

THE

QUARTERLY

Official Publication of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association

October 1979

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY
W. C. T. U. CONVENTION
At Good Templars' Hall,
CANTON,
Feb. 7th and 8th, 1889

PROGRAMME:

Thursday, February 7th, 2 o'clock P. M.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Convention called to order by the President. | 7. Seating by Unions. |
| 2. Devotional Exercises. | 8. Minutes of last Convention. |
| 3. Address of Welcome. | 9. Report of Corresponding Secretary. |
| 4. Response. | 10. Report of Treasurer. |
| 5. Appointment of Committees on Credentials and Courtesies of Convention. | 11. Reports from Unions. |
| 6. Roll-call of Officers and Delegates. | 12. Reports of Superintendents. |
| | 13. Report of Delegate to State Convention. |
| | Meeting of Executive Committee. |

7:30 P. M., in the Town Hall.

A MASS MEETING addressed by Mrs. MARY TOWNE BURT,
President of the New York State Union.

Friday, Feb. 8th, 9 A. M., Good Templars' Hall.

1. Devotional Exercises.
2. Paper on Home Influences, by Mrs. G. ERWIN.
3. Discussion.

All are Cordially Invited to Attend.

Mrs. C. W. LEETE, Potsdam, President.

Mrs. RANDALL, Gouverneur, Vice President.
Miss JENNIE DEANE, Gouverneur, Cor. Sec.

Miss MINNIE NICHOLS, Madrid, Rec. Sec.
Mrs. C. E. BASCOM, Potsdam, Treasurer.

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VOLUME XXIV

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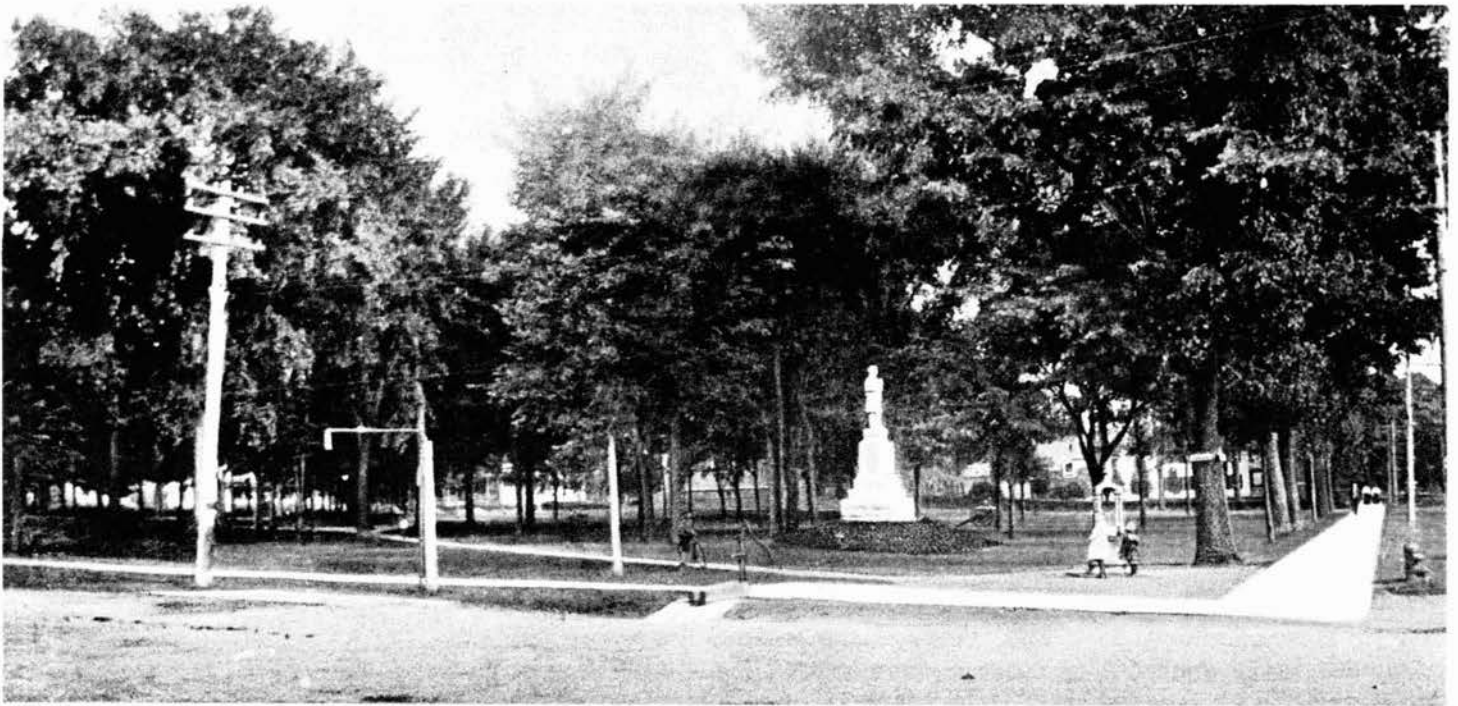
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Editor: Varick A. Chittenden

Cover: Broadside announcing the 1889 Women's Christian Temperance Union convention in Canton. (Courtesy the History Center). See page 3 for the story.



The park in the Village of Canton, with children at the WCTU water fountain, lower right corner. (Photo courtesy of the History Center)

In Search of Ardent Spirits: the WCTU

by Mary H. Smallman

Nearly a century ago a movement spread throughout the nation—and St. Lawrence County—to influence the sale and use of intoxicating liquor, beer, and wine. The shockwaves of that movement were incredible—first the temperance groups, then women's suffrage, on to Prohibition, and even into today's feminist activities. The author, using local primary source materials, documents the local history of the struggle of its founding order, the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Once in a while a remarkable document comes our way and cries out for further research, for amplification, for explanation. Then we find we have other documents touching on a similar subject and try to find ways to interweave them. Such are several separate and distinct items in the History Center: a small miscellaneous account book from Ogdensburg; a minute book found at a church in Canton; photos of the Haven House and the drinking fountain in Canton; a very real mother-of-pearl WCTU pin from a teacher in DeKalb; books with individual histories from Gouverneur and Massena; a map showing locations of some of the above.

Our appetites are especially whetted by the discovery during attempts to write the history of the Methodist Church in Canton that a little book long thought to be old Church records was in fact the minute book of the County's WCTU from its inception to the turn of the century.—MHS

A small account book belonging to Hugh Q. Miller, Jr. of Ogdensburg was apparently a record of his pay from work for the Marine Railway as well as his living expenses. He also received

some income from mysterious investments in tea. One can soon envision this young man's life from some of his entries—he must have been a social lion. In spite of his membership in the Temperance Reform Club, he often purchased pipes, tobacco and cigars—even a whole case of the latter at once. At one point he was initiated into the Independent Order of Good Templars, continuing such purchases without qualm. He paid his pew rent regularly (but in which church we do not yet know), played billiards and a banjo, journeyed to Prescott (25¢ fare), to Montreal (\$2) and to Quebec (\$4.50) round trips. He went to the Campground (no doubt Terrace Park in Morrystown) where guest tabernacles were set up and temperance and religious revival meetings were held annually.

This little book is more interesting because we began to search for background material after Attorney Everett Howard brought us the minute book found in the Methodist Church—the first years of the County's WCTU.

When, who, what the WCTU?

The first countywide convention of the

Women's Christian Temperance Unions was held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton July 15, 1886. The state treasurer had been in the area organizing and reorganizing the Unions in large and small communities and was asked to chair the meeting. So a formal County Union was then born. Historically, Miss Frances E. Willard, dean of Northwestern Female College and Professor of Esthetics in Northwestern University, had been part of the Women's Temperance Crusade during 1873 and 1874. In the latter year she made the first attempt to unite women into an organization which would make the influence of womanhood an appreciable power in the world. "Alone," she cited, "we can do little. The fingers of the hand can do little alone, but correlated into a fist, they become formidable." The Women's Christian Temperance Union became a powerful educational agency for women, united for a common cause in which each had an interest. It used the argument that after our basic instinct (self preservation) comes mother's love, and organized Mother-Love became the best definition of the white-

ribbon movement. "Tell them the world was made for women, too!" she declared.

At that very first convention, reports from the various Unions were given and it was noted that Potsdam had been organized the longest—since May 2, 1876—and Canton and Gouverneur since 1883, Ogdensburg since 1884, while Heuvelton, Lisbon, Lisbon Center, Massena, Rensselaer Falls and DeKalb Junction were newly formed. No exact dates for founding were mentioned in the reports of formation of the Unions in Richville, Pierrepont, Norwood (which died in 1887), Madrid, Hermon (formed 1887) or Louisville.

In 1884 the Women's Temperance Society of Potsdam affiliated with the WCTU. They wore the white ribbon continually. A committee of six ladies were organizing a Reading Room in connection with six men of the IOGT, along with six business men. They intended to serve free lunches at each election day. "This banner Union had survived much strife" and internal struggle and apathy, the report indicated.

About this time Ogdensburg decided not to work in the county organization. Strengths and weaknesses are both apparent from the minutes. The county officers constituted a board of managers for business transactions between conventions. Superintendents of the various departments of work were elected, too, and got right to work: Sunday school, juvenile work, scientific instruction, literature—that is, "uplifting, moral literature"—mothers meetings, county fairs, jail work, county home, influencing physicians. These were all proscribed by the National WCTU organization.

Painted Mottoes and Better Air

At the fall convention that same year (1884) held at the Baptist Church in Gouverneur, there were three newly formed Unions, and a committee named to help form others. In December the convention held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in DeKalb Junction reported much progress. Mrs. E. Pooler of Gouverneur presided. Reports from absent Unions included Pierrepont which already had ten members, worked with the Sunday schools in summer and a temperance school in winter. Rensselaer Falls, newly formed but concentrating on children, reported opposition there from cider drinkers; Lisbon Center, already with 27 members, featured mothers meetings and juvenile work; East DeKalb had failed to perfect an organization. Other Unions reported hard work, especially in Madrid which had five licensed bars. They too were establishing a reading room and free lunches on election day. The latter met some opposition, being considered by some a bribe, as much as money would be. Heuvelton and Hermon, DeKalb

Junction and Massena reported hard work.

"Dr. Weaver will preach on Temperance next Sunday at 2½ p.m. at the Brick Chapel." (Commercial Advertiser, Canton, news item)

Mrs. Solon D. Kimball of Canton reported on the visit to the County Jail. "It is utterly without ventilation, cold and unhealthy, while the prisoners have nothing to read and nothing to do." The ladies were urged to interest themselves in it, and to provide "good temperance reading." Within a few months Mrs. Kimball reported that religious meetings were held at the jail as often as once every three weeks and, along with literature, she was having mottoes painted on the walls. They authorized as much as \$50 for literature for the jail, which it was reported "now is to be provided with new furnaces and better ventilation."

The fourth convention was held at the M.E. Church in Madrid in March 1887 and Mrs. Gaines of Canton reported "temperance sentiment and enthusiasm was never higher." They were working well with the Good Templars, holding Saturday evening meetings and furnishing refreshments (hopefully keeping men out of the saloons).

*"If you never take a first drink,
you'll never take a second. WCTU motto*

Gouverneur had had a mass meeting, signing 1500 pledges after a turn-away crowd filled the hall. In Gouverneur a strong leader, Mrs. H.S. Randall, was president from 1886 for about 12 years. At the end of that time, a group broke away and organized a Mothers Club and

Mrs. C.B. Austin, already a tireless worker, was elected its president. It continued to affiliate with the WCTU until 1902 when it became independent. Their object was to sympathize with and assist mothers in the duties of the home.

Mrs. C.K. Gaines, as well as Mrs. Kimball, Miss Martha Noble and Lucia E. Heaton of Canton, and Mrs. Esther Dart in Rensselaer Falls were all active, constantly keeping the poor house and jail under scrutiny. A long-time member of this Association, Cyril B. Clark, writes that he recalls after seeing a photo used in the April 1974 *Quarterly* of the WCTU bulletin board, that his mother took him about 1900 to a WCTU meeting upstairs, where he "took the pledge." He recalls that Dr. Priest of SLU was very active and that this building burned several years ago, next to the theater on Main Street.

Mrs. Helen B. Mann, Mrs. C.W. Leete, Mrs. Clara W. Cook of Potsdam attended meetings in several departments. Some of these ladies as well as Miss Blanche Hazlett became state officers.

"Yield Not to Temptation." Popular WCTU song

Lisbon, which had been organized in September, already had subscriptions to the National publications "Our Work" and the "Union Signal." As a public service, they subscribed to the local newspaper for several poor families. Lisbon Center and Madrid had just been formed also, and had many juvenile members. Their special undertakings were collecting literature for the prisons' superintendent and promoting temperance instruction in the schools.

Norwood's president gave a most disa-



Mrs. C.P. Gaines commended Canton which was "blessed with a first-class hotel run on strict temperance principles and worthy of support and patronage of all. The Haven House to succeed and prosper without recourse to the bar as means of revenue would be . . . patent argument for temperance . . . our duty as well as pleasure to advertize, recommend and support this house . . ." (Emphasis hers.) (Photo courtesy of the History Center)

F. B. BALDWIN,

(Successor to Chas. I. Baldwin & Co.)

IMPORTER OF PURE

BRANDIES, GIN, RUM, WINES,

IRISH & SCOTCH WHISKIES,

SCOTCH & ENGLISH ALES AND PORTER.

AND WHOLESALE DEALER IN

Fine Bourbon and Rye Whiskies.

Store, 47 Isabella Street,

Bonded Warehouse, Custom House Building,

OGDENSBURG, N. Y.



Advertisement for an Ogdensburg distributor of "spirits." Such companies were the natural targets of temperance group battles. (Courtesy of the History Center)

couraged report. At organization they had a large group, but no one seemed to continue the projects discussed. Fourteen of the ladies of the other Unions volunteered to visit Norwood and assist. At this meeting once more Potsdam had the most to report—the no-license commissioner had been elected; they had started a reading room and library; they had visited every school and found

that temperance instruction was given; had given lessons at and placed literature in the libraries of every Sunday school and nearly all the children had signed pledges.

Other triumphs were reported in those early years: no liquor sold at the Gouverneur Fairgrounds (that lasted one year, was sold the next!); reading rooms in Potsdam and Gouverneur

established on temperance subjects in the *Northern Tribune* (by Mrs. C.B. Austin) in Gouverneur and the *Commercial Advertiser* in Canton; many of the physicians were signed up (ten out of eleven in Ogdensburg, six out of seven in Potsdam); they sent boxes to Auburn and other prisons; they established Loyal Temperance Legions of youngsters in every area; they established means to provide coffee at disastrous fires (instead of other drink); they actually closed down at least one hotel where selling of intoxicants infractions were repeatedly found.

Although Parishville did not have a Union, they had at one time a strong "Sons of Temperance" group—1855-1865. The hall they built still stands there today.

"I will try so to act that, if all others followed my example, our school would need no rules whatever."
Loyal Legions Motto.

The newspapers of the county reported often on activities in the various villages and one item about the County Convention meeting in Morristown says "Mrs. Bessie Camfield, Mrs. P.B. Ellithorpe and Mrs. Rev. C.H. VanCamp attended. Mrs. Ellithorpe then attended the State Convention in Ithaca." A tireless WCTU supported in Massena was Harriet Clemmons Walker who worked also for suffrage and the Methodist Church there, as well as serving as president of that village's Union.

HOW and WHY the WCTU

A number of organizations, most motivated by religious convictions, had conducted campaigns designed to obtain signatures on individual abstinence pledges. They effected the first state-wide prohibition law—in Maine in 1846. By the end of the 1800's almost every state had legislation requiring that public schools instruct all pupils as to the evils of drink. After formation of the WCTU in 1874, and the Anti-Saloon League in 1895, the temperance movement in this country gave increasing emphasis to governmental control or prohibition of production and sale of liquor and by the time the National Prohibition Amendment became law in 1919 most states had already outlawed liquor traffic. The WCTU (and from 1950 the National Temperance League, Inc.) carried on temperance propaganda campaigns in schools, churches and the press, with a wide use of scientifically founded information as to the effects of alcohol in their continuing effort to encourage abstinence, child labor and moral education. Hours of sale as well as conditions of sales outlets were a primary concern.

The WCTU was the first women's society built on a framework of local, county, district and state affiliation



Canton millinery storefront with WCTU bulletin board. (Photo courtesy of the History Center)



The WCTU provided this fountain in the Park in Canton village. It is still a welcome thirst quencher of a summer's day. It is understood that the impressive fountain erected in the Park in Gouverneur was sold by the village and now graces the yard of the late Hon. Harlow Godard in Richville, presently owned by the LaFalce family. (Photo by the author)

under a National Director. The World WCTU came about in 1883 with an international convention every three years. Men were granted honorary membership, and young people were formed in Loyal Temperance Legions for children and Youth Temperance Councils for older youths. Iota Sigma WCTU was designed for business and professional women, holding meetings in evenings for their convenience. Adults were encouraged to subscribe to the *Union Signal* and youngsters *The Young Crusader*. Frances Willard's name became a household word, and sermons on temperance were popular; adults and especially prominent professional people signed the pledge as well as thou-

sands of school children and their teachers. Later the pledge against tobacco was added, and merchants who sold tobacco to children were a prime target for the WCTU.

Some of the committees reporting success (?) at the 1893 national convention were Work Among Indians (1884); Work Among Railroad Employees (1881); Work Among Lumbermen and Miners (1883); Work Among Soldiers and Sailors (1881); Temperance and Labor (1881); The Press (1874); Penal and Reformatory Work (1877); Medical Temperance (1883); Sabbath Observance (Suppression of Sabbath Desecration 1884); Purity in Literature and Art (1884); Health and Heredity

(1881); Anti-Narcotics (1884) and many other working committees in many fields of interest and influence on legislation.

"Make yourself a Good Templar, live according to your Obligation and you are sure of one person who will not be a drunkard." Good Templar motto.

All the magazines for women from the 1850's on had temperance poems, stories, advice, devoting special columns to various subjects. A shelf of *Wood's Household Magazine* is remarkable for the variety of appeals in cartoon, scientific proof and the like they offer the family on the evils of drink.

Let us fight against letting our children become chewers, smokers, or dippers of snuff. (Advice to parents in Temperance column)

The little account book of records shows that by 1889 DeKalb and Norwood Unions were reportedly dead, Ogdensburg in a "headless condition," and Gouverneur was entering its sixth year. Richville had begun a new department "Kitchen Gardens" and several other aspects of work—narcotics, Sunday observance (they fought to eliminate baseball games and Sunday Fair Day and stores being open), Social Purity (they influenced merchants not to sell cigarettes to boys and wanted social hygiene and such taught in the schools), suffrage, soldiers and sailors (the latter were scarce here). Times do not seem to have changed much, it seems.

The book closes with a list of current (March 1890) officers, department superintendents and business held at the eleventh convention, held in Madrid. Mrs. Dr. G.W. Reynolds reported crisis in that Union. They "could not be represented in a convention of Christians lest political feeling be brought up."

The obituary of one of the County's ardent spirits says: Mrs. John F. Skinner died at age 73 . . . Tryphena Collamer Skinner, born in Stockholm, was one of the original WCTU members. She was a singer and composer of verses and poetry appearing in the papers, an ardent advocate of prohibition, writing and reciting verses on the subject . . ."

We salute these ardent ladies, who put their hearts and spirits into the fight against an evil they felt strongly about. They with their spirits sought to put the liquid spirits out of business forever.

The surest way to lose your health is to keep drinking other people's. (Advice to all!)

About the Author

Mary Smallman is the County Historian and frequent contributor to *The Quarterly*.

Looking at Architecture in St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County, the largest county in the State of New York spanning some miles, presents some unique opportunities to the student and admirer of historic architecture. Perhaps one of the most exciting is discovery. Many other areas, especially the more urban, have located their area treasures—this information is available to the public.

Over the past year, Caroline Cushman and John Baule have discovered, researched and photographed some of our county's noteworthy architecture. This research culminated in an exhibition entitled "Architecture in St. Lawrence County" being displayed in the Silas Wright House, Canton. The exhibition, coordinated by me and funded by the E.J. Noble Foundation, presents an indication of our area's architectural styles and how they are exemplified in our homes, churches and public buildings. But this is only an indication. There is much work yet to be done towards developing an overview of St. Lawrence County treasures.

Throughout the following photographic essay taken from the current Silas Wright exhibit, we hope we might share our interest in area architecture. We encourage you to acquaint yourself with architectural styles—Federal, Queen Anne, Greek Revival, etc.—and share the pleasure of discovery. What is to be found down our country lanes? What is around the corner waiting to be admired for its architectural merit? We feel this essay is a hint. Let's find the answers together.

*John Sholl
Education Coordinator
St. Lawrence County Historical Association
Potsdam Public Museum*

EARLY SETTLEMENT

In the late 1700s and early 1800s much of that area now called St. Lawrence County was part of the American Frontier. In 1795 the Mohawk Nation relinquished by treaty Indian jurisdiction over these areas to the state of New York. Various state land sales opened this wilderness for settlement though most of these properties were purchased by a handful of investors. These investors sent their agents into the wilderness to manage their properties and to encourage and create settlements. Soon land offices were opened and pioneers began forging their livelihoods using the natural resources at hand. Roads were built, lands surveyed, grist and saw mills fashioned. Most settlers built log houses or shanties and few examples of early log architecture are known to have survived. As the settlements grew so did the need for legal services and, in 1802, 156 men petitioned the state that their territory became a county of the state of New York. On March 3, 1802, by an act of the state legislature, St. Lawrence County was created.



FEDERAL 1790-1830

Federal architecture in St. Lawrence County is represented in structures with formal, symmetrical facades. These buildings generally have low pitched or hipped roofs. External walls are as smooth as the building materials allow. Often fan shaped windows appear at the gable end. Thin pilasters at the buildings corners may grace the federal structure climbing one or two stories to join the cornice. The overall effect in the federal structure with prominent entrances and balanced window placements is light and graceful.



*Jonathan Wallace House
Potsdam*

FEDERAL CONTINUED



Phyllis Clark House
Canton



Stretton Residence
Canton



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Waddington



Harison Grist Mill
Morley

GREEK REVIVAL

1820-1860

Greek Revival architecture in St. Lawrence County takes various forms. The general emphasis of the style attempts to recreate Greek temples perhaps using columns or pilasters (1). Usually a Greek Revival structure has an orientation so that its gabled (2) side faces the public right of way. Roofs are generally low pitched or flat as a temple roof. Exterior walls are as smooth as siding material allows. Often buildings have heavy cornices (3) with pediments (4) on the structures gabled side.

1. *Pilaster*—a flat column projecting slightly from a wall.
2. *Gable*—the triangle of wall formed by the joining of two sloping roof lines.
3. *Cornice*—a horizontal, projecting molding along the top of a wall or below the eaves of a roof.
4. *Pediments*—created when the cornice is extended across the gable to form a triangle.



Temple Front House
Morristown Road
Ogdensburg



Willmarth House
Canton

GREEK REVIVAL CONTINUED



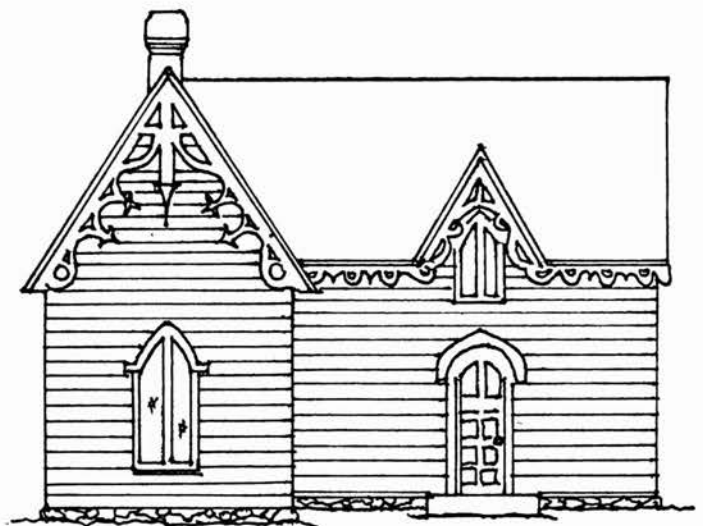
*United States Custom House
Ogdensburg*



*Merritt House
Potsdam*

GOTHIC REVIVAL 1830-1860

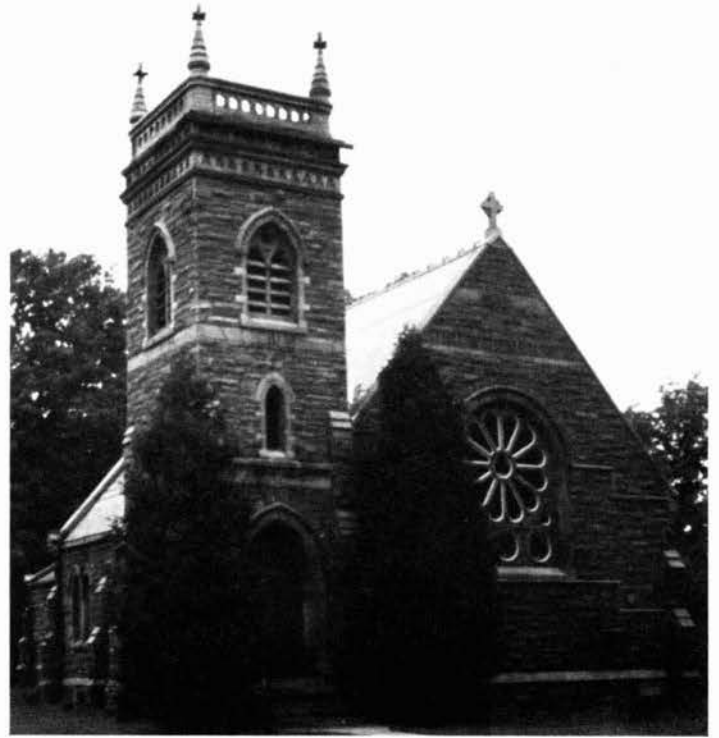
Gothic Revival architecture in St. Lawrence County is represented in buildings that emphasize height using pointed arches and steeply pitched roofs. Windows, shutters and doors often take the shape of the pointed arch. On wooden structures, eaves and gable ends may be decorated with gingerbread trim and siding is often of the vertical board and batten technique. Stone structures may have towers and battlements. Stained glass is used extensively.



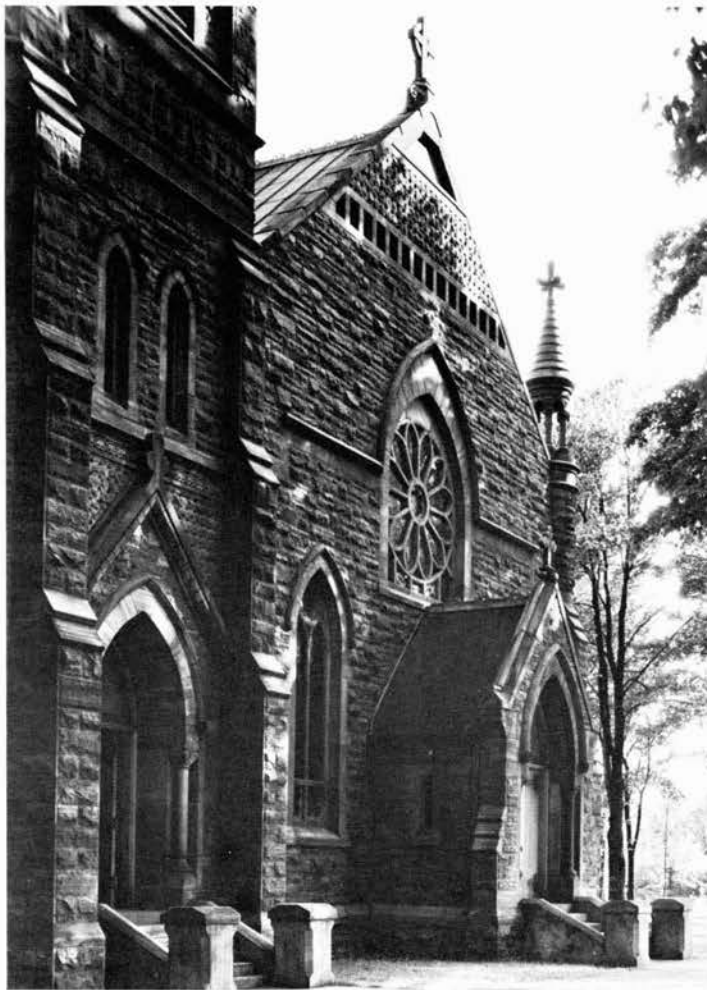
GOTHIC REVIVAL CONTINUED



Trinity Chapel
Morley



Zion Episcopal Church
Potsdam



Trinity Episcopal Church
Potsdam

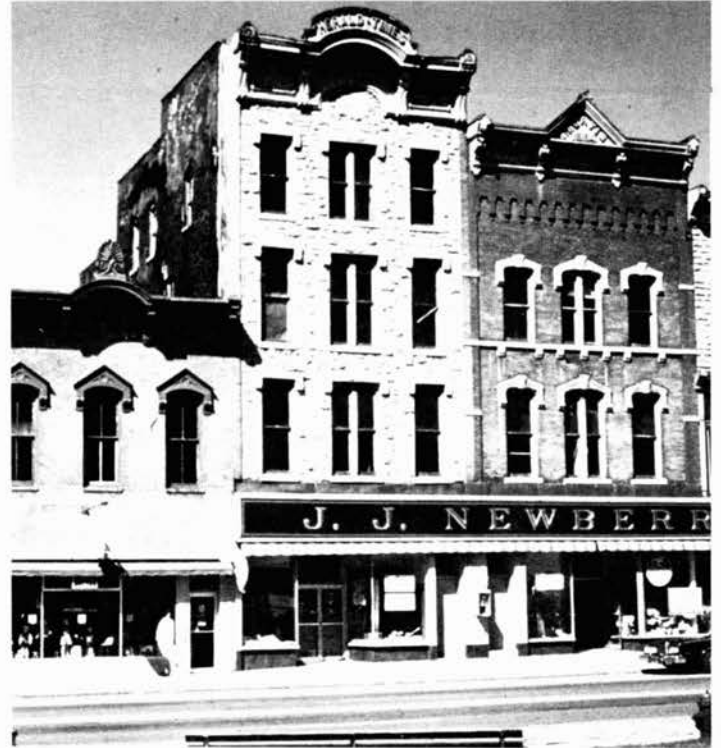
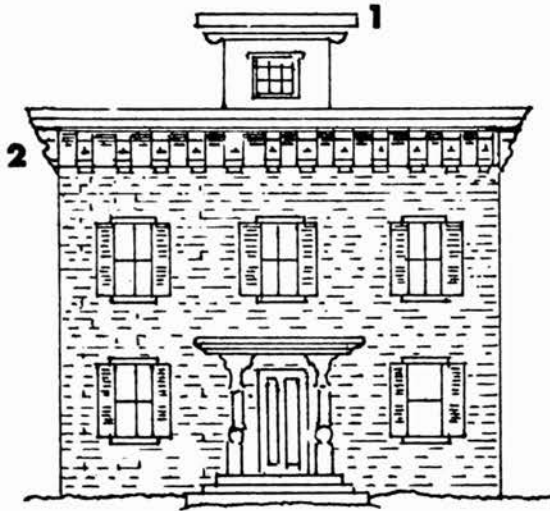


Gothic Revival Residence
Potsdam

ITALIANATE 1840-1880

The Italianate style of architecture is represented in St. Lawrence County by buildings with flat or low pitched roofs. Often a square tower or cupola (1) will grace the Italianate structure. The eaves are often broad, overhanging and bracketed. (2) Windows typically are grouped in twos and threes and may be rounded at the tops or flat with prominent moldings.

1. *Cupola*—a small, round, square or octagonal structure resting on the main roof.
2. *Bracket*—a support, usually decoratively carved, which projects from a wall and supports an architectural feature.



*Italianate Commercial District
Gouverneur*



*Richardson Hall
St. Lawrence University
Canton*



*Italianate Residence
Gouverneur*

ITALIANATE CONTINUED



*County Clerk's Office
Canton*

SECOND EMPIRE 1860-1890

Second Empire architecture in St. Lawrence County is distinguished by the use of the mansard roof. The mansard roof is steep and often convex or concave. Dormer windows are often found in this roof. The eaves are often bracketed and have heavy cornices. Windows and doors are often arched and first floor windows are generally very tall.



*Second Empire Residence
Potsdam*



*Bishop's Residence
Ogdensburg*

QUEEN ANNE

1880-1900

The Queen Anne style of architecture is decoratively rich using a variety of materials, styles, textures and colors. Queen Anne structures in St. Lawrence County might include the use of towers, turrets, tall chimneys, projecting pavilions, porches and encircling verandas to effect an asymmetrical composition. Windows take many forms and may be glazed to create geometric patterns often using stained and leaded glass. Wall surfaces might include the use of stone, brick, wood and shingle on a single building.



United Church
Madrid



Queen Anne Residence
Gouverneur

QUEEN ANNE CONTINUED



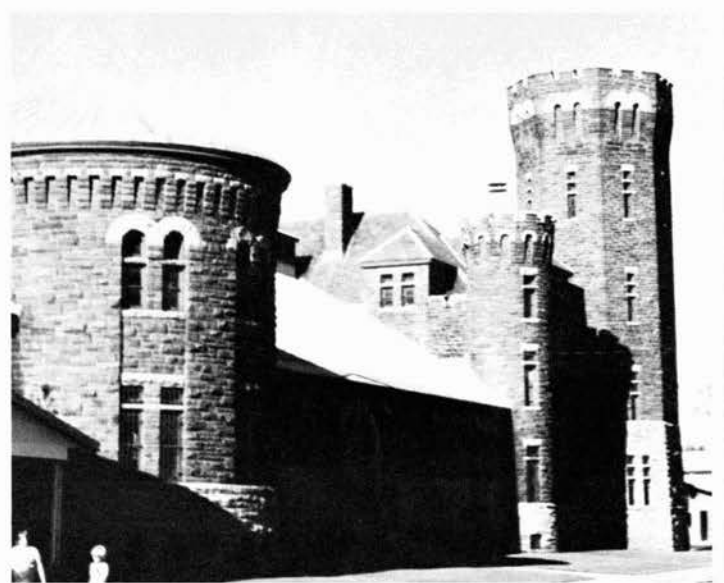
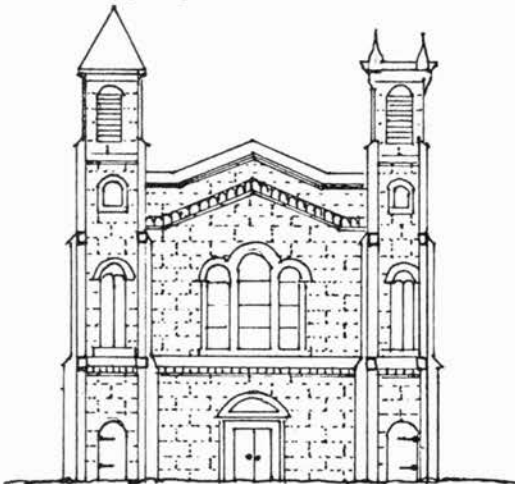
Augsbury House
Ogdensburg



O'Leary Funeral Home
Canton

ROMANESQUE REVIVAL 1840-1900

Romanesque Revival architecture attempts at the revival of the medieval semicircular arch. Semicircular arches are used for window and door openings as well as decoratively in stone work and along the eaves. Tower roofs are often pyramidal in shape or finished off with parapets.



State Armory
Ogdensburg

RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE

1870-1900

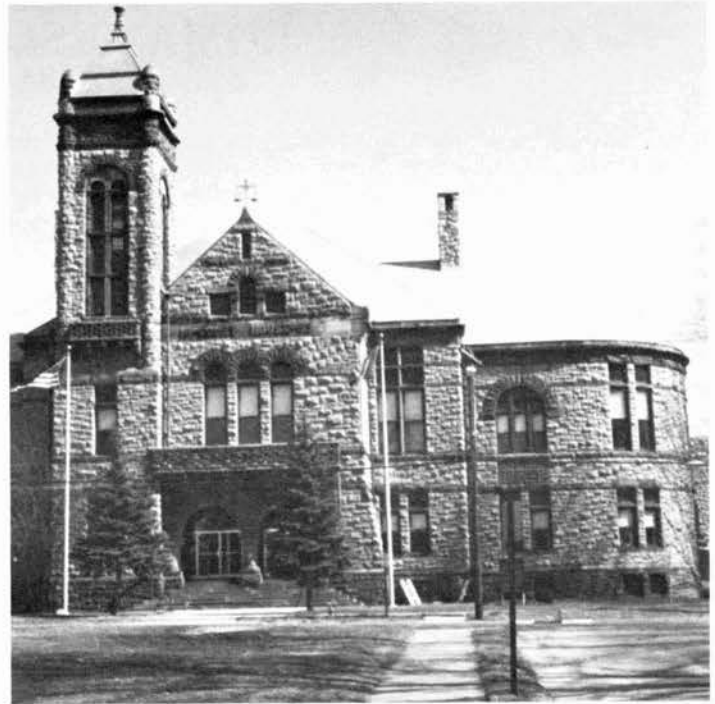
Richardsonian Romanesque architecture has an emphasis on mass and volume. Straightforward treatment of stone, the use of broad roof planes, and the selective use of door and window openings effect a feeling of weight and massiveness. The use of the large round arched entry, set deeply in the wall and usually without supporting columns, is an important characteristic.



Town Hall
Edwards



Public Library
Gouverneur



County Court House
Canton

COLONIAL REVIVAL

1870-1920

The Colonial Revival style of architecture is often a combination of various styles and contemporary elements. There are some Colonial Revival structures that are executed with such historical accuracy that they are very difficult to distinguish from original colonial structures. Often the Revival structure is larger than its colonial counterpart and might exaggerate certain details.



Colonial Revival Residence
Potsdam



Hepburn Library
Colton

BEAUX-ARTS CLASSICISM NEO-CLASSICISM 1890-1920

Beaux-Arts Classicism attempts at the grandiose using an extraordinary amount of detail and a variety of stone finishes. The use of colossal size columns (often in pairs), pronounced cornices, and projecting facades blend to form the elaborately symmetrical Beaux-Arts structure. The Neo-Classic style of architecture is based on the Greek and Roman architectural orders, and also attempts to be monumental. Structures are symmetrical and finished with smooth or polished stone surfaces.



Snell Hall
Potsdam



Benton Library
Canton

Counterpoint: Dr. Friedman Replies

In the July 1979 issue there appeared four viewpoints—three of them local—on the recently published account of an anti-Semitic occurrence in our area over fifty years ago. Titled Incident at Massena, the book—and these viewpoints—stirred some controversy. Here the book's author responds to, and takes issue with, the July article.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to reviews of my book, *Incident at Massena*, which appeared in your July issue. Originally, I had intended to treat all criticism with what Emma Lazarus once termed "perfect indifference," but at least one of the published reviews makes that impossible.

There is not much I can contest in the evaluation of Lawrence Baron and Samuel Jacobs. I plead guilty to the charge of using "purple language," as Professor Baron indicates, but only in those places where historical judgment and condemnation are mandated. There may also be some errors of mis-identification (Andrews Street instead of Andrews Avenue, location of health springs), but these should be charged to lack of familiarity with Massena topography and are not so serious as to justify Jacobs' comment that the book "unfortunately contained so many factual errors and distortions, that some people were convinced the whole thing was fiction." The only specific difference noted by Jacobs is where he states there was "no real evidence" to support the picture of Rabbi Brennglass running a gauntlet at the police station when questioned by Trooper Mickey McCann. In fact, I deliberately hedged on whether such a mob did exist and used no less than three sources in the paragraph dealing with this scene (p. 116). As well as anyone, perhaps, Mr. Jacobs knows how painstakingly I have tried to unravel the various interpretations of the ritual murder libel. In all, however, I think his account and my own are remarkably similar.

The article by Ms. Dumas is another thing. It suggests that I deliberately tried to impugn the honor of the community in Massena, that I distorted, misquoted and/or fabricated statements from my sources. I have pondered whether her piece was simply unfair or libelous. Yes, there were misspellings (Andre Massena's first name because of an overzealous linotypist and poor proof-reading on my part) and those perpetual mistakes of local color or location. Not even the editors of this *Quarterly* are immune to such errors. For example, where I had written in the preface to my book that "I have found newspapers, especially the New York Press, to be generally unreliable" (that is, the New York Press erred repeatedly in treating the incident at Massena), my words appeared here as "I have found newspapers, especially the New York Press, to be generally reliable." I do not ascribe

any personal animus to the editors of the *Quarterly* for this error. As for mistakes relative to Amable Fancher, the Diamond Creamery, bridges and the like, I would refer Ms. Dumas to my principal sources—*The Massena Story*, published by the Chamber of Commerce in 1958, a flyer titled "Massena, New York" compiled by the Massena Chamber of Commerce, March 19, 1971, and the WPA Writers Program publication of *New York: A Guide to the Empire State*. My own errors, hardly invented, stem from reliance upon these sources, one of which was in part the product of the former editor of the *Massena Observer*.

There are more serious charges, namely:

(1) Ms. Dumas claims "many Massena people" have come forward declaring "I never said that" or "I never told him that." Without citing a single source anywhere in her piece she attempts to explode 20 pages of published notes, boxes of files and interviews. My experience interviewing Holocaust survivors has made me aware that people sometimes regret their own candor. At no time, however, did I attempt to hide the fact from my contacts in Massena that I intended to publish a full account of what happened. And I repeat, every statement published has its basis in scrupulous notes taken during interviews.

(2) Ms. Dumas implies my research consisted primarily of long-distance telephone communications. The snows of 1977-78 did prevent me from reaching Massena (or Miami, Florida, for that matter). My own gasoline bills would attest to treks to Massena, Rome, Syracuse, Albany, New York City, Waltham, Mass., and elsewhere over the past nine years.

(3) Ms. Dumas suggests that my pictorial sources consisted of "people who must have reached out from the grave" to me. The only possibility may be Dave Griffiths, father of the four-year-old who disappeared in 1928. He was very much alive when I contacted him in 1971 and 1977. I do not believe Ms. Dumas can speak for the editors of the *Massena Observer*, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Mimi Klein, or a Youngstown State student Fred Chittock, who supplied me with the remaining photographs and all of whom (or which) are still very much extant.

(4) In denying the existence of "a sneaky anti-Semitism" in Massena, Ms. Dumas denigrates Marie Eldon-Brown

as someone who was not a local historian. In fact, when I interviewed her in 1971. Ms. Eldon-Brown was very much the town historian in the Massena Historical Society Office in Massena's Town Hall. She held that job from 1965 and I was referred to her by the publisher of the *Massena Observer*, Leonard Prince. I only regret Ms. Eldon-Brown cannot respond to Ms. Dumas' comments personally.

(5) Ms. Dumas errs when she attributes to me the remark "that there were no Jewish cemetery records kept" in Massena. The comment was made by Town Historian Marie Eldon-Brown and is quoted on p. 25 of the book.

(6) Ms. Dumas' impressions of the deathly quiet which settled over the town during the height of the incident may be legitimate for her, but they constitute the memories of one young Gentile girl, who was personally unmenaced. And they do not weigh equally with the dozens of eyewitness accounts, newspaper articles and files from different state and national agencies describing the hysteria and tension of Massena in the fall of 1928.

(7) Ms. Dumas dismisses the existence of the Ku Klux Klan with remarks that it "seldom had more than one subscribing member" and was "more a matter of something to joke about than anything." Either all of my sources are fantasizing or there were cross-burnings, smearings of Jewish businesses, Klansmen in the Fire Department, membership meetings in the Town Hall. Perusal of Samuel Jacobs' article would demonstrate that the Klan was more than a chimera.

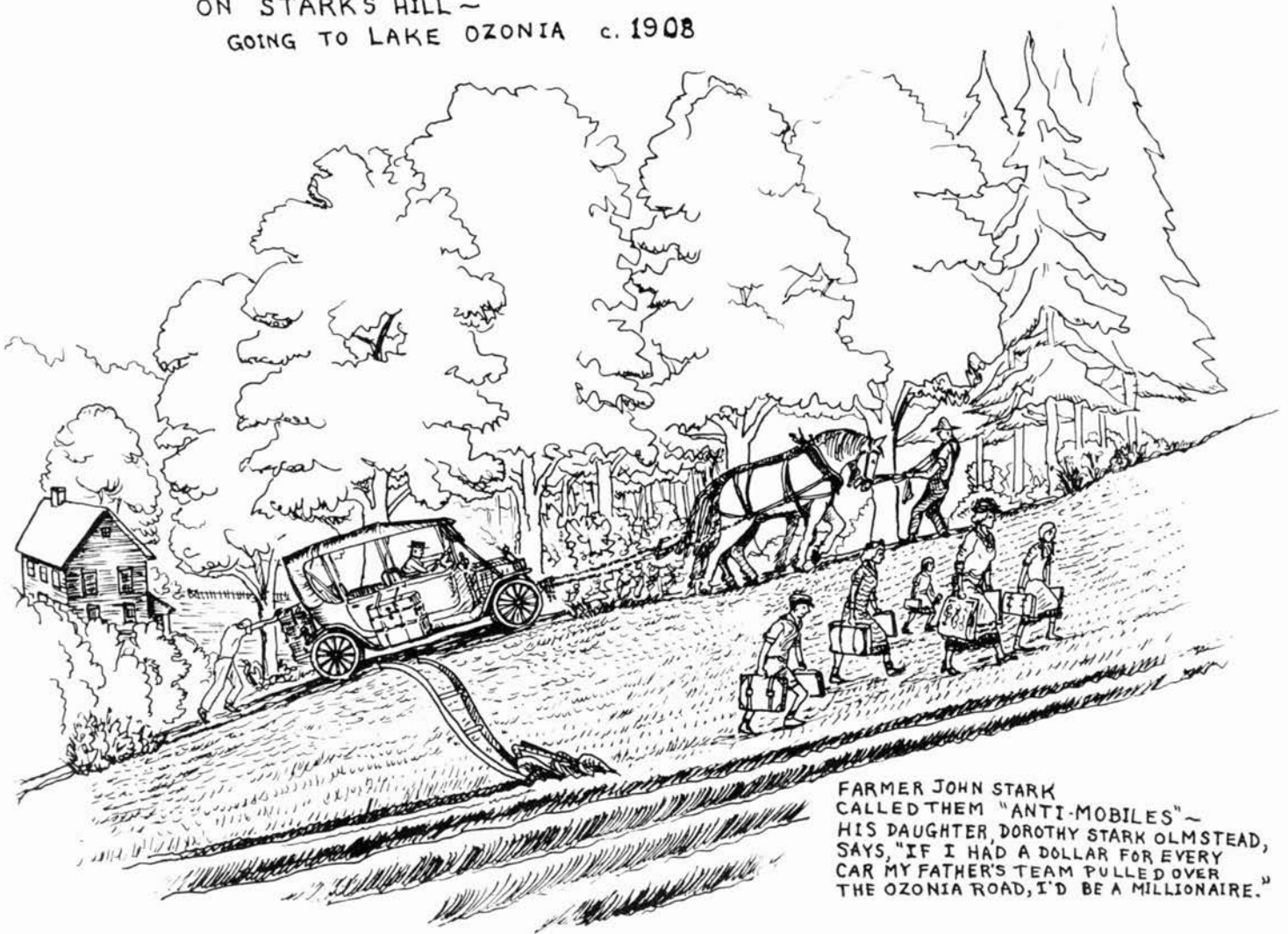
(8) Ms. Dumas offers up Massena's history as a way-station along the underground railway as if to absolve the town of any blot on its past. One matter has nothing to do with another. Poland welcomed Jews in the 14th century and watched them burn in the 20th. This does not mean that Polish history is free of anti-Semitism.

(9) I am less impressed with Ms. Dumas' humanitarianism when she dismisses the perjorative use of the word "Jew" by saying "it was a way of the time that people often said 'that Mick who lives on the corner' or 'that Hunky down the street' or 'that Dago.'" Ms. Dumas should inquire whether the Irish, Hungarians, or Italians view such phrases with indifference.

(10) Finally, I am disturbed by the tone of Ms. Dumas' manuscript, that

(continued on page 23)

ON STARK'S HILL ~
GOING TO LAKE OZONIA c. 1908



FARMER JOHN STARK CALLED THEM "ANTI-MOBILES" ~ HIS DAUGHTER, DOROTHY STARK OLMSTEAD, SAYS, "IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY CAR MY FATHER'S TEAM PULLED OVER THE OZONIA ROAD, I'D BE A MILLIONAIRE."

John Stark and the "Anti-Mobiles"— A Story About Progress

by William McLoughlin

The shrewd, inventive farmer, rescuing the "city slicker" and his fanciful ways from ruin, has sometimes been the delightful subject of fiction. But John Stark was not fiction. Here the author captures the spirit of one local man and his resistance—with apparent good reason—to changing times.

John Stark of Hopkinton was a descendant of General John Stark who beat the British at the Battle of Bennington in 1777. His grandfather had come to St. Lawrence County in the middle of the nineteenth century to find some land less burdened by mortgage and taxes than he had farmed in Vermont. The Starks settled along the East Brook which is the outlet for Lake Ozonia (then called Trout Lake) just west of the Franklin County line along the road leading from St. Regis Falls into the lake. The John Stark of whom I speak took over the farm from his father at the

turn of the century just as America was going through the fateful transition from horse-power to gasoline. But John Stark never owned a tractor. He farmed throughout his life with horses. And it was a good thing for summer visitors that he did.

"The Lake Road" from St. Regis Falls had never been easy to travel, but when Frederick M. Heath built his elegant Fernwood Hall on the lake in 1892 and the railroad began to bring summer visitors into the region from down-state in 1896, the road was improved somewhat—just enough to enable "Colonel"

Heath to send a high-wheeled jitney and team to the railroad station to meet each train that might carry guests to or from his hotel.

John Stark earned part of his income selling chickens, corn, and green vegetables to the dining room at Fernwood Hall and also to the more rustic inn known as The Prentice House or The Old Log Hotel which had preceded Fernwood Hall and catered to a less fancy clientele further down the lake. He raised a large family, three sons and four daughters, most of whom still live near the old homestead, some of them in

the Stark farmhouse on the lake road. In the years after 1905 John Stark found another job thrust upon him each summer. He made no income from it (except in good will) but it paid for itself in amusement, at the expense of the new-fangled inventions which he jokingly referred to as "anti-mobiles" because when they forced themselves upon his attention they were always stationary.

Anyone who has driven into Lake Ozonia from the Falls knows there are a number of pretty good hills along that winding road. The highest and steepest of these is the one you encounter just after you cross the little bridge over East Brook and pass from Franklin into St. Lawrence County. Locally it is known as Stark's Hill because the Starks owned most of the land on its eastern slope. When you cross the bridge you have to turn sharply to the left and there, looming up in front of you, is this last but forbidding obstacle between you and two weeks of good fishing and relaxation. The early automobiles were not built to negotiate a twenty degree grade, especially over rough terrain when loaded to the gunwales with a family and baggage. However, "hope springs eternal," as they say, and the driver would adjust his spark, race his motor a few times, and then start boldly up the slope on a hot summer's afternoon going about forty yards up the slope and then the car would come to a stop. Undaunted, he'd back carefully down until it rested at the bottom just where the driveway entered into John Stark's farmhouse and barn. Then he would

start the motor and gun it up the hill again, this time at about ten miles per hour. His family, packed in like sardines, would bounce and sway trying to keep the suitcases, water-jug and boxes from falling out the open sedan.

John Stark, ploughing or haying in his field, took no notice. Finally, after the third or fourth try, the tin lizzie would be all steamed up, water spouting out of its radiator cap, the driver fuming, the family frustrated. Now the driver would make his wife and children get out and carry their suitcases up the hill on foot to lighten the load. But even this didn't work. Eventually he'd have to ask for help. Putting on the hand-brake and placing stones behind the rear tires to keep the car from rolling back, he would come out into the field, mopping his brow, his hat in his hand, tie and collar askew, and ask John Stark if he could borrow a can to put some water in his over-heated radiator. "Over there," John would say, pointing; he kept a can behind a rock near the road just where he knew the cars would stop. While the driver took it down to the East Brook for water, John would unhitch his horses and harness them to the bumper of the anti-mobile. "Yup," he'd told the driver, "I'll help you get your anti-mobile up the hill." With a few "gees" and "haws" and the release of the hand-brake, the car would lurch forward; slowly but steadily the farm horses would haul the magnificent heap to the top of the last hill to Shangri-la, the driver walking along beside the car with his hand on the steering wheel to keep it straight.

Frederick Heath had helped to make the lake (which he re-named Ozonia as a ploy to attract visitors interested in what then were considered the benefits of ozone in the Adirondack air) a popular summer resort, and after his death in 1904 more and more lots were sold to build camps around the lake. From 1905 to 1920 John Stark spent many summer afternoons helping city slickers get their fancy autos over Stark's Hill. His daughter, Dorothy Stark Olmstead, who founded Ozonia Lodge in 1935 on the foundation of Fernwood Hall (which burned mysteriously in 1929) witnessed many of these incidents as she was growing up: "If I had a dollar for every time my father helped someone over that hill," she says today, "I'd be a millionaire."

But John Stark never took money for helping people who needed a little more horsepower. A patient, quiet man, he was satisfied to make a few laconic remarks to his horses about the so-called "wonders of modern progress" as he led them up the hill in front of the anti-mobile. With today's looming gas shortage, there may be a lot more antimobiles around soon. Progress doesn't always make the grade.

About the Author

William McLoughlin is Professor and Chairman of the Department of History at Brown University. He is a regular summer resident at Lake Ozonia, has been a long-time member of SLCHA, and actively researches and writes about the history of the Lake Ozonia area, a fascinating hobby for him.

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Articles about Any Aspect of St. Lawrence County History

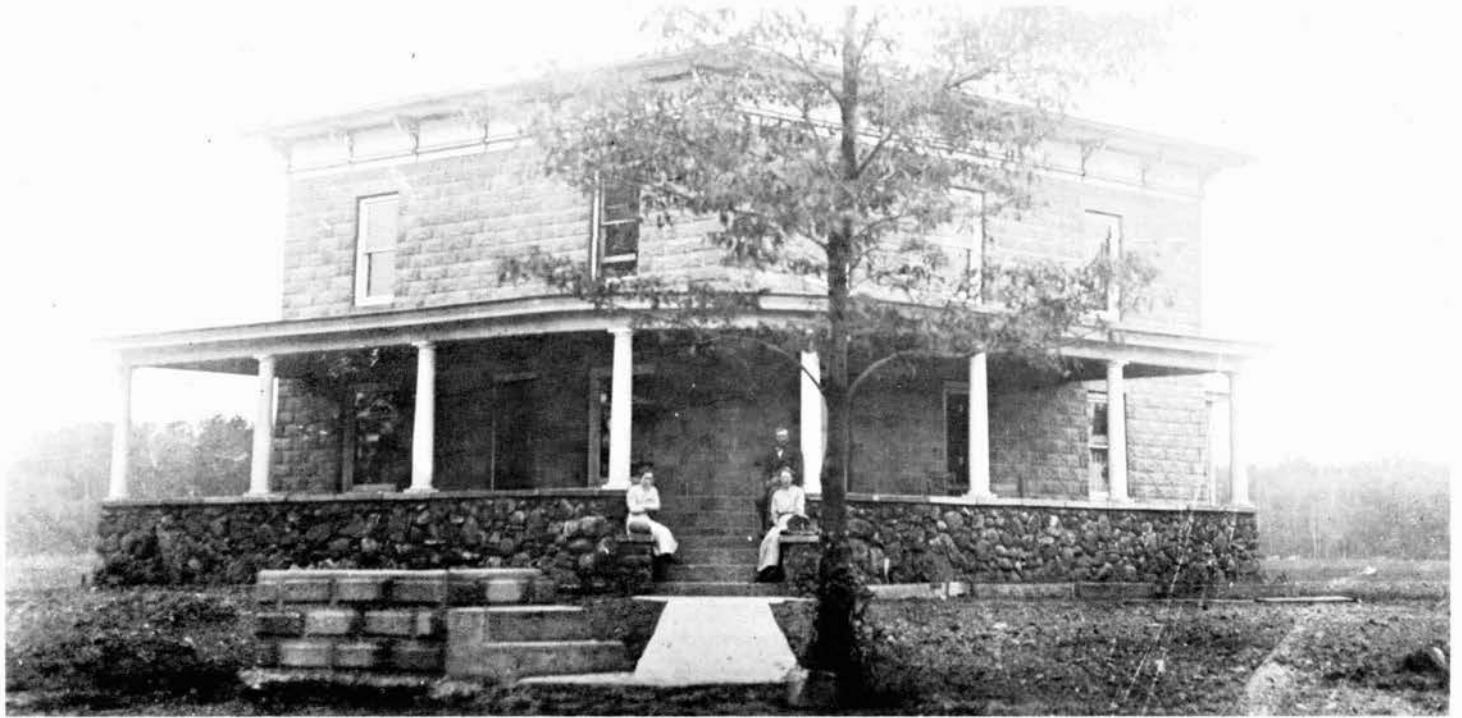
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St. Lawrence County Historical Association
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The Gray family shown on the front porch of their new home in 1911.

The Marvelous Block House

by Katherine Gray

In 1911 the Gray family of Brier Hill completed a monumental group effort—a twelve room house with all the latest trappings. Electricity and plumbing and especially the cement block exterior walls, all of their own making, were star attractions and certainly the reason for family pride. Here Miss Gray, an octogenarian, recalls the happy, busy days of its construction on Sand Street, toward North Hammond. Today that same block house is occupied by David Stout, only the second family to own it.

What a celebration! The plans of Frank and Nettie Gray for a new twelve room house, which included electricity and engines for pumping washing and drinking water, had become a reality. Neighbors, friends, and relatives gathered in 1911 for a gala housewarming that also celebrated the 25th anniversary of Frank and Nettie Gray's marriage.

The house building had been truly a farm—family project from the beginning. Trees were cut on the farm, hauled to Dave McWilliam's sawmill, and planed into lumber. The new planks were then stacked for curing by the barn. My father and my brother, William, worked hard on this project.

William also helped mix cement and pour it into a cement-block-forming-machine that had been set up in the carriage room of the horse barn. We all helped and marveled at the clear cut design on the finished block. Hundreds of blocks were made over a two year period so that ample material was on hand when the masons, George Ackley and Mr. Murray, finally arrived. Both

masons were skilled in stone work after numerous projects on Thousand Island mansions and cottages.

Day by day, tier by tier, the new house began to emerge. The design specified a ten-foot wide verandah across the front and one side of the house. Mr. Ackley wanted the verandah front to be made of moss rocks. My father, mother, William, my sister Helene, and I searched all over the countryside for big moss-covered boulders.

As the stone work progressed and neared completion, other workmen were needed. Carpenters, plasterers, and painters arrived to accomplish a variety of tasks. Workers came from Ogdensburg to install the latest fashion in steel ceilings, which were then painted. Woodwork was carefully placed throughout the house and different types of wood were used in different rooms—pine for the kitchen, walnut in the dining room, maple for the halls, and oak in the double living room. All the walls were painted; no wall paper was hung anywhere. Each member of the family chose his favorite color for his

bedroom, but it took a lot of deciding to choose the Muruco colors for the rest of the house.

One of the most modern features, however, was the installation of electricity. Mr. Francis, the electrician, and his men journeyed to the site from Ogdensburg and spent a week wiring the house and two barns. As no power lines yet came into the countryside, they mounted dynamos, storage batteries, and an engine in a building across the road from the house.

It seemed to take forever but finally all was completed and we moved in. In honor of the occasion my eleven-year-old footprint, with the year 1911 beside it, was placed in the wet cement at the top of the outside cellar stairs. A dream had come true for all of the Gray family that year.

About the Author

Katherine Gray now lives in the Syracuse area but keeps in touch regularly with relatives and family friends in St. Lawrence County.

From the Editor's Desk . . .

This October 1979 issue of *The Quarterly* is the eleventh to be produced by your current editor. It has been an eventful, usually exciting, usually pleasant, usually rewarding task for this nearly-three-years to find and present a wide variety of material that we hope can appeal to all of the journal's readers. Overall, I feel the results have been successful, but have often wondered just how you are reacting to these efforts. Just recently—for some reason the July issue provoked reader responses—the Association has been hearing from some of you. None of these came to me. One was sent to a past president; a second to the current president; a third to the chairman of the publication committee. Although each has been forwarded, it seems natural that the editor, who makes many decisions about content and format, is in the best position to respond directly to suggestions and constructive criticism.

I include two of the letters most recently received, one from a long-time member, Jack Brown, and the other from Eleanor Niedeck's husband Arthur, in response to the W.B. Leonard articles in July. I agree that this journal is not meant to be scholarly. I also agree that we should be seeking and selecting material from *all parts* of our membership (and that these articles should be *well researched and well written*). I think that our latest offerings have been both. It is difficult to be as selective as we'd like when I do not receive manuscripts, a situation that is recently changing, especially with the current writing com-

petition under way.

The trustees, the publication committee, and this editor truly want to maintain the highest quality, most interesting local history publication that we can. Our current membership, the highest number of paid up participants in Association history, reflects many views and has many talents. It is a different kind of membership than it was fifteen years ago, when I joined. The activities of the SLCHA, including this publication, should respond to these changes.

What do you think? Please let me know.

Varick A. Chittenden, Editor

To the President:

I want to write to you in your capacity as president of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. I have been a life member for a number of years and I have a full set of *The Quarterly* except for two issues that are only xerox copies.

The July 1979 issue arrived in the mail this week and I enjoyed reading the articles as usual. The magazine has come a long way from the single-fold sheet it once was. It is now academic, professional, thorough. Your writers would likely take this as a tribute to their competence. But what I want to say is that *The Quarterly* has become TOO academic, TOO professional and TOO thorough.

I dug out my copy of July 1969 to compare the contents and format with the way *The Quarterly* was ten years ago. I think that there used to be a warmth, almost folksy contact between the readers and the Association. The greater number of short articles ensured that everyone would find something of interest. The regular features such as Poetical Portraits, Letters to the Editor, and especially the Cracker Barrel News formed a warm personal link between the people in their homes and activities in Canton.

I think it is important to involve average members as much as possible. By encouraging them to submit short items for publication you provide a reason and stimulus for their research. On the other hand, if they know that their written items would not stand up to comparison with articles presently being published, there will be little incentive to do the research. Who knows but what they might become apathetic, maybe even resentful?

For a city historical association, the present format of *The Quarterly* would be most suitable. But a greater involvement by more people would be better here. The Association will only be as strong as its membership, and a mem-

bership will only be as strong as its involvement.

Please do not take time to send me a reply. I thank you for reading down this far. But if you have time, I hope you will ask people of Rossie or Norwood or Hermon or Parishville to see if they don't agree with my point of view.

Good luck to *The Quarterly* and to the Association. I have a high regard for both and my suggestions are meant only to produce the best possible results over the long term.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Brown

Mallorytown, Ontario

Eleanor wishes you to thank all responsible for *The Quarterly*. In fact, I have been able to spend more time with it than has she. It is a fascinating issue, I think. The excerpts of hers pieced together very well and the additional material fitted well into the scheme. The pictures were superb. The posed publicity shot was the only one we have ever seen. I am wondering if the cover photo was taken in Cortland.

I've not come across *Incident at Massena* but the four viewpoints were so well presented one didn't need to read the book. Eleanor Dumas writes with precision. I'd like to have her on my side.

Isaac Johnson's pamphlet should be republished in its entirety. I'm sure there would be a market for it.

Anyway, I had a delightful time reading it from cover to cover.

Sincerely,

Arthur Niedeck

(Friedman letter continued)

somehow I set out to embarrass this community on the St. Lawrence. (One correspondent has delighted in pointing out to me that my book has been lifted from the Massena library and is no longer available to incite hatred there.) All of this is reminiscent of charges hurled at my other writings by Arab, Russian and Ukrainian nationalists, who claim that Jews in their lands were never abused, that coexistence between their people and the Jews has been almost idyllic. Yes, no one has ever left Massena because of anti-Semitism and that is a testimony to the rational heads which prevailed once Barbara Griffiths was retrieved. It is to her detriment, however, that Ms. Dumas has never contemplated the truly terrifying question—what if Barbara had not been found?

The Nazi-hunter, Simon Wiesenthal, genuinely appreciated my motives in writing this book when he wrote "May this book enlighten people and show where the unscrupulous baiting of minorities is bound to lead." Lamentably, there will always be those who cannot see the forest for the trees.

The cost of publications and other operating expenses of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association are partially subsidized by this advertising support.

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