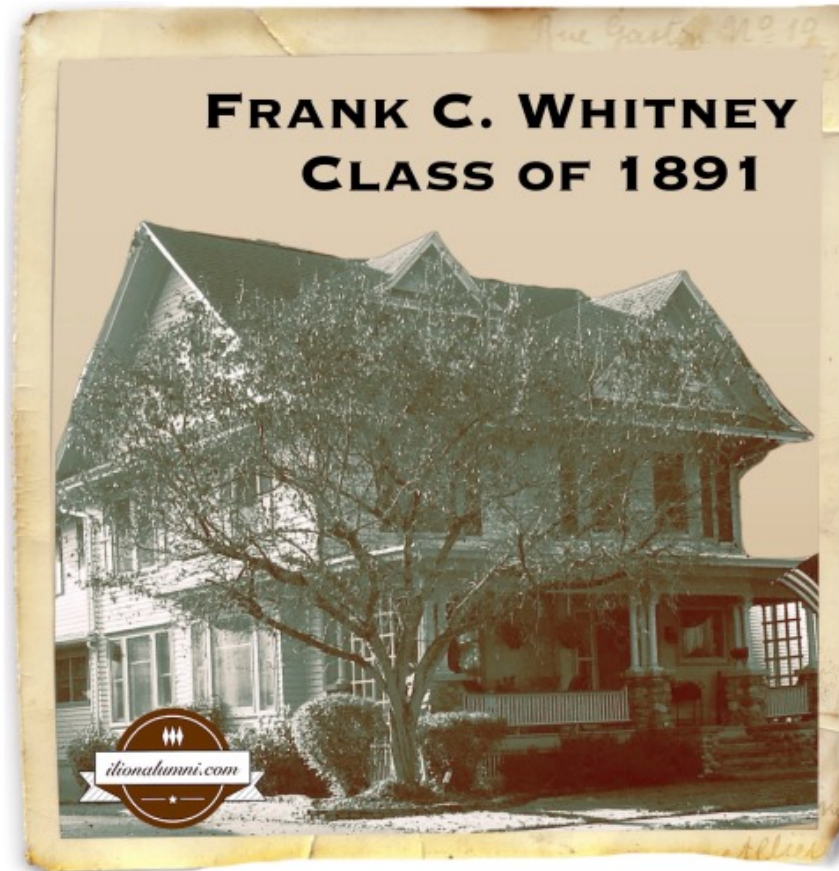


Frank Cole Whitney

The Legacy of 'Old Man Whitney'

September 2019

By Aileen Carney Sweeney



427 Otsego Street, Ilion NY - The Frank Whitney - Elsie Edsall Home

Who Was Frank C. Whitney?

Former Ilion School Board President, William Momberger, used to tell this story about Frank Whitney. In the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Frank went to a car dealership, in Utica, looking to buy a new car; not a used car. He wore his farmer overalls; however, *he did have on a pair of clean boots*. The salesman took one look at him and passed him on to someone else. This pass-along went on for a few more times. Finally, another salesman showed him the new car that he wanted. Frank said, "I'll take it" and then Frank Whitney, Ilion's Mayor, pulled out a big roll of money from his pants, and paid for the car in CASH.

The Whitney Parents

Frank Cole Whitney was born March 28, 1873 in German Flatts, New York. He was the only son of Henry G. Whitney and Elmina 'Mina' (Folts) Whitney. Frank grew up in a prominent family. His father's obituary described Henry Whitney as a "...sterling citizen of German Flatts and descendant of a pioneer family. His father was owner of a livery business for 33 years. In 1891, Henry sold the livery and purchased the (John) Delos Ingersoll farm on Upper Otsego Street and the Elm Street extension. In addition to operating the Ingersoll farm, he ran a plaster mill. Much of this property was disposed of for building lots."

Henry Whitney had purchased the Clapsaddle farm, on Otsego Street, by the time his son, Frank Whitney, graduated from the Ilion Morgan Street School in 1891. After graduating from the Old Morgan, he studied law for three years in the office of James Conkling. He also studied to be a veterinarian. He decided to join his father in the family dairy farm and cattle business, under the firm name of H. G. Whitney and Son. On that farm, Henry Whitney and his son Frank, "...built up a reputation as breeders of fine cattle, mostly registered Holstein stock, which ...made them known throughout the state."

Henry G. Whitney died at the Ilion Hospital on August 25, 1909. He suffered for two weeks with appendicitis. Pneumonia later developed which caused his death. He was 73 years old at the time of his death. He was survived by his wife; Elmina, a son, Frank; three brothers, Harvey of Frankfort, Harrington of Ilion, and George N. of Chicago. He was also survived by two sisters; Mrs. Manuel Kinne and Mrs. C. H. Wheeler of Rensselaer. - [Google Books - Holstein-Friesian Register, Volume 27, Part 2](#) - Obituary Henry Whitney and [August 9, 1909 - The Ilion Citizen](#) - Illion NY Citizen 1909-1910 - 0207.pdf

Frank Whitney Marries

Frank's wife, Gertrude (Clapsaddle) Whitney, was born August 25, 1872, in Ilion, the daughter of William and Caroline Buchanan Clapsaddle. She married Frank Whitney in November 1895, in Ilion. Together, they had three daughters, but by the time of the 1900 census, only one was listed as surviving. That child was Elsie Whitney and she was born on May 17, 1896. Source - [Known Descendants of Caspar Getman as of October 2018](#)

Whitney Ventures into Real Estate

Building Boom in Ilion 1915

A building boom occurred in Ilion in 1915 when 73 new houses were erected or were under construction. Frank Whitney ventured into real estate and built 1 house on Richfield Street, a house on Otsego Street and one house on Prospect Street. His mother, Elmina Whitney, was listed as building one house on Second Street. - [September 5, 1915 The Utica Sunday Tribune](#) - Utica NY Sunday Tribune 1914-1915 - 0885.pdf

1920s - Whitney Controls Movie and Theater Business

The Little Falls Journal and Courier newspaper reported, on September 9, 1924, that Ben Young and Frank Whitney purchased a site on Otsego Street with plans to build a new theater and business block. They bought back Mr. Young's former properties, the Ilion opera house and the Temple theatre which was the Ilion Odd Fellows Temple on First Street. In essence, Young and Whitney would have control of the local

movie and theatre business in the village of Ilion. - [September 9, 1924 The Little Falls Journal and Courier](#) - Little Falls NY Journal Courier 1924 Grayscale - 0287.pdf

In December 1925, a special election was held by the Village Board to decide the question "Shall that Village Board enact an ordinance pursuant to law, permitting that exhibition of moving pictures on Sunday?" All costs associated with the balloting were paid for by Whitney and Young. As owners of the Capitol Theater, they were not asking any more than what had already been granted to theaters in Mohawk, Herkimer, Little Falls and Utica. - [December 19, 1925 The Utica Daily Press](#) - Utica NY Daily Press 1925 - 7300.pdf

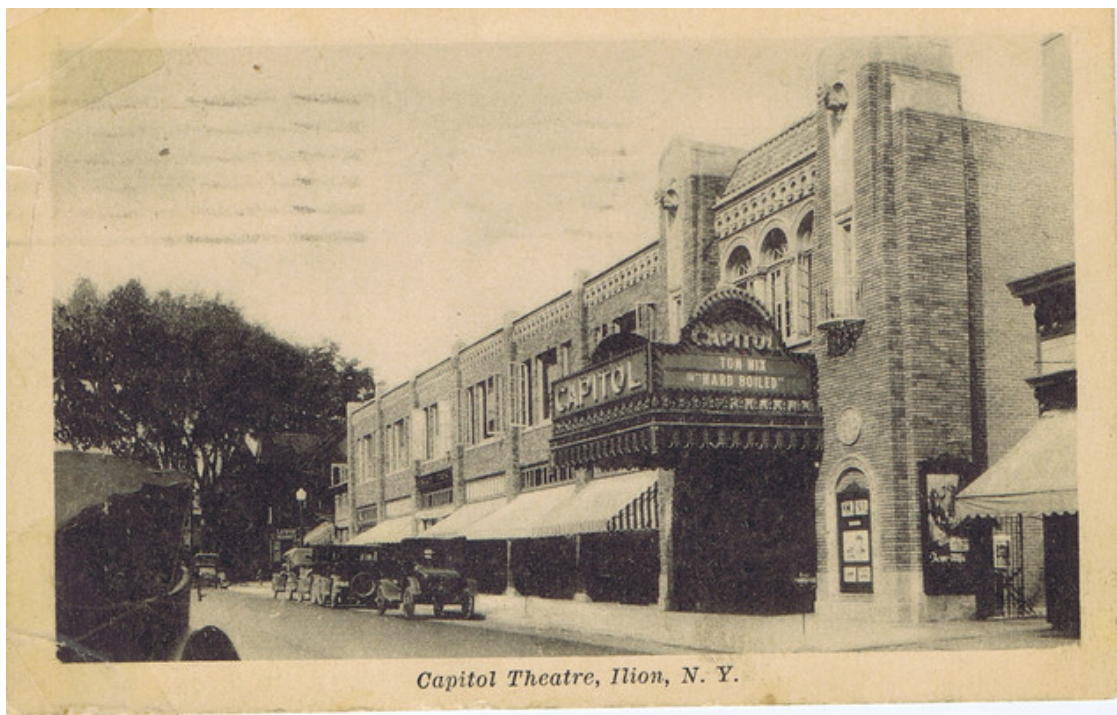


[Photo Source](#)

The 1952 Ilion Centennial book described Ilion's Social life. The Herkimer County GenWeb site republished the book and provided the following description of theaters in Ilion.

There were many theatres, from 1900 on, devoted to motion pictures, the forerunners of which were phonograph concerts at the YMCA Hall and animated pictures as shown by animotoscope at the Opera House. The Opera House showed the first real "movies". Some almost forgotten theaters include the "Grand" at Main and Morgan, and the "Casino" in the Wilcox Dancing Academy. A typical nickelodeon of the times open from 12 to 1 p. m. for the working men, was later called "Big Ben" when renovated in 1916 during World War I. This was on First Street just west of "The Sentinel". The Temple Theatre in the Odd Fellows Temple was popular for years but fell into disuse when the Capitol Theatre opened in 1925 with Frank Whitney and Ben Young as co-owners and operators. This has a capacity of 1200. Beginning in 1928, an orchestra under the direction of Clarence

Flint added an especial attraction for a few years. Since 1928 Sunday performances have been allowed by virtue of a special election. - Source [Ilion 1852-1952](#)



[Photo Source](#)



By Source ([WP:NFC#4](#)), [Fair use](#), [Link](#)

Whitney Sells Theater Business but Keeps Control

The theater opened on November 23, 1925 and had one screen and a seating capacity of 1,250. It also had a ballroom and bowling alleys. The stage was 36 feet deep and 60 feet wide. The entrance and foyer was large and could accommodate 300 people between shows. The business block portion of the site was added in

1927. With the business block connected and the cost of the equipment for the theater, the site represented an outlay of \$300,000.

On January 3, 1926, shortly after the theater opened, Young and Whitney Inc., in what was called the largest real estate deal ever consummated in Ilion, sold the theater to the Kallet Theater, Inc. chain. The deal also included the lease that Young & Whitney, Inc., had on the Temple Theater in the Odd Fellows Block, but did not affect their buildings in the Opera House Block in First Street. Young and Whitney Inc. also had holdings in the Kallet Theaters, Inc., and were able to retain local interest in the theater.

The theater changed hands again in January 1930 when Whitney and Robert I Pierce, manager made the deal to transfer the theater to Fox Metropolitan Playhouse.

Whitney was still listed as an owner in October of 1934, when Young & Whitney, owners of Capitol Theater and a block on First Street, brought action to have the assessment reduced.

By 1941, it was operated as part of the Schine circuit. The theater closed after 1966. Harry Levin purchased the building in 1968.

Whitney and Village Politics



[Photo Source](#)

THE LIBERTY PARTY

Start of Political Ventures - 1919

Besides being a real estate developer, farmer and cattle breeder, Frank Whitney had his hand in village politics for many years. He began his service as a Village Trustee and served in that position from 1919 to 1921.

Launched his own Political Party - The Liberty Ticket

In 1930, Whitney ran for Village President, with a slate of other candidates by launching their own political party named the "Liberty Ticket". The party was created by a group of residents prominently identified with both the Republican and Democratic parties. The Republican Party had a full slate of candidates. The Democratic Party adjourned their caucus without naming a ticket in order to leave the field open to the

Liberty and Republican tickets, the Liberty ticket being made up of both Republicans and Democrats. Whitney lost the election to Oliver S. Coleman who served as Village President/Mayor for the following terms, 1930 - 1932, 1939 - 1945, 1947 - 1948. Between the 1932 and 1939 years, Frank C. Whitney was Ilion's Mayor.

The 1930s - Mayor Frank Whitney's Tumultuous Village Years

The Remington Rand Strike of 1936

The year, 1936 was, without a doubt, his most difficult term. The Remington Rand strike began in May of 1936. In February 1936, the District Council of Office Equipment Workers became the Remington Rand Joint Protective Board. About 2,300 workers were employed at the Ilion plant. With the old contract about to expire, the Remington Rand Company refused to discuss a new agreement. A strike vote was taken in a number of plants including in Elmira, Tonawanda, Syracuse and Ilion. In May, 200 Ilion union workers met and voted to strike and joined other Joint Protective Board/IAM-International Association of Machinists Union workers. James Rand, President of the Remington Rand Company, had thwarted union efforts since the 1934 contract had been signed. He was credited with using "The Mohawk Valley Formula" to break the union. The company hired professional strikebreaking agencies to intimidate the strikers. They paid Herkimer County to fund 300 specially sworn sheriff's deputies. The mayors of these Ilion, Herkimer, Frankfort and Mohawk villages went to work and under the leadership of Mayor Frank Whitney, of Ilion, a joint committee of themselves, their counsel and members of the respective boards of trustees were set up with Edward J. Burns, Corporation Counsel of Mohawk, as chairman. The Ilion Village Board shut down the union headquarters on June 10 and also passed a resolution to barricade roads leading into the village. Mayor Whitney and the other members of a 'Citizens Committee', declared a state of emergency. "We did it, legal or not." declared Mayor Frank Whitney, at a hearing held June 18, 1936, to have the headquarters reopened.

The National Labor Relations Board later reported:

The main road leading into the village was barricaded with a large chain. Squads of special deputies and the local police armed with shotguns -- consisting of four to six deputies and one policeman in a squad -- stood guard at the entrances to the village and patrolled the streets. Only persons with passes of the Association, those working at the Remington Arms plant, and others satisfactory to the guards were permitted to enter the village. Arms had been secured that night at the Remington Arms plant and were carried by many of the special deputies and police. Others carried clubs. Private cars were used to serve as police cars. The headquarters of the Ilion unions, where the pickets gathered, and which were across the street from the plant, were padlocked by the Village Board on the basis of one complaint.

The company's strong-arm tactics were successful in Ilion. By the end of June, the plant was back in operation. Rand applied the same union busting tactics at other struck plants. "The company got judges to limit picketing, landlords to raise rents and police to arrest picketers on the most flimsy charges."

["The Fighting Machinist, A Century of Struggle"](#), by Robert G. Rodden, contains this story about Mayor Whitney and how he felt about the strike.

At the Middletown, Ohio plant police arrested peaceful picketers and judges hit them with long prison sentences. Every week the pressure increased. Rand devised diabolic strategies to demoralize and divide the workers. "For Sale" signs appeared in front of the factories. "Citizens committees" were formed. Workers and their wives were visited in their homes and urged to join highly publicized "back-to-work" campaigns. The company also leaned heavily on locally elected officials. **On one occasion, the mayor of Ilion met secretly with the strikers and tearfully confessed that he was being forced into actions he did not want to take. Although he was one of the wealthiest men in town the mayor had been warned by a citizens' committee that included his banker that if he**

defied the company he would be ruined and run out of town "with nothing left but his hat, coat and pants." Citizens committees visited merchants and warned them not to help or give credit to strikers.

Mayor Frank Cole Whitney actively participated in, supported the "Citizens Committee's" anti-union actions and kept his fortune, hat, coat and pants. He was not ruined and he was not run out of town.



Homes Bombed in Ilion

While the plant was back in full operation by the end of June, 1936, the strike still continued for others. In August, two homes owned by Remington Rand employees, who had been out on strike but returned to work, were bombed. The homes were occupied by William Alpert and family, 287 Second Street and Edwin Mallery of 15 South Fourth Avenue. "The bomb was placed under the corner of the porch of the Alpert home and although considerable damage was done to the porch and surrounding property no persons were injured. A large stone was hurled through the front window at the Mallery residence." The bombings occurred about 2:45 am.

"Strike leaders emphatically asserted that unionists still out in strike knew nothing of the occurrence and the bombing was sharply condemned in a statement by John Flynn, vice-president of the polishers, the organisation to which Alpert and Mallery formerly belonged." Some reported that a car from Syracuse had been seen in the area shortly before the bombings.

The Union Prevails - National Labor Relation Board (NLRB) - (decided March 13, 1937)

On March 13, 1937, the NLRB issued a decision, Remington Rand, Inc., 2 NLRB 626, finding Remington Rand guilty of violating federal labor law. In the decision, the NLRB described the company's anti-union tactics undertaken during the strike year.

In a monumental 120-page decision the Board found Rand had arrogantly place himself above the law, subjecting 6,500 workers and their families to the miseries of a prolonged strike, the people of six communities to extreme economic hardship, turning neighborhoods into warring camps and unleashing unreasoning hatreds. The NLRB ordered reinstatement with back pay of the union workers discharged prior to the strike, reemployment of the 4,000 workers still on strike, disestablishment of all company unions and recognition of bona fide unions in the six affected plants as well as in the new Elmira plant. Rand fought

the order all the way to the Supreme Court but was eventually forced to recognize the union and make restitution to the workers. - source ["The Fighting Machinist, A Century of Struggle"](#)

The Mohawk Valley Formula

In case you wondered, here is the union-busting formula as reported in ["The Fighting Machinist, A Century of Struggle"](#)

First: When a strike is threatened, label the union leaders as "agitators" to discredit them with the public and their own followers. Conduct balloting under the foremen to ascertain the strength of the union and to make possible misrepresentation of the strikers as a small minority. Exert economic pressure through threats to move the plant, align bankers, real estate owners and businessmen into a "Citizens' Committee."

Second: Raise high the banner of "law and order", thereby causing the community to mass legal and police weapons against imagined violence and to forget that employees have equal right with others in the community.

Third: Call a "mass meeting" to coordinate public sentiment against the strike and strengthen the Citizens' Committee.

Fourth: Form a large police force to intimidate the strikers and exert a psychological effect. Utilize local police, state police, vigilantes and special deputies chosen, if possible, from other neighborhoods.

Fifth: Convince the strikers their cause is hopeless with a "back-to-work" movement by a puppet association of so-called "loyal employees" secretly organized by the employer.

Sixth: When enough applications are on hand, set a date for opening the plant by having such opening requested by the puppet "back-to-work" association.

Seventh: Stage the "opening" theatrically by throwing open the gates and having the employees march in a mass protected by squads of armed police so as to dramatize and exaggerate the opening and heighten the demoralizing effect.

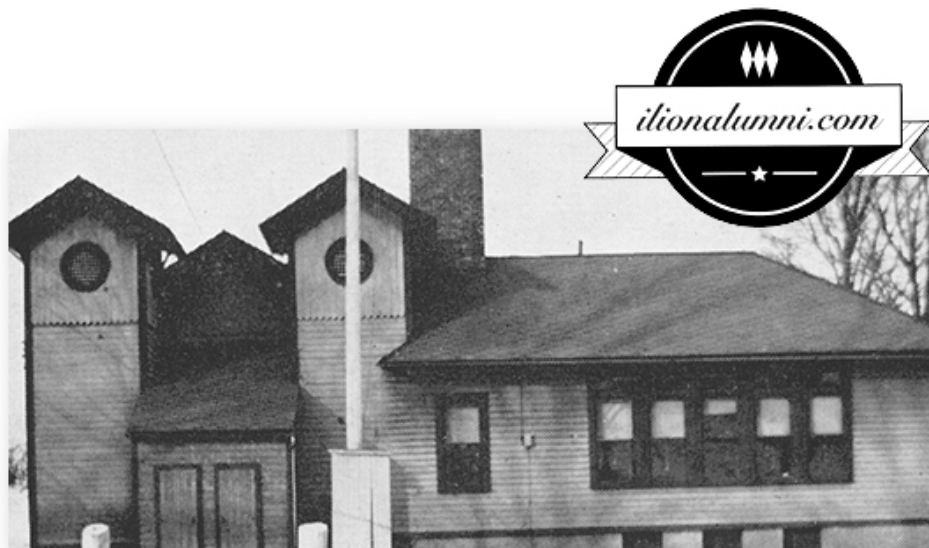
Eighth: Demoralize the strikers with a continuing show of force. If necessary turn the locality into a warlike camp and barricade it from the outside world.

Ninth: Close the publicity barrage on the theme that the plant is in full operation and the strikers are merely a minority attempting to interfere with the "right to work". With this, the campaign is over--the employer has broken the strike.

1938 - Whitney Unopposed in Village Election

Mayor Whitney began his last term, as Village Mayor, on March 2, 1938. He ran unopposed and was on the Republican ticket. He served for a total of seven years as President/Mayor. From 1884 to 1949, the President of Ilion was elected for a one-year term while the Trustees were elected for two-year terms. His terms, as President, were the third longest in Ilion's history. Source ["The Honorable James F. Garnsey Booklet"](#)

He unsuccessfully campaigned to have Ilion convert from a Village Charter to a City Charter in March of 1938. "Whitney declared that Ilion is sustaining more than 75 per cent of the Town of German Flatts and he contends that one government under the city form can be run cheaper than two with Ilion supporting both herself and German Flatts. There is too much overlapping of government and officials and with that Ilion under a new form of government, the administration would be consolidated, with only one set of Officers and village to support." source - [Ilion NY Sentinel 1938-1940 - 0258.pdf](#)



Ilion Old Forge Road School - South Ilion District Number 7 - Built in 1910

Whitney and the School Districts

Frank Whitney was a member of the Union Free School Board Number 7, which was housed in the Old Forge Road School building. Mr. Whitney served on the board for 20 years. He was president of the School Board for ten years. In 1927, he put up the addition to the Old Forge School that provided sanitary facilities, running water, and lights. It was through his efforts that electric service was extended to the four-room school.



Photo courtesy of Ida Seckner as published in The Herkimer Evening Telegram

Frank Whitney's daughter, Elsie (Whitney) Edsall began her teaching career at the Old Forge Road School. Elsie graduated from Ilion High School in 1914 and then attended St. Lawrence University. Miss Whitney is included in the photograph above.

1927 Old Forge Road School Class Picture



Photo courtesy of Kay Ellen Gilmour, MD as published on flickr

The Old Forge Road School was an integrated school, back in 1927, as seen in the above Class photograph.

School District Changes 1940s

School District Number 7, The Old Forge School District, which Frank Whitney served for over twenty years, was annexed by the Ilion School District Number 1 on August 13, 1946. The South Ilion School District taxpayers met with both boards and by a unanimous vote decided to close the Old Forge Road School. The Ilion Board promised to provide transportation to West Hill School and hot lunches for South Ilion children attending Ilion schools. Eventually, the building was sold to Raymond Bennett who used it as a car wash for many years. source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1948 01591.pdf](#)

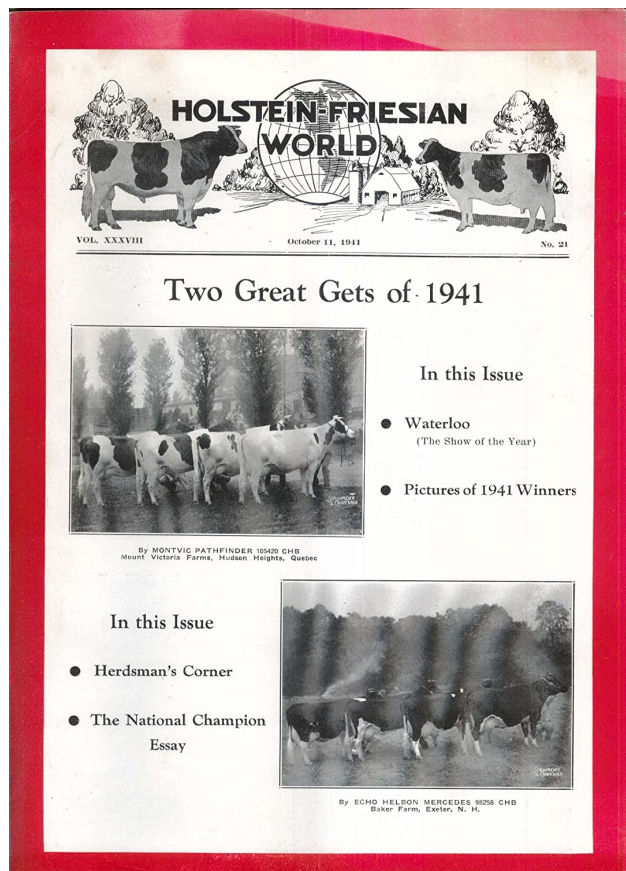
Whitney Land for Sale for School Building

In July of 1948, voters defeated a proposal to buy a tract of land from Frank Whitney for \$12,000. The site was to have been used for the erection of a new elementary school in the southern part of the village. "The proposal to sell Hunt's Field, which was included in the plan, was discussed by George F. White, veteran sports enthusiast, who pointed out that the returns from selling the field would not be sufficient to cover what the school district would lose in a playfield." source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1948 01592.pdf](#)

You can get an idea the location of the property that Frank Whitney was willing to sell for a school building site by the description in the legal notice. source - [Ilion NY Sentinel 1947-1948 - 0658.pdf](#)

Shall the Board of Education of Union Free School District No. 1 of the Town of German Flatts, New York be authorized to purchase from Frank C. Whitney and Gertrude C. Whitney the real property located on the south side of Brook Street, Ilion, N. Y. bounded and described as follows.

Being the real property known as the Gravel Pit containing approximately twelve acres and bounded on the north by Brook Street, on the south by Davis, on the west by Doty, and a certain brook which divides the land intended to be sold from other lands of Whitney, and easterly by Gordon and the rear line of lot a fronting on the west side of Elm Street extended.



1950s Whitney Sells off Cattle Stock

In September of 1951, Whitney sold off 40 head of cattle stock. For years, he and his father traded in high-quality cattle. He continued to run dry stock on his farm. On the sale of his herd, Whitney said, "It's going to be pretty lonesome around here with those empty stanchions."

"His most cherished memory of his 70-year career in farming was his ownership of the renowned prize Holstein bull "Pathfinder" who displayed typical vicious traits with all but his owner." source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1968 01879.pdf](#)

Pathfinder's mother was Montvic Rag Apple Bonheur. An article in the "The Bullvine", a trade journal, noted that she was the "...highest producing daughter with a world 3X record of 1,263 lbs of fat...Her progeny includes the bull Montvic Pathfinder, of which Backus says, 'Many consider his pedigree the greatest ever written.'" source - [Montvic Ribbons - 1934](#)



You can look up each property and when it was built using the SDG system

1940s and 1950s Building Boom - Whitney Names Streets

In the early 1950s, Frank Whitney's lots east of upper Otsego Street were to be developed into as many as 20 new homes, priced to sell between \$8500 and \$10,000. At the same time, a building boom was occurring in the S. Fifth Avenue area and Barringer Road. As early as 1909, Frank Whitney had laid out Whitney Park (Columbia Parkway). It now has over 70 homes.

Several streets in Ilion were developed and named by Frank C. Whitney. In 1947, those streets were reported to be, as follows: Buchanan, Jefferson, Monroe, Washington, Columbia Parkway, Richfield, Henry, William and Whitney Streets. source - [Ilion NY Sentinel 1947-1948 - 0180.pdf](#)

1956 and 1958 - Family Deaths

1956 - Carroll A. Edsall Death

Carroll A. Edsall, husband of Elsie Whitney Edsall, of 421 Otsego Street (the Clapsaddle house on the South corner of Otsego and Richfield Street), died December 2, 1956 in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Utica. He was associated with his father-in-law, Frank Whitney, in the operation of the Capitol Theater. He later joined Frank Whitney in the operation of Pioneer Farms. Besides his wife, he left his mother; two cousins, Dr. Preston Edsall of Raleigh, NC and Mrs. Laura Thomson of Margarettsville and several nieces and nephews. source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1958 02980.pdf](#)

1958 - Helen 'Gertrude' (Clapsaddle) Whitney Death

Helen 'Gertrude' (Clapsaddle) Whitney, Frank's wife, died December 4, 1958. She died at her 427 Otsego Street home after a long illness. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, the Mohawk Valley

Daughters of the American Revolution, an honorary member of the Ilion Garden Club, and the Eastern Star Chapter. She was 86 years old. Burial was in Armory Hill Cemetery. sources - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1958 02980.pdf](#) and [Utica NY Daily Press 1960 - 9173.pdf](#)

1960s - Lawsuits, Lawsuits, Lawsuits

Perhaps he got a little cranky in his older years. Frank Whitney filed many, many lawsuits against the village in the 1960s. He was usually represented by Ilion Attorney Fred J. O'Donnell.

Russell Park Law Suit 1963

In August of 1963, he claimed a 475-foot section of Russell Park, the entrance to the Park from Philip Street, was owned by him and not the village. In 1959, Raymond H. Bedworth, public works superintendent, had prepared a village map that Whitney claimed contained errors. Whitney maintained that prior to 1962, the entrance and access to Russell Park from Philip St. was controlled by him and village employees using a gate that he had bought and placed across the entrance. "The former mayor claims in 1961 and early 1962 village employees had tried to lock the gate without affording access to Whitney's land. He says on his request the village clerk gave him a key. He also claims in 1962 the village replaced Whitney's gate." source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1968 01879.pdf](#)

The case was not settled until 1970. Whitney's daughter, Elsie Edsall through her counsel, she was also represented by Attorney Fred O'Donnell, sought to recover 33 acres of annexed land in Russell Park. She claimed the land was owned by her father, the late Frank Whitney. The suit was settled in the village's favor and the village was granted \$2,190 in court costs against Mrs. Edsall. A Supreme Court jury decided, in October 1970, that Russell Park belonged to the village and the village can continue to use the park property. source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1970 02269.pdf](#)

"Before turning the case over to the jury, Supreme Court Justice Richard Cardamone dismissed two companion suits against the village charging trespass and damages. Judge Cardamone dismissed suits against the Town of German Flatts, which was brought in as a defendant because of annexation proceedings, and against John LaFlair, a home building contractor, who had also been named a defendant. Attorney Fred O'Donnell, Ilion represented Mrs. Edsall, while the village was represented by Leighton Burns of Kernan and Kernan Utica, as counsel for Mrs. Mary Panarites, village attorney. LaFlair was represented by George Getman, Ilion, and Grover Radley was attorney for the Town of German Flatts." source - source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1970 a 01244.pdf](#)

Whitney sues Antenna-Vision Inc. 1964

Once again, Attorney Fred J. O'Donnell filed lawsuits on behalf of Frank Whitney. In 1964, Attorney O'Donnell served The Village Board with a summons naming the TV Company, Mayor Donald E. Hall and the four village trustees as defendants. Whitney was seeking an injunction to force the removal of television cable poles and seeking an order adjudge as void the franchise given the TV company by the Village. His attorney contended that the cable poles, installed on Whitney's Brook Street property, interfered with access to his land and damaged the property. source - [Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1964 00758.pdf](#)

Reservoir Law Suit and John LeFlair Trespass Lawsuit 1965

A summons was served on Mayor John Morris, in March 1965, when Whitney sought damages totaling \$150,000, "...claiming that the level of No. 3 reservoir was raised by 13 inches since 1957, and depriving the claimant by impounding and diverting the waters of Ferncliff Falls and Clapsaddle Creek involving land owned by the claimant." A summons was also served on Ilion contractor, John LaFlair, asking damages totaling \$65,000 in an action involving trespass on the claimant's property between the south side of Philip St. and the west boundary of Russell Park. The claim alleged removal of valuable topsoil and trees on property owned by Whitney. When the case was finally settled in 1970, costs of \$150 were granted John LaFlair, Ilion contractor, and \$75 to Town of German Flatts. Both were also named as defendants in the three actions. [source - Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1965 00839.pdf](#)

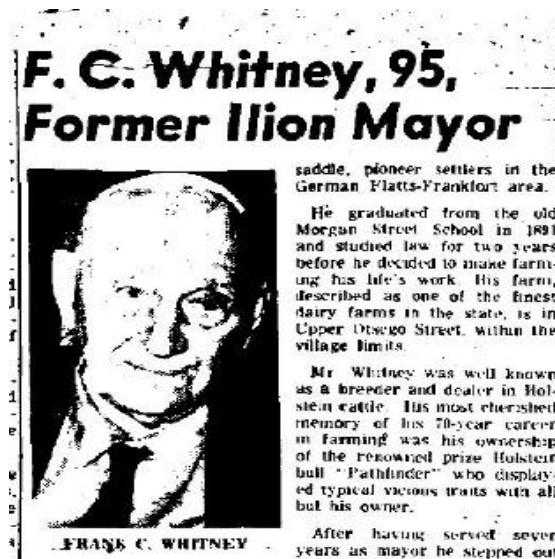
Whitney Lived in the Ilion Hospital 1964-1968

Frank Whitney was a patient in the Mohawk Valley General Hospital from 1964 until his death, four years later. He had a private room with round the clock private-duty nurses. He paid out-of-pocket for his care. In a 1975 separate case, involving the hospital and Whitney's daughter, Elsie Edsall, Attorney Fred O'Donnell revealed that the hospital was paid over \$500,000 for the care of Frank Whitney, who died at the age of 95 after being patient there for five years. [source - Utica NY Observer 1975 - 5896.PDF](#)

Frank Cole Whitney Dies

Frank Whitney

Dies At Ilion; Former Mayor



Frank C. Whitney, 95, of 427 Otsego St., who had been the oldest living Ilion High School alumnus, died June 7, 1968. He passed away in the Mohawk Valley General Hospital, where he had been a patient since 1964.

He was a life member of the Ilion Elks Lodge, a 72-year member of the Ilion Lodge FV-AM, a charter member of the Holstein Friesian Association of America, and a past member of the Kiwanis Club. He

attended the Presbyterian Church.

Surviving was a daughter, Mrs. Carroll Edsall, Ilion. Services were conducted by the Rev. Maurice Mitchell, Presbyterian pastor, and Rev. Patrick Mangan, Annunciation Church assistant pastor, from the Whiter Hendrix Funeral Home. [source - Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1968 01879.pdf](#)

Frank Cole Whitney is buried in [Armory Hill Cemetery](#), Ilion, New York.

Whitney Estate Value

The entire estate, consisting of personal property, which was estimated to be worth \$650,000 and real estate worth \$200,000, was bequeathed to his daughter, Mrs. Elsie (Whitney) Edsall, according to his will. Adjusted for inflation, \$850,000 in 1968 is equal to \$6.3 million in 2019. Mrs Edsall was a widow and childless at the time of her father's death. She lived in the family home at 427 Otsego Street, Ilion NY. She will be featured in an upcoming story. [source - Herkimer NY Evening Telegram 1968 02561.pdf](#)

Whitney Legacy

Frank Cole Whitney had his hand in everything; politics, education, real estate development, unions and agriculture. When you drive down Otsego Street, you can see it from his farm, his family home and the Capitol Theater building. On Old Forge Road, one can see the remnants of Union School District Number 7. The Ilion Post Office was built during his tenure as Mayor. The entirety of the Columbia Parkway area is due to his development. No other alumnus has left so broad a mark on the Village of Ilion.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to 1946 Alumnus, Shirley (Burns) Momberger Tippet White, for sharing the anecdotal story about Frank Whitney buying a car in the 1930s.

BACK

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