

The Northville House, or Hotel Northville, was built in 1813 by Abraham Van Arnam for his daughter and her husband, James Lobdell. Abraham's brother, Jacob Van Arnam later became the owner and converted the home into a hotel. A portion of the hotel was burned in a fire in 1898, and it was repaired. The 138-year old hotel ceased operation in 1951 with Alfred Sawyer, who ran it for 10 years, as the last proprietor. Hiram Denton and Claude Lipe, proprietors of a small furniture store since 1947, purchased the large building for their growing furniture business. In 1960, Milton Groff: who had been associated with the business since 1949, became the owner of the firm. In 1999, the Northville House was purchased from James Groff by Pat & Kevin Richard, with the idea of restoring it to its former grandeur by its 200th birthday in 2013.

From Adirondack Hotels and Inns. by Donald R. Williams, copyright 2008, Arcadia Publishing.

The Northville Hotel was built on Main Street in 1813 by Abraham VanArnum as a home for his daughter and her husband. Van Arnum's brother, Jacob, soon opened it as a guest house and restaurant. Over the years it welcomed many famous guests, including J.D. Rockefeller. The hotel's colorful history includes "hooch holes" in the floors to hide illegal booze during Prohibition, cock fights in the basement, a secret code on the hotel register and an Underground Railroad site.

From Along the Adirondack Trail. by Donald R. Williams, copyright 2004, Arcadia Publishing.

The foregoing was taken word for word from Arcadia publications under separate pictures of the hotel building as it presently exists. It is the purpose of this narrative to flesh out the above and to add facts and lore in an effort to more completely tell the story of the only remaining hotel building in the Village of Northville, Fulton County, New York.

F.W. Beers Illustrated History of Montgomery and Fulton Counties, NY, 1878 states that the existing Main Street was laid out in 1797 and further that the first tavern at this place was opened by Abram VanArnam in 1800. In 1839 two separate deeds; one from Abraham Van Arnam to Jos. Cornell and Wm. Smith and another from Jacob Van Arnam to Jos. Cornell describe, in some detail, premises northerly of the "Baptist Church Lot", which was at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets - the site of the present "Village Green", which would include the hotel property. No mention of the hotel was made.

In 1852, William & Emily Smith conveys lands to Josiah & Henry Wadsworth (Liber 15/page 458) recited as the same lands described in the two 1839 Van Arnam deeds. However, in Smith to Wadsworth "the house...occupied by Truman Partridge for a Hotel" is described as being on the premises conveyed. The Hannah Barker to Rowland and Ann Ash deed of 1855 (Liber 23/page 219 offers a new description of what has to be the same premises. That deed describes lands bounded on the north and west by Albert Van Arnam, also bounded on the west by the School House Lot; bounded on the south by lands of Philips and on the east by the highway. It is further

described as: the Tavern Stand and lot occupied by Richard Barker", and is subject to mortgages given to Truman Partridge and Josiah & Henry Wadsworth. The location and adjoining owners are the same as shown on the 1856 Chace wall map of Fulton County.

Roland & Ann Ash conveys the same premises to Silas Call (Liber 37 / page 170) said premises described as the "Tavern Stand and lot" in 1867. The 1868 Stranahan and Nichols Atlas of Montgomery and Fulton Counties, N.Y., page 28, Northville insert shows: "S.Call, Northville House" at this location with A.H. VanArnam, adjacent owner to the north and W.Smith, adjacent owner to the south. The Ash to Call deed further describes the premises as the "Tavern Stand and lot". By the summer of 1871, Silas & Susan Call have conveyed their interest to Gilbert Petit (Liber 39/ page 589). This deed describes said premises as: "occupied by Marvin Chase ...and known as the Northville Hotel property". This fixes the "Tavern Stand" and "Northville Hotel" as being one and the same. Subject to the ever-present mortgage. Gilbert Petit lasted just over a year in the hotel business at this location. On October 19, 1872, Gilbert Petit conveyed "The Northville House Hotel property" to Lewis, John, Orra and Robert Brownell (Liber 43 / page 25). Again, subject to two mortgages totaling some \$3,100. The following year, 1873, marked the incorporation of the Village of Northville and by 1875 the Gloversville & Northville Railroad was completed to its terminus at the west end of the Northville Bridge - less than a mile from the hotel's front door. It would seem that the Brownells had arrived at an opportune time.

The next twenty-five years seemed to be a time of growth and prosperity for the Village on the east bank of the Sacandaga River. By 1892, according to History of Fulton County, revised and edited by Washington Forthingham, businesses included The Northville Knitting Mill, The Globe Metallic Binding Company, Willard & Partridge, dealers in all kinds of rough and dressed lumber and a variety of other enterprises making this business center for the lumbering industry a bustling spot indeed. "The Main street is well built up with two and three story brick blocks containing groceries, dry goods houses, drug stores and their aggregate assortment contains almost everything that can be asked for in a first-class community." (History of Fulton County). The proximity of Sacandaga Park under development of the Fonda, Johnstown and Gloversville Railroad Company, doubtless added much tourist activity. The "new" school was but four years old housing some 200 students and the village boasted of 1,100 inhabitants. By this time, also, there were "four large hotels": The Winney House, the Arlington, the Northville House and the River View Hotel in the village.

In 1897, Frederick J. Harris and William R. Washburn were operating the hotel as the "Northville House". Title continued to rest with the Brownells. At this time the hotel facade or front section was as shown on 'No. 640, Back from the woods, Northville, NY" (attached). At about this time the front section of the building succumbed to that old Adirondack hotel nemesis: fire. By 1905 the business listing in the New Century Atlas for Montgomery and Fulton Counties boasts the following: "Hotel Northville, Robert Brownell, Jr., Prop. Under entirely new management, open all year, newly furnished and renovated throughout. Patronage of commercial travelers, sports and summer boarders solicited. Game dinners

a specialty. Steam heat. Rate: \$2 / day, special by the week. "It is presumed that the facade by 1905 was as shown on the three "Hotel Northville" pictures (attached).

Northville hotels came and went. The Winney House burned in 1905, the Avalon was a local landmark until it burned in 1958, the Lyons Hotel (two doors south of Hotel Northville) prospered then failed, as did the Boswell on Bridge Street and the St. James (on the road to the Park). All now gone. No record examined indicates the extent of success of the Hotel Northville from 1905 to 1930, however, it seems likely that at least moderate success was experienced. After all, baseball great Christy Matthewson and team, reputedly stayed there during 1907 and while Prohibition most certainly put a damper on things, summer activity at Sacandaga Park rolled along and the hotel continued to operate. (See attached "Main Street looking south, Northville, NY").

The year 1930 brought the closing of the dam at Conklingville and the rising waters of the Sacandaga Reservoir. Sacandaga Park as known and enjoyed was no more. Additionally, 1930 was a year of panic, depression and business failure nationwide, nee worldwide. Just how this effected the Hotel Northville and its intrepid proprietor is unknown. One thing that is known, however, was that by February 1, 1930 Robert & Anna Brownell found it necessary to mortgage the premises to Grace Rogers (Grace Brownell Rogers) for \$5,000 at 6% interest. The principal and interest due one year after date hereof. Mrs. Rogers, probably a close relative of Robert Brownell, was the wife of the Rogers of Addressograph-Multigraph fame, the forerunner of Xerox Corp. She later, for many years, owned and occupied the large frame home two doors south of the BradtBuilding-Town and Village Hall, on the eastside of South Main Street. She and a later husband named Felter owned the only Rolls Royce in the village. I digress. Yet another description of the premises said to contain the 'Hotel Northville and two houses in the rear thereof' soon follows. May 23, 1932 is the date of that mortgage to Grace Rogers totaling \$14,000 plus the use Addressograph-Multigraph stock as collateral to be deposited at the Northville Bank. Oh yes, yet another description of the premises known as the Hotel Northville property and this indenture is subject to prior mortgages aggregating \$6,500. By instrument filed at Liber 239 at page 218 premises known as the Hotel Northville property is foreclosed upon with referee's deed granted to Grace Rogers. So ends almost 70 years of ownership of the property by the Brownell family.

Grace Rogers quickly deposes of the property by two separate deeds. The two houses or cottages and land are sold to Dr. K.A. Durand. Most of the hotel property, as shown on "Survey Map of Lands of Denton & Lipe, Inc., dated February 2, 1999, prepared by John W. Ferguson, PLS No. 49088, is sold to Alfred Sawyer, who has previous hotel and tap room experience at the Hotel Northville, the Log Cabin Inn at Sacandaga Park and at the Avalon on North Main Street. A sign outside the hotel in the mid to late 1940's announces: "Northville Hotel, Bar & Grill, meals at all hours" and then the one below: "Heated Rooms". Mr. Sawyer conveyed the Hotel and property to Denton & Lipe, Inc. on May 16, 1951 after nearly ten years of operation. At this time the building was converted into a retail

furniture store thus ending over 100 years of documented operation as a hotel and/or tavern stand.

Denton & Lipe, Inc. retail furniture business was continuously operated until 1992. Other uses include a boot sock manufacturing operation in the basement, Ruby & Quiri operated a furniture and appliance store for a short time and other modest enterprises came and went. Dr. Dasher maintained his office in the northerly section of the front for a number of years.

As for some of the other assertions made by my friend and longtime inspiration, Donald R Williams, I defer to him. I have heard it said that John D. Rockefeller stayed there. Others say the signature was the work of a prankster. I also heard that Grover Cleveland once graced its threshold. Some have told of town folk taking all there meals at the hotel and signing the register on each occasion. Can't prove it by me. What it is, however, is a marvelous old building-the only remaining hotel building in the Town of Northampton, in which there existed perhaps as many as a score of hotels from the early 1800's on.

I have endeavored to cite references and documents of information contained herein. Any failure to do so and/or to give proper credit where same is due on my part is inadvertent. Additionally, my efforts were assisted by Mrs. Gail Cramer, Town of Northampton and Village of Northville Historian and the Hon. James K. Groff, Mayor of the Village of Northville and a former owner of the premises.

Respectfully submitted by:
August 5, 2013

John W. Ferguson