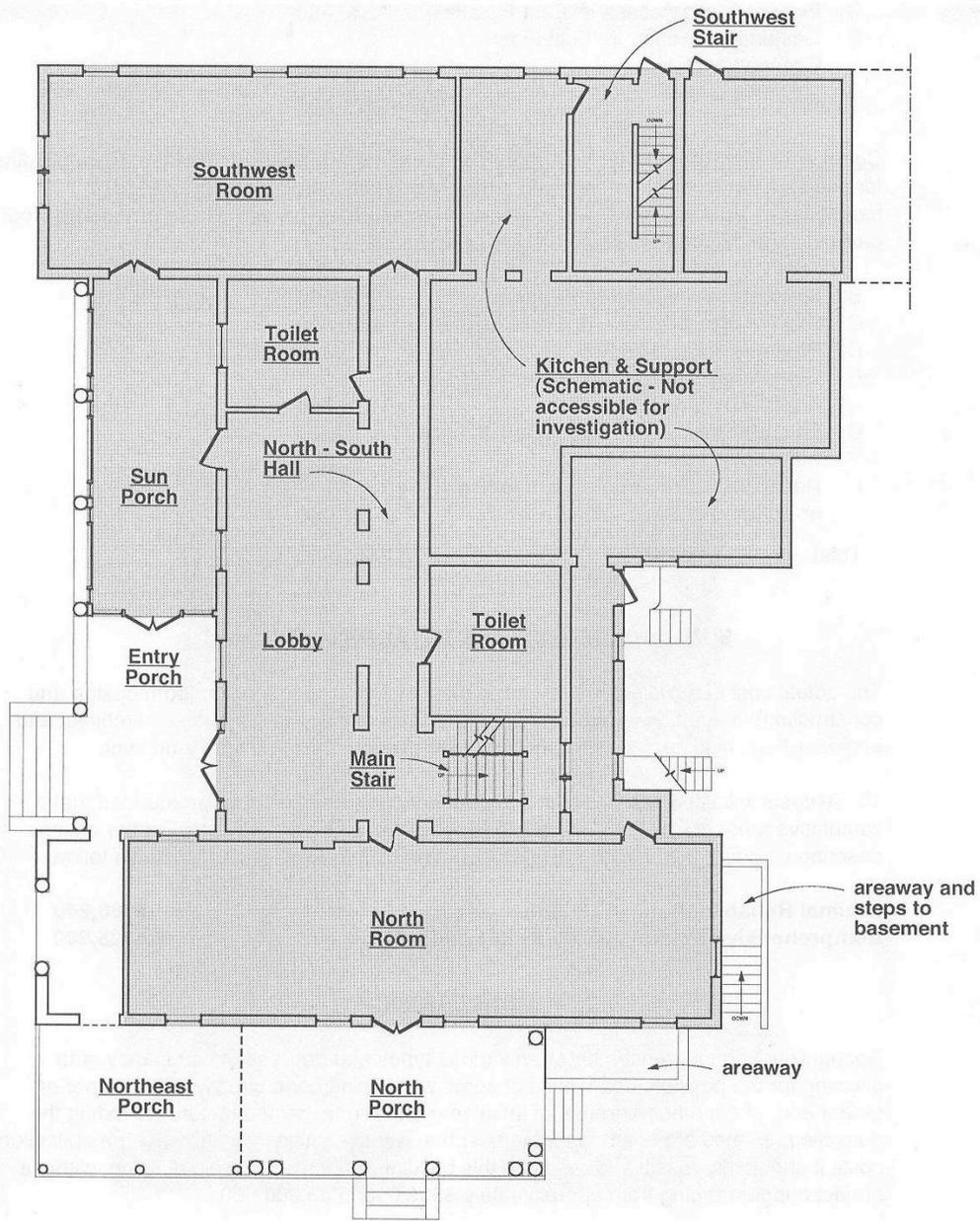
Figure 10: East Façade, Sherburne Inn  
Source: Author, April 2011



Figure 11: South Façade, Sherburne Inn  
Source: Author, April 2011



Figure 12: West façade, Sherburne Inn  
Source: Author, April 2011



1

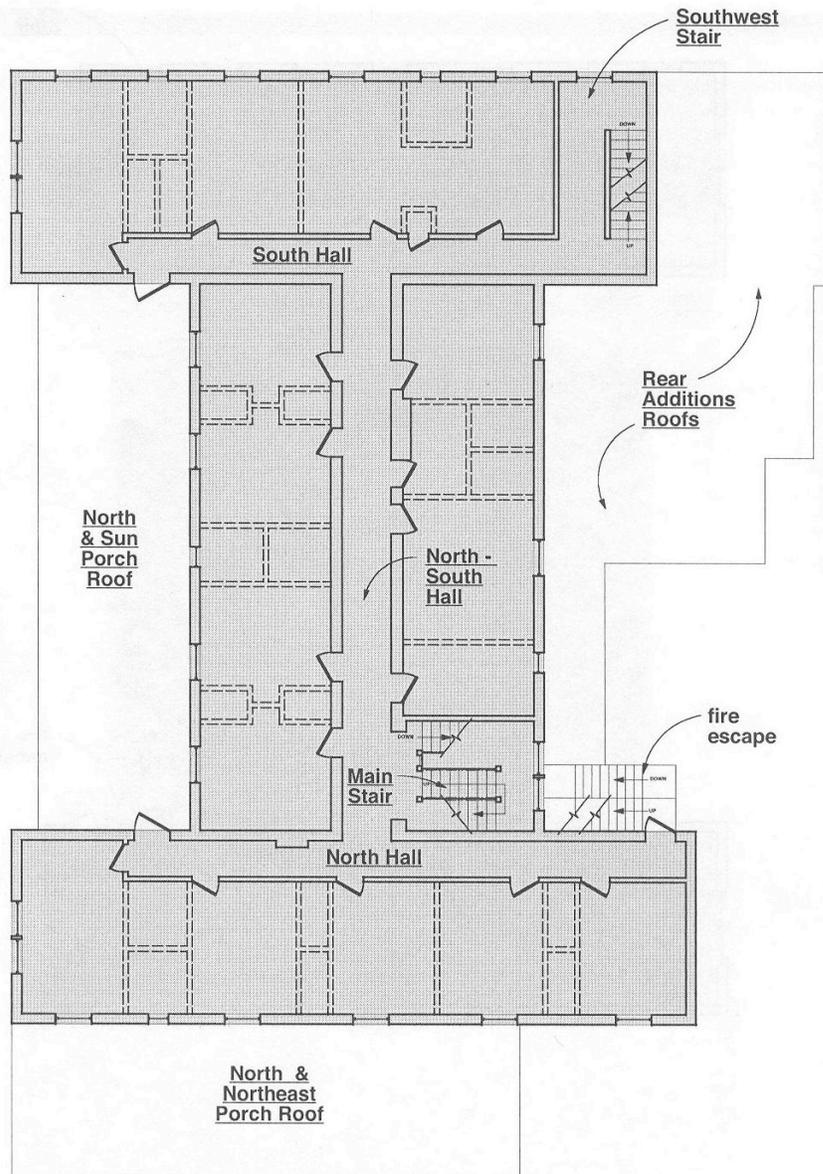
**EXISTING CONDITION 1ST FLOOR PLAN @ THE SHERBURNE INN / SHERBURNE, NY**

CRAWFORD & STEARNS / ARCHITECTS AND PRESERVATION PLANNERS / 134 WALTON STREET / SYRACUSE, NY 13202  
 JANUARY 15, 2005 SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



NORTH

Figure 13: First floor, floor plan  
 Source: Crawford and Stearns



**2**

**EXISTING CONDITION 2ND FLOOR PLAN @ THE SHERBURNE INN / SHERBURNE, NY**

CRAWFORD & STEARNS / ARCHITECTS AND PRESERVATION PLANNERS / 134 WALTON STREET / SYRACUSE, NY 13202  
 JANUARY 15, 2005 SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



NORTH

Figure 14: Second and third floor, floor plan  
 Source: Crawford and Stearns

Note: The dashed lines indicate walls that have been removed.

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