

Warren Montgomery

by Raymond LaFlamme

Warren Montgomery was the first of three major magnates of the hotel industry of New York City to not only have the unusual distinctions of having their origins in a small village such as Hoosick Falls, but also to maintain very active lifetime connections with the village. Montgomery was actually born under humble circumstances in the north country town of Johnsburg, New York to Thomas and Margaret Kays Montgomery on April 28, 1866. The Montgomery family, including brother Robert and sisters Cora and Margaret, moved to North Pownal, Vermont in 1872 and finally to Clay Hill in Hoosick Falls six years later.

Although he did not have any formal education, which was not uncommon during that period, Montgomery possessed native intelligence and was an ambitious youth who secured employment as a timekeeper in his early teens at the Mechanic Street plant of Walter A. Wood Company where he remained until 1896, gaining invaluable experience. During his tenure in Hoosick Falls, his military affiliations consisted of membership in the reserve type organizations Thirty Second Separate Company and Old Guard of Company M. At age thirty, Montgomery, through business connections, seized the opportunity to accept an entry level management position at the financially handicapped Bretton Hall Hotel where, through dogged determination and long hours, he rapidly rose to the position of Manager and eventually turned the Hotel into a successful and profitable enterprise. The Bretton Hall chapter in his life was followed in 1903 by an investment that resulted in an ownership share and management position in the Seymour Hotel on West Forty Fifth Street, a location that became the destination of many Hoosick Falls residents while visiting New York City.

After several years of successfully securing his position with the Seymour, and while retaining his ownership share, Mr. Montgomery was appointed General Manager of the prestigious and exclusive Barclay Hotel on Park Avenue. This is where his career had come to a pinnacle as, during this period of his life, his services were in such demand that he was also connected in an executive capacity with the Towers Hotel in Yonkers and the Clifton and Esplanade Hotels in New York. After several years of undertaking this whirlwind performance, in the middle of 1934 Montgomery briefly returned to active participation with the Seymour where he remained until his retirement at the end of 1934 when he returned to Hoosick Falls. Throughout his long and illustrious career in New York City, Montgomery never lost contact with his hometown and was recognized as the official "host" by many Hoosick Falls residents visiting New York City, and he returned to Hoosick Falls for most of his vacations. Mr. Montgomery was also known for his generosity towards the Hoosick community and, in addition to other benefices, he assisted in financing college education for several young men from the Village. Montgomery never married.

Anticipating his retirement, in 1930 Montgomery purchased the Hobby Hill farm on the Hill Road in the Town of Hoosick and his social endeavors included being a member of Van Rensselaer Lodge # 400; B.P.O. Elks Lodge # 178 of Hoosick Falls; the Kiwanis Club and many organizations of hotel men. He maintained his religious affiliation as an active member of the Methodist Church for many years of his life. In 1936, he purchased the Carroll property in North Hoosick that included Devil's Den and the village pool known as White Creek. The property was

renamed Everready farm after his good friend Frank A. Ready, a Hoosick Falls native who was Montgomery's protégée, having entered the New York City hotel industry through Montgomery's considerable influence, and as a result of his significant accomplishments is the subject of a later biographical sketch.

Montgomery was "ever ready" to receive a bevy of friends and associates at his expansive farm which included not only the top echelon of the hotel business but also employees of the Seymour of any position level who savored a trip to the country during and after the Great Depression that was otherwise beyond their fiscal reach. In the fall of 1938, Montgomery commenced his one and only foray into political office seeking as a lifetime member of the Republican party when he was elected Hoosick Town Councilman by a substantial margin.

Unfortunately, and almost simultaneously, he was stricken with an undetermined illness that prevented him from attending but a few Town Board meetings and rendered his service ineffective. The illness lingered tenaciously, and Warren Montgomery passed away at his beloved Everready farm in September 1940. He was buried in Maple Grove Cemetery and his sisters, Cora Gill of Hoosick Falls, and Margaret Parkins of Pittston, Pennsylvania survived him. It should be noted that his protégée and friend Frank A. Ready was a bearer at the funeral.