

# T H E Q U A R T E R L Y

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Boyhood Home



Schooled Here

## IRVING BACHELLER: REGIONAL VOICE OF AMERICA

Address by Professor Edward J. Blankman

At the outset I want to make two points very clear. The first is this: Irving Bacheller can scarcely be considered a major writer of America. There do not seem to be in him the writing qualities of universality and permanence which would give him the stature, say, of his contemporary, Mark Twain. Bacheller himself was aware of this. For years after publishing Eben Holden, his most successful book, he was accustomed to refer to himself as a "copyist." No writer of large genius is going to think of himself in terms as a mere copyist of life. Also, Bacheller voiced as his one great regret the fact that he did not become a published writer until after his fortieth year. He knew that this handicapped him in the mastery of techniques.

Having made this point, let me make my second. I have not come here, like Mark Antony, to bury Caesar rather than to praise him. It is the fashion in criticism nowadays to do a lot of burying of reputations, but I hope you will find before I have done that my principal intention has been to be appreciative of our North Country writer.

I should also make clear that I do not intend to discuss him according to the chronological order of his works. The pattern I wish to follow is this: first, Bacheller as social and economic critic of America, and satirist; second, very briefly, his historical novels and third, his achievement as a regionalist of the North Country. I have chosen this order because it permits me to deal first with some of his weaknesses as a writer and then to lay larger stress upon what I consider his very considerable strengths. I think you will find, as I go on, that the third part dealing with him as a regionalist will take up the larger part of my time, and hence my title will be justified.

Another reason for my pattern is this. The most frequent criticism which friends of mine utter concerning Mr. Bacheller is to the effect that his books are all alike. Well, they aren't all alike, even though the best of them are somewhat in the same mold. Perhaps my arrangement will underline this point for such critics of Bacheller.

To my first topic then of Bacheller as social critic and satirist. Like many successful writers, Irving Bacheller came to think of himself as a critic of his times, and as a thinker. Certainly as the latter, a thinker or philosopher in any profound sense, he can be dismissed very quickly. In the 1920's, alarmed by many changes coming after the First World War but caused by all sorts of disruptions stemming well back in the 19th century, he railed at the order of things about him. These included everything from extravagance to the speed at which young people were leaving farms. He placed the blame for these dislocations, in the mass or for the individual, upon iconoclasts like Bernard Shaw and Sigmund Freud. The truth is that he probably read such thinkers very scantily, if at all, and he was harking back in wish fulfilment to an uncomplicated world pattern of the 19th century.

It must be said, however, that he was very successful and effective as a lecturer during this period and made an appeal to many persons, as Mark Twain had done in a different way a quarter century before. He was a handsome and impressive looking man, very genial and magnetic upon the lecture platform. If only he had lectured more extensively upon such matters as folk anecdotes of the North Country, he might well have become one of the most popular lecturers since Artemus Ward and Mark Twain.

One basis for his carping attitude from the 1920's on interests me very much. He was in a very real sense both the victim and the beneficiary of his education at St. Lawrence University in the 19th century. A teacher who made a profound impression on him was Dr. Absalom Graves Gaines, who taught his course in moral philosophy up to the turn of the century. In Dr. Gaines' view, which of course was theologically derived, every person possesses a natural instinct for telling right from wrong, and this instinct has nothing to do with the reasoning faculty. There are no persons in this room today, I should judge, who share this opinion, and certainly it would be untenable to the sociologist or psychologist nowadays. But it influenced Irving Bacheller all his life; it was a basic reason why he saw things pretty rigidly in black and white tones, and it handicapped him as a modern writer. On the other hand, it was a source out of which sprang some of the best things that he wrote. These were the characters and scenes of simple farm life, to which he gave an effective dignity and idealism.

So much about his inadequacies as a critic of a society which, for good or ill, was becoming tremendously complex and in which one could not solve individual or mass frustration by returning to an earlier age. In work that is more purely satire, he seems more effective to us. Let me comment especially on a novel published as early as 1911, Keeping Up With Lizzie. In this book a character whom he calls Socrates Potter is both the story teller and the vehicle for expressing satire.

The locale is a town in Connecticut. Bacheller had established a residence in that state and he knew something of the customs of a class which in our own time is called suburban. What is Bacheller chiefly satirizing in the novel? Extravagance. A town deteriorates because of the fashion of extravagance set by "Lizzie," a businessman's daughter. Because she demands more and more luxuries, her father's prices go up and every businessman in town except Sock Potter follows suit. Through the influence of Sock, Lizzie finally alters her ways and the sanity of a decent economy returns to the town.

Here is Bacheller, I think, at his very best as a critic of his times. He is writing about something that he understands, and his story seems credible to us because he is satirizing a universal weakness as seen in the light of a sensible and practical mind, that of Sock Potter.

A book in which he turns satire upon the 19th century itself is The Turning of Griggsby, published in 1913. Here he opens to us, as he had not done in the idyllic Eben Holden, some of the seamy and even corrupt forces in the village life of an earlier time. What does he focus his attack upon here? Upon such things as drunkenness, and time wasted and money spent in racing horses. He goes beyond this to show how these social ills among men of a village like Canton distort and magnify the labors of women. You see here a compassionate Irving Bacheller, remembering such women as his beloved mother and anticipating the suffragist drive which resulted a few years later in the 19th amendment.

Other books came from Bacheller's pen which used the lance of satire. I have little time to consider them here, except possibly to mention Uncle Peel, which in 1933 lampooned current investment speculation in Florida real estate. Once again we find Bacheller doing a Mark Twain sort of thing and doing it for the same reason as Twain, in the wake of his own failures in speculation. But Uncle Peel is a pretty weak book. Aside from the satire I mentioned, I would recommend it only to the persons of Canton and vicinity who remember Mr. G. William Lewis, upon whom the character of Uncle Peel is modeled.

This is enough about Bacheller as satirist. The objects of his satire may seem rather too transparent for some of us, and his remedies for the ills he perceives are too simple. Nevertheless he was a literary force in this genre. Sock Potter became a well known literary philosopher. The title Keeping Up With Lizzie anticipated such a phrase as "keeping up with the Joneses" and was supposed to have given origin to the term "Tin Lizzie."

During the course of his lectures and writings in this field, he often struck of an apt phrase. His description of Henry James is worthy of Mark Twain. Of that novelist, whose subtle character portrayals and involved descriptions of European society baffled many readers, Bacheller remarked, "Mr. James is going up into the stratosphere, and he seems pretty short of oxygen."

I have made reference to Bacheller's historical novels. By this I mean novels which reach back to public figures like Lincoln and put stress upon the historical features of a period like the War of 1812. I do not mean such a book as Eben Holden which, while historical in utilizing the Civil War, is chiefly a study in character and local customs. Bacheller's principal attempts in the historical novel were those like A Man for the Ages (1919). Here he voiced the familiar Bacheller pattern, the telling of a journey westward through the St. Lawrence Valley, in this case all the way to the Sangmon country of Illinois. He combines with this a boy-girl love story, but the deepest interest of the book lies in Lincoln as a kind of folk hero.

At this time Bacheller, despite his knowledge of plain people, seems to have been increasingly distrustful of the folk and thought the salvation of America lay in heroes as leaders. This tendency, we see, goes hand in hand with his feelings about complex social ills, and he is propagandist as well as story teller. A Man for the Ages, In the Days of Poor Richard (1922), the much later A Boy for the Ages (1942) -- these are historical romances, and they are joined by such novels about early Christian times as Vergilius (1904) and Dawn (1927). Dawn, by the way, is probably the best of his religious novels and was based upon considerably more research than he gave to other books of this type.

Thus far, I have tried to remind you of certain books of Bacheller in fields of criticism and satire, and historical romance. Now I want to discuss what probably seems to both you and me his most important work. Here we approach Bacheller as a regionalist, an authentic voice of America. He is sometimes sentimental, and very often unobservant of unhappiness or tragedy as a part of living. But he is usually shrewd in his simple portraits of persons and places, and always faithful to an idyllic quality of village and farm life that must have existed. Let me say here that I consider Bacheller to be at his best with what I have just said, portraits and scenes. His worst weaknesses are those of structure, and it may be said of him as of Mark Twain that he was not really a very good novelist.

The following weaknesses are pretty certain to be found in even his best novels. The plot is contrived or hackneyed, and it is cursed with a habit of failure to have situation grow out of situation. By this I mean an episodic framework. Details are supplied one after another without one leading naturally to another and supplying motivation for it. Take Eben Holden, for example. The first five chapters are enchanting, and I use the word advisedly. There are both suspense and character creation as Bacheller tells the story of Willie and Uncle Eb traveling through wilderness from Vermont to St. Lawrence County. Here is probably the best writing Bacheller ever did. But take the five or so chapters following this. Details of farm life, hunting, fishing, and other matters are picturesque and carry us along, but they fail to provide the cumulative tension which a good plot should give us.

This fault of contrived episodic plot was to remain pretty characteristic of Bacheller throughout his career. But then, look at an acknowledged masterpiece like Huckleberry Finn. It has the same kind of episodic plot, and Twain shares the same defect with Bacheller. But what a wonderful story Huck Finn is. Like Homer's Odyssey, the oldest great novel of the western world, it has an epic grandeur which transcends its weaknesses. And in its own perhaps minor way, Eben Holden has a simple dignity which makes it, if not a masterpiece, an authentic and valuable record of life in the North Country.

A little while ago I said "weaknesses" of Bacheller, and I have mentioned the contrived plot. Other shortcomings, I think it must be admitted, are a lack of psychological insight into character and the use of melodramatic characters and situations. On these points let me merely say at the moment that Bacheller, a relatively uncomplicated person himself, was at his best with a very simple type of character like Eben Holden or, on a higher intellectual level, Silas Wright. He could not transform his melodramatic characters into the most real of human beings, but at least he could use them as suspense-producing devices. Of this more later on.

Having noted some of Bacheller's weaknesses, let me get on to some more positive details about him as a regionalist. It seems to me here that three features of his writing, or perhaps four, contribute to this regionalism and are productive of his originality as a writer. There is, first his use of folklore. There is an abundance of this in Eben Holden, perhaps more here than in any other of his novels. The ballad "Going to Salem" which Bacheller reproduces here seems to be an indigenous

North Country ballad of the time. There are Uncle Eb's animal stories, and in this sort of thing Bacheller is often a real master. Some of you perhaps recall the creature which Eb describes to Willy in the first chapters of the novel. This is the swift, sort of like a panther, only with supernatural powers. As Uncle Eb tells us about the swift and later tells other animal legends, we see that here Bacheller can rise to even the level of Twain.

Like Twain, he used a device which has been called the "double snapper." A dramatic incident closes the story. That is the first snapper. The second snapper is the moral application which, if the story is successful, should remain with the reader. The swift carries away a boy who has kept two squirrels in captivity, and the boy is returned to his home only when he has dramatically learned a lesson of humaneness. Again, two caged squirrels afloat on a torrent find some kernels of corn which they had previously secreted in an aperture beneath their floor. As they are rescued and returned to land a sage old squirrel celebrates the rescue and chants their wisdom and their saving ways from a treetop.

Examples of folklore appear in many of his novels. In his visits to the North Country and to the Adirondacks, Bacheller was a habitual seeker after the unusual and the eccentric. Silas Strong (1906), his principal novel of the Adirondacks and camp life, is largely anecdotes about and by Silas Strong. Tall tales about animals are Silas' stock in trade. There is practically no plot in this book except a mild conflict between guides and lumber companies. It is all folkways. "Philoing" is a term which Bacheller uses here and in other writings. It means telling a story with infinite digressions and circumlocutions. He caught this from an actual guide of the Upper Adirondacks, Philo Scott, who was the model for Silas Strong.

Bacheller was less successful than Twain in his use of folk idiom. At his worst he could be either barren or trite; an animal was "quick as a flash," or a child was "limp as a rag." But at his best his language could be both faithful to the region and dramatic; for example, "easy as a grasshopper'd go over straw" or "slower'n a toad in a tar barrel." In general his language was direct, without being adorned by imagery or symbolism except in patterns of rural usage.

A favorite motif as important to the regional aspect in Bacheller as folklore is his use of eccentric, striking figures in the background of his stories. I mean characters like Nick Goodall, the wandering fiddler, and Jed Feary, the poet of Paradise Valley, both of whom appear in Eben Holden. There is Crazy Kate in The Light in the Clearing, who is utilized to issue warnings to the grasping Benjamin Grimshaw. There are of course numerous characters like these in other stories. All too often they are nothing more than melodramatic devices which enable Bacheller to heighten suspense and interest us through the picturesque. They must not, however, be considered wholly unrealistic. Anyone who knows the North Country will admit that the rural nature of our countryside, the loneliness of back country life, and the frequent tensions created by a village life perhaps too inbred -- these produce such things as we call eccentric. Within the memory of most of you people here, this has been true, and certainly was true from the beginning of our North Country settlements. Sociologists tell us that, although the suicide rate is higher in urban areas than in the country, eccentricities and perversions which loneliness induces are more numerous in rural areas. Bacheller, though not a profound psychologist of character, was certainly sound in his sociology as he made use of these eccentrics.

To pass on to the third feature of Bacheller as a regionalist. Here I make reference to the customs of country and village life which he so often portrays with great vividness. Hunting and fishing episodes, wrestling matches, spell-downs, the county fair and the harvest dances invariably following the fair -- these come to life in books like Et'n Holden and The Light in the Clearing. It is Bacheller's

use of such customs that makes so many pages of Eben Holden delightful and The Light in the Clearing, if not delightful in the same sense as Eben Holden, true. And this gives rise to the paradox that while Eben Holden is possibly the better book of these two and Bacheller's best book, The Light in the Clearing is more faithful to its region, and a better novel. In Eben Holden it's the idyllic features of country life which hold us interested. The frequent drunkenness in the 19th century, the grasping habits of the village money changers, the fear in so many homes of the mortgage holder and tax collector, the waywardness of a boy or girl -- all these less attractive aspects are not in Bacheller's Eben Holden. About the closest he comes to it is reported by this scene: in his room Willy keeps on the wall a sickle of Uncle Eb's, and in the worn handle Willy sees the grinding toil so necessary to a farmer's survival in the North Country. In The Light in the Clearing, published in 1917, such evidences of realism as this detail in Eben Holden are carried to genuine realization. There is a real villain, Benjamin Grimshaw, the mortgage holder. The starkness of farm life is provided, somewhat in the same manner as Bacheller's contemporary, Hamlin Garland, had given in darker shades in his book "Main Traveled Roads." An unhappy ending was, of course, impossible for Bacheller. Grimshaw dies and the young hero, Bart, through his own self-reliance and the aid of Silas Wright, is well on his way to success. Though the features of realism are thus softened, the tragic character of life has made an impact upon us. Also, the entire novel shows improved construction on Bacheller's part, although the unmotivated and passionless development of boy-girl romance marks this book as it had marked Eben Holden and indeed all Bacheller's novels.

You will note that I certainly consider Bacheller weak in his love stories. The same was true of Mark Twain, a much greater writer, whose young lovers are so much cardboard figures. Here the hand of 19th century genteel tradition lies heavy upon Bacheller and Twain. It may be noted that Bacheller's literary father confessor, Hamlin Garland, made attacks upon this genteel tradition with his realism, and Stephen Crane, whom Bacheller helped toward fame by syndicating The Red Badge of Courage, broke it down even more. Bacheller could never accept the breaking of this tradition, and that is one reason why in later years he could not come to terms with the changing 20th century. Bacheller could not make his love episodes very convincing, or at least not very convincing as far as I am concerned. His characteristic device was this: boy meets girl, boy is separated from girl by some improbable circumstance, boy at last wins girl through the aid of his old mentor, Uncle Eb or Uncle Peabody or whoever the "uncle" happens to be.

On the other hand, Bacheller is highly successful in giving us the relationship between the boy and the mentor. The very best pages of all his writing, it seems to me, are those devoted to respect and friendship and love between Uncle Eb and Willy, and between Bart and Uncle Peabody in The Light in the Clearing. The same is true of similar characters in D'ri and I and Darrell of the Blessed Isles, though these are considerably weaker books. Here, whether Bacheller realized it or not, and I am sure he did, he was expressing one of the most classical themes of literature. This essentially is the father-son relationship, or the search of the boy, facing life inexperienced and alone, for the elder counsellor who should be father to him in spirit. This is the theme of great books like Homer's Odyssey. Now Bacheller of course cannot rival the Odyssey in scope or power, but with this one classic theme he sometimes becomes the most successful kind of regionalist, making true use of figures typical of his region and arousing the readers' emotions about them as is sure to happen with a good book.

This is perhaps Bacheller's greatest single achievement in the writing of his career, and this is partly the reason Eben Holden and The Light in the Clearing are his very best books. This ability of his to project an unspoiled father-son relationship puts him in the company of the leading 19th century regionalists like G. W. Cable of New Orleans, Mary Wilkins Freeman of Massachusetts, and Sarah Orne Jewett

of Maine. It enables him, at his top form, to transcend them occasionally, just as he can transcend the portrayal of some father-son relationships in David Harum and Deacon Babbitt. In these two latter novels, both of them laid in New York state, the relationship is tainted just a little bit by the excessive Yankee shrewdness of the elder counsellor. Deacon Babbitt advises his young protege, "Be honest but be smart." At least in the first half of Eben Holden, Uncle Eb would say no more to Willy than, "Be honest," and Bacheller's picture of idyllic and ideal life is so much the richer.

I am coming to the end of my talk, and let me summarize some of the things I have said. Irving Bacheller is still the most authentic literary voice which our region has produced, this North Country which arches in the shape of a lion's shoulder from Lake Ontario to Lake Champlain. There is the folklore. There are the characters who represent the life of the region, eccentric like Crazy Kate, or young and impressionable like Willy or Bart, mature and successful like Silas Wright. There are the features, mostly idyllic but occasionally even stark and sordid, which are sharply observed out of our village and countryside customs. And there is the classic theme, this father-son relationship sometimes localized with great realism and emotionalism. This theme, of course, is not a purely regional theme, but as Bacheller makes use of it, it derives its strength from the region which gave spark and vitality to his imagination in its best moments.

Sometime before Mr. Bacheller's death in 1950 he intrusted to the hands of his old friend, the late John Finnigan of Canton, the following epitaph to be placed upon his headstone:

"Here where the wood thrush sings I lie down with those I love."

This epitaph is characteristic of the feeling for poetry in Bacheller. But some of us who have met Mr. Bacheller, or those who have read his tales of the North Country, might prefer as a memorial this last declaration of faith by Eben Holden:

"I ain't afraid  
'shamed o' nuthin' I ever done.  
Alwus kep' my trap tight,  
Never swore 'less 'twas necessary,  
Never ketched a fish bigger'n 'twas  
Er lied 'n a hoss trade  
Er shed a tear I didn't have to.  
Never cheated anybody but Eben Holden'  
Goin' off somewhere, Bill - dunno the way nuther -  
Dunno 'f it's east or west or north or south,  
Er road er trail;  
But I ain't afraid."

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A stock of back issues of The Quarterly is temporarily available as follows at 25¢ each, and added 5¢ for postage:

Vol 1, No. 4, 92; Vol. 2 Nos. 1, 72; 2, 42; 3, 100; 4, 15; Vol 3 Nos. 1, 30; 2, 23; 3, 36; 4, 16; Vol. 4 Nos. 1, 73; 2, 68.

If you desire any of these write the Society's Secretary, Mr. Malcolm Booth, Canton, New York.

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ASSOCIATION'S FORTHCOMING SPEAKER SHOOTING THE LONG SAULT IN 1957

A special effort has been made to prepare an interesting and worthwhile program for the Annual Meeting of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association to be held Saturday, October 24th at Canton. At its recent meeting the Association's Board voted to make this an "all-day" meeting, beginning at ten in the morning with an opportunity to inspect the new County Historical Centre where County Historian Nina Smithers is located, and where many interesting displays and exhibits are to be found.

At noon luncheon will be served in the dining hall of the new Masonic Lodge, just west of Canton village on the Ogdensburg Road. Following the luncheon the annual business meeting will take place.

At two o'clock the members of the Association and guests will be addressed by one of their fellow members, Dr. Homer L. Dodge of Burlington, Vermont. During the past five years Dr. Dodge has been taking photographs and gathering material from which to prepare an illustrated lecture on various phases and interesting aspects of the St. Lawrence River Development. This will be the first time he will have given this program publicly. Dr. Dodge has had a life-long intimate knowledge of the river, and during the past four years has kept pace with each step in the power and seaway construction. It will be recalled that he "shot" the Long Sault Rapids in his tiny canoe in the fall of 1957 just before the coffer dams throttled that great cataract; that he accompanied the first freighter through the new locks; then repeated this performance on the return trip of the U. S. S. Macon from her escort duties when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip toured the Seaway to Chicago this past summer. Dr. Dodge will emphasize the salient features of the development construction which, he contends, make it the greatest engineering feat of all time. As one who loves the great river, in all its majestic beauty and power, who knows intimately its whims and fickleness, its tantrums and tensions, this famed world traveler, educator and scientist has a real treat in store for us.

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Parishville has organized a local historical society, of which the membership already exceeds 138.

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## BLACK LAKE FERRY REPLICA TO PLY SLEEPY HOLLOW WATERS

Next summer, in the neighborhood where Washington Irving once had the terror-stricken Ichabod clinging frantically to the neck of Gunpowder, with the headless horseman in mad pursuit, an old-fashioned ferry-scow will convey sightseers across the Croton River to visit the historic Van Cortland Manor and other sights in what has but recently become the Sleepy Hollow Restoration. This scow-ferry will be a replica of the ferries which served for crossings at The Narrows on Black Lake in St. Lawrence County, from Edwardsville to Booth Island on the north side, and from Booth Island to the south shore on the other for fifty years.



Dr. Harold Dean Cater, a Syracusan by birth but North Country by exposure and adoption, is the executive director in charge of restoring and preserving Philipse Castle, Sunnyside, and other historic parts of Washington Irving's favorite retreat, under a Rockefeller Foundation grant. Dr. Cater's principal North Country hideout is Morristown. While here last summer he brushed up a bit of conversation with Carl Fay of that place. The subject revolved about the old Black Lake ferries. Hot on this scent Dr. Cater progressed, from Mr. Fay to Emmett Booth who still occupies the old Toll House on Booth Isle at the Lake; Ed Phillips, 83, who once operated the old ferry; Charlie McCourt, W. R. Perry and others, including Morristown's Town Historian, Doris Planty. Ed Phillips' father was the Edwardsville smithy who did the repair work on the iron rod-link cables used in operating the ferries. Dr. Cater dredged up no end of source material and returned to Sleepy Hollow with photographs, a Research Report, drawings and enthusiasm. Work begins this fall on the proposed ferry reproduction.

There are those in the North Country whose recollections of the old toll bridge across The Narrows on the Lake are only partially eroded memories. There are a thinning few who go back to the days of ye primitive scow-ferries, those rather crude contrivances which patiently and safely conveyed man, beast, burden and buggy from shore to island and thence to opposite shore. These scows were shallow flat-hulled barges operated by well-calloused man-power, slowly but surely.

According to Dr. Cater's Research Report the two ferries crossing the Lake channels were identical, each 24 feet long by 16 feet wide, constructed of sound two-inch plank. Each had two pairs of oars for emergencies such as a broken cable or high winds and rough head-seas for which Black Lake is noted. Running along the side of the ferry was a protective railing, accommodatingly just the height on which to bend a friendly elbow and lean for a real juicy bit of local gossip during "the trip acrost." On the opposite side of the ferry were rigged two grooved cast iron wheels, three feet in diameter, each mounted on a metal tripod secured to the deck. From shore to shore stretched the iron rod-link cable, anchored by a "dead man" at each end and resting in the groove on top of the two

ferry cable wheels. These wheels served two purposes: to keep the cable up out of the water during passage, and to facilitate the back-breaking labors of the ferryman. The cable rods were 16 to 18 feet long, joined together by cast iron "cold shuts", or links, which had the habit of frequently breaking and thus affording blacksmith Phillips a steady side-line of work at his forge.

The ferry was propelled by man-power, sweat, calloused palms, and occasional grunts. The operator manipulated a huge hardwood oar-like handle, with a groove on its bottom edge. The ferryman would slip the oar-groove over the cable and then heave back on the handle to cinch the lever tight against the cable. Then with this firmly secure he would bend his back to the task of propelling the scow, his feet firmly planted for proper purchasing, and putting his muscle to the oar. Once under headway these labors eased considerably and the ferryman would be able to "pass the time of day" with his passengers. Landings were via improvised docking facilities, a floating dock to maintain level with the ferry deck, and from there to the shore over loose heavy planks which could be shifted as needed. The ferries operated "on call", the calling being by means of a large iron bell swinging on top of a post at each dockage point. Customers not finding the ferry handy would lustily ring the bell to call the ferryman from refreshment to labor, or just to inform him business was waiting. These scow-ferries operated over the north and south channels at The Narrows from 1851 to 1903.

Dr. Cater, who is thoroughly inoculated with North Country lore, will now perpetuate some of our heritage in the area of the Tappan Zee, the Croton, Philipse Castle, the ancient Van Cortland Manor. Originally a ferry crossed the Croton. Well, now, another will do the same in good old Black Lake manner, carrying folks to see the grounds and manor buildings recently restored to pre-revolutionary status and opened to the public. The Van Cortland Manor House stands close by the shore of the bay. The old ferry house which stood on the shore in 1746 is to be there again, and the ferry. In olden days a man and horse paid four pence; one horse, sulky or chair one shilling; a wagon and team with load, two shillings; pheaton and pair, two shillings; four-wheeled carriage and team, two shillings; four horse conveyance three; foot passengers two pence. How about Cadillacs, Larks and Corvettes in 1960?

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**MR. ANDREW IRVING AND HIS BAGGAGE**

"What is in a name?" The plaintive question of Juliet to Romeo, may be linked in a small degree to an incident to Andrew H. Irving, a resident of Gouverneur sixty years ago.

Mr. Irving made a European trip, and had his baggage marked quite plainly, "Andrew H. Irving, Gouverneur, N.Y." His first stop was at Paris and from the start he noted he was receiving unusual attention. It was not long before it could be seen that this attention was far more than any other person was receiving. The obsequious attentions finally forced him to inquire as to the reason for bell hops, clerks and even ordinary citizens acting so extraordinarily polite. A bell hop said, "The Governor of New York we are proud to have as a guest."

Gouverneur is the French word for Governor and his baggage indicated that he was the Governor of New York. Mr. Irving was for quite some time a resident of Gouverneur at 29 Grove Street, now the property of James F. McCormick. Mr. Irving later lived at Ogdensburg and owned what is now the main wing of the Pythian Home just west of the city on Route 37.

## COUNTY'S OLDEST BARN DESTROYED

By Doris D. Rowland, of Parishville



The oldest barn in St. Lawrence County and one of the few remaining evidences of the vast holdings of the wealthy international banker, David Parish, was destroyed last May when the James Bradish barn on the Smithville-Parishville Road burned. Erected in 1813 by Mr. Parish who owned all the town of Parishville, the barn was part of his Allen's Falls estate.

The beautiful Mansion and servant's quarters which burned in 1916 stood on the sight of the present Bradish home, facing the barn. Tradition has it that Mr. Parish wanted the road built at the front of the house and when it was placed at the back, instead, he spent less time at his home.

Known also as the Brick Barn, the edifice was a massive building. Although, from the outside it appeared to be constructed of wood, its gables were of brick, concealed behind boarded sides. The frame of massive beams was pinned and morticed as was the custom 150 years ago.

The barn was 160 feet high, with an exceptionally steep roof, which had an inward and outward slope, reminiscent of oriental architecture. Originally three large windows stood above the center doors.

A passgate extended the length of the barn below the ridge doors so that teams could drive through and turn around. The stables were in the portico on the sides. The barn had a vast hay capacity and at one time 115 loads of hay were housed in it in addition to ten tons from the preceding year and there was still room for more.

Mr. Parish attempted to raise Merino sheep on this estate, but this Spanish breed were not able to survive our severe northern winters. Because of this venture on Mr. Parish's part, the building was often referred to as "The Sheep Barn."

Today only three buildings remain in Parishville of the many built by the Parish family. One is a stone building, the former a store-house for the famous whiskey, located near the gorge and now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Foster. The second is a frame house on the corner of Main and Elizabeth streets. This was the residence for the Parish agents and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Fenner. The third, across the street from the Fenner home, was built and used as an office for the great Parish land interests.

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**CORRECTION:** The Editor of THE QUARTERLY makes apologies to Mrs. Jeanne Reynolds, Cranberry Lake, in connection with her fine article, " 'Emporium' Was The Word For Lumbering," in our issue of October 1958. In a footnote he incorrectly stated that John Caflish played an important role in establishing the Emporium industry in this county, and that he died in a train wreck on the Pennsylvania Railroad. George Sykes of the former Emporium Forestry Company informs us that other members of the Caflish family died in the wreck, and that Mr. Caflish was not one of the company's leading pioneers in this county.

SUGGESTED REVISIONS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE  
COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
CONSTITUTION

(Editor's Note: -- Following is the proposed revised Constitution of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association, which was approved by the Board of Trustees on September 12 for submission to the annual meeting, when it will be voted on. Members desiring to discuss the proposed revisions at the annual meeting on October 24 are requested to bring their copies of The Quarterly, so that they may refer to the proposals printed below.)

ARTICLE I

This organization shall be known as the St. Lawrence County Historical Association.

ARTICLE II

Its objects shall be to promote and encourage historical observances and historical research (including the publication of articles), and the preservation of books, manuscripts, and relics pertaining to the history of St. Lawrence County.

ARTICLE III

Section 1. Membership shall be open to persons interested in, and willing to aid in the promotion and encouragement, of the objectives of this association.

Section 2. Members shall be of four classes--active, life, sustaining (or contributory), and honorary.

Section 3. Honorary members shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of members present at any regular meeting. They shall be exempt from dues but shall not have the right to vote or hold office unless they qualify as active or sustaining members.

Section 4. Each active member shall either pay \$2.00 per year, or \$3.00 for two members of the same family living together receiving one Quarterly. A sustaining member shall pay \$5.00 or more each year. A person may become a life member for a single payment of \$50.00, and become exempt from further payments.

ARTICLE IV

Section 1. The officers shall be a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, residing in the County of St. Lawrence, State of New York, all of whom shall be elected for one year and shall exercise the powers and duties usual to their respective offices.

Section 2. The management of the affairs and the property of the association shall be vested in a board of fifteen (15) trustees, consisting of the President, the two Vice-Presidents, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the County Historian, and nine other qualified members, three (3) elected, at the first annual meeting, for three years, three (3) for two years, and three (3) for one year. At each annual meeting thereafter the non-officer members of the board shall be chosen for three (3) years to fill vacancies of trustees whose terms have terminated.

Section 3. Vacancies in any office may be filled by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. Should a vacancy occur in the Board of Trustees, the President, with the approval of the remaining members of the Board, may appoint a qualified member to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

By-Law I

Section 1. The annual meeting and the election of officers and trustees of the Association shall be held in October of each year at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. Special or other meetings may be called at any date, time, and place as designated by the Board of Trustees. Notice of any and all meetings shall be sent to each member at least five (5) days prior thereto.

By-Law II

Ten (10) members shall constitute a quorum at all meetings.

By-Law IV

Order of business: - Call to order, Roll call, Reading of minutes of previous meetings, Reports of officers, Reports of committees, Unfinished business, New business, Elections, Adjournment.

By-Law V

Amendments to the Constitution and by-laws may be made at any duly constituted meeting of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, after notification of the membership, either by publication in The Quarterly or by direct mail at least 60 days in advance of adoption of the amendment.

By-Law VI

The Board of Editors of The Quarterly shall be appointed by, and responsible to, the Board of Trustees.

By-Law VII

There shall be, in addition to the officers enumerated in the Constitution, an Assistant Secretary, whose duties shall be specified by the Secretary. (Recording secretary and membership secretary.)

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Five members of the Board of Trustees travelled to Elizabethtown July 11 to see the Adirondack Center, the museum operated by the Essex County Historical Society. Although sizable donations, and patron memberships of \$100 or \$250 annually, contributed to the success of the museum, part of the Society's work is supported by annual dues of \$2, supplemented by \$1 for a subscription to the Society's printed booklet issued every three months. The Society now has approximately 400 members.

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A color lithograph of the grain elevator at Ogdensburg owned by the Ogdensburgh and Lake Champlain Railroad Company, as it appeared in 1867, will be exhibited in the Library of Congress this fall.

The Secretary Says . . .

by Malcolm A. Booth, Secretary

Below is a report compiled as of September 20, 1959, showing the number of members of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association living outside St. Lawrence County. Each member who maintains two addresses, one inside St. Lawrence County and one outside, is counted as a half member in this report.

The report may not be exactly accurate, because of the difficulty of determining whether persons living on rural routes out of such post-offices as Redwood, Harrisville, and St. Regis Falls live in St. Lawrence County or not. But it is probably 99% accurate.

In New York State:

New York County	9
Nassau County (Long Island)	2
Oneida County	4
Onondaga County	4
Jefferson County	12
Westchester County	3½
Clinton County	2
Madison County	2
Monroe County	4
Queens County (New York City)	1
Suffolk County (Long Island)	3
Franklin County	2
Hamilton County	1
Oswego County	1
Delaware County	1
Schoharie County	1
Warren County	1
Schenectady County	2
Chenango County	1
Lewis County	1
Albany County	1
Erie County	1
Broome County	1
Steuben County	1
<u>Wayne County</u>	<u>½</u>
25 counties	62

Outside New York State:

District of Columbia	8
Virginia	4½
Arizona	1
Massachusetts	2½
Illinois	2
Alabama	2
Florida	2
Vermont	3
New Jersey	5
Pennsylvania	2
Indiana	½
Delaware	1
Michigan	1
State of Washington	2
Ohio	3
Canada (Ontario)	1
Wisconsin	1
<u>Kentucky</u>	<u>1</u>
16 states	42½
1 district	
1 province	

The total membership as of September 1 was 578.



The Association sponsored an exhibit at the Gouverneur-St. Lawrence County Fair during the week of August 9, which was a great success, as 78 new memberships were sold at the Association's booth in Floral hall. At least 23 members of the Association cooperated in manning the booth. It is to be hoped that this will be an annual project for the Association.



Exhibits of dolls and of writing instruments are new displays in the County Historian's Office.



## FROM THE COUNTY CRACKER BARRELS

(Including the names of all Town and Village Historians together with a continuing report of their activities)

BRASHER: (Mrs. Joseph O'Brien). CANTON: (Mrs. Karl M. Mayhew Jr.) Dated and clipped current newspapers and worked on the Irving Bacheller Birthday Tour and Program... dates seem difficult for me. RENSSELAER FALLS VILLAGE: (Mrs. Nina Wilson). CLARE: (Mrs. Leslie Colton). CLIFTON: (Mrs. George Reynolds). COLTON: (Mrs. Lorena Reed). DEKALB: (Mr. F. F. E. Walrath). DEPEYSTER: (Mrs. Emery Smithers). Has been compiling a record of old DePeyster families and arranging in a notebook for town files. EDWARDS: (Miss Leah Noble. "Most of my summer activities included getting records up-to-date, doing research on Van Ornum family and giving a talk at Grange on 'Our Year of History -- What It Is' and at Library Club 'The Dutch in New York and Around Here'." FINE: (Mrs. Roland Brownell). We are pleased to welcome this new historian especially for the work she is doing on the roads, both old and new in her town. FOWLER: (Mrs. Robert Yerdon). GOUVERNEUR: (Miss Helena Johnston). GOUVERNEUR VILLAGE: (Julius Bartlett). Tree surgeons Mark Gates and Erny Barbery are taking down the decaying trees around town...mostly elms. An elm taken down in front of the residence of L. B. Cathers, 108 Park Street was found to be nearly two centuries old, a relic from the virgin forest as there was no settlement here until 1805. HAMMOND: (Harold Hibbs). Is doing research for the town map and collecting more pictures of the early scenes of the town. We are sorry to hear of the broken rib -- a result of a fall in Ohio while doing research. HERMON: (Mrs. Kellogg Morgan). HOPKINTON: (Mrs. Dorothy Squires). "I've had many history-minded callers during this last Tourist Season. One of the most interesting was Mrs. Albert Brush Pomroy from St. Paul, Minnesota. She was tracing her family line back to Eliphalet Brush, one of Hopkinton's first pioneers of 1802. After visiting Hopkinton, she went to Boston, on to Williamsburg and Jamestown, Virginia, where she succeeded in tracing her Brush ancestry back to America's first colonial settlement of 1607." LAWRENCE: (Mrs. Gordon Cole). Gathering historical data on the "Doctors in the Town of Lawrence. LISBON: LOUISVILLE: (Mrs. Lorraine Bandy). We have become good Seaway Guides. MACOMB: (Mrs. India Murton). Furnished advice and a map of the town showing locations of the cheese factories for Macomb Grange for their Exhibit at the Gouverneur Fair where she also assisted in the St. Lawrence County Historical Association Booth. Entertained the Town Board and their families at a picnic dinner at her camp, where she explained some of the work she is doing. Made some collections for the History Center Museum. MADRID: (Mrs. Margaret Thompson). MASSENA: (Mrs. Ella Lahey). MORRISTOWN: (Mrs. Doris Planty). Desires short "Did You Knows" for "Year of History" radio programs and short stories too. NORFOLK: (Mrs. Ralph Wing). Has been going through Town Clerk's old records to find more items to put into "Calendar of Events" adding to those listed last year. OSWEGATCHIE: (Mrs. Monna Mayne). HEUVELTON VILLAGE: (Mrs. Ida Downing). PARISHVILLE: (Miss Doris Rowland). Here are two excerpts from Mrs. Daniel's prize-winning column 1939: "The old Baptist sheds have been torn down. Where are the Dobbins of yesteryear? Time was when the sheds were filled with the family horses and buggies of the church-going farmers. Now if the farmer comes to the country church, his car will stand quietly beside the road, and if hungry will be filled at the nearest gas station." . . . "Too bad that here in America so many old buildings have to be torn down. Gone, except for the back wall and part of others, David Parish's old brewery, a really historic north country relic. It requires funds and much initiative to save old buildings." PIERCEFIELD: (Mrs. Beulah Dorothy). PIERRE-PONT: (Millard Hundley). Loaned clippings for Irving Bacheller Day exhibit, drew the map for the tour and gave information for nine of the stops on the tour. PITCAIRN: (No historian). POTSDAM: (Charles Lahey). ROSSIE: (Mrs. Virgie Simons). Sponsored an historical dinner at the Rossie Community Center at which she exhibited over 100 early pictures of the town's buildings, sites and people. Many new ones have been mounted recently. Also completing an article to be published in the near future. These two endeavors constituted her contribution to the YEAR OF HISTORY. RUSSELL: (Mrs. Dorothy Manning). STOCKHOLM: (Mrs. Lindon Riggs.) WADDINGTON: (Mrs. Ethel Olds.

FROM THE YORKER CRACKER BARREL

CANTON: Foote's Followers. LISBON: We haven't organized as yet but hope to have two chapters one for 7th and one for 8th grade. Last week a member of the high school Yorkers volunteered to help with a display in the Hepburn Library. The Yorkers of last year financed rebinding a copy of "History of St. Lawrence County" by Gates Curtis and a record of men in service during Civil War for Town Clerk's office. - Rachel Dandy sponsor. GOUVERNEUR: Marble Village. This year promises to be a much better year for our club here. After attending district meetings and the State Convention at Saratoga, we feel that we now understand to a greater degree what is expected of us as Yorkers. Our school hasn't allowed any clubs to organize yet, but we will probably be under way by October. Our officers are Bob Brown, President; Kay Randall, Vice-President; Donna Homer, Secretary; Janet Peck, Treasurer; and Peggy Robillard, Historian. Our adviser is Mrs. Wranish. - Donna Homer. MADRID: WADDINGTON: MASSENA: Andre Massena chapter.

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Broadcast Music, Inc., is offering a prize of \$500 for the best program or series of programs dealing with state or local history. The radio station which broadcasts the winning program will also win a prize of \$500. The contest is co-sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History.

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A gift of \$350,000 has been made to the Tioga County Historical Association for the construction of a new historical museum. When the building is completed on the outskirts of Owego, the association will move its collections from temporary quarters in that village to the facilities provided by this generosity. The St. Lawrence County Historical Association fondly hopes there is some such "angel" in its midst.

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The St. Lawrence County Historical Association would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the following persons who assisted by manning our exhibit at the Gouverneur-St. Lawrence County Fair from August 10 to 16, at which time they obtained 78 newmembers for the Association: - From Gouverneur; Mrs. Fay Trerise, Mrs. Hazel Hudson, Mrs. Myra Leach, Mrs. Blytha Jeffers, Mrs. Martin Kelley, Mrs. Maurice Anthony, Mrs. Iva Dodds, Mrs. George Griffith, Mrs. Blanche Hodgkin, Mrs. Vaughn Corse, Eugene Hatch, Harold A. Storie; Potsdam: Mrs. Howard Smith, Mrs. Al Gaier Canton: Bette Mayhew; Depeyster: Nina Smithers; Ogdensburg: William Davies; Morristown: Doris B. Plantey; Macomb: India S. Murton; Spragueville: Laura Gillett.

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St. Lawrence County Historical Association  
P. O. Box 251  
CANTON, N. Y.

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