

THE QUARTERLY

Official Publication of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association

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Editor: Varick A. Chittenden

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Cover: An after dinner smoke enjoyed by E.W. Perry at Upper Point of Jack Johnson's Bay, June 18, 1896. (Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University) See the photograph album, beginning on page 10.



Andrew Tuck driving his horse-drawn cultivator, early twentieth century. (Photo courtesy of Town of Lisbon Historian)

Memoirs of Andrew Tuck—Part One

Near the end of his long life, Andrew Tuck of Lisbon (1833-1917), son of an Irish Catholic immigrant, wrote down his memories as a gift for his children. Through hard work, a genial way, and confidence he had become a prosperous farmer and a political power in his community and the county. Here, with only a few corrections in punctuation and sentence structure, we present the first part of his own interesting story, his youth and early years as a school teacher. (The extensive typed transcript of these memoirs are a recent, much-appreciated gift to the SLCHA Archives from Mrs. H. Douglas Barclay of Pulaski.)

It was in the summer of 1832 when my mother and her brother, Patrick Dunn, began to think of coming to "America", the name they gave this country where my father had gone twelve years before. He had landed in Montreal and immediately went to work for a man by the name of Halpin who was a contractor and builder and

carried on a large stone quarry where my father worked for twelve long years. My father, after five years, having saved quite a little sum of money, intended to go "home" and bring Mother and the children to this country, but his employer, knowing that Father had some money, sought to induce him to leave it with him, and

he, Halpin, would pay him interest. Father, believing it to be a safe proposition, consented. But when he desired to return home Mr. Halpin kept putting him off with many excuses until the twelve years rolled around. In fact, Father began to see that his employer was being distressed to pay his debts and could pay only a little at a time.

This uneasiness and Mother's condition at home culminated in the decision of mother, uncle and aunt to come to America. Their home was in Queens County, Ireland, at St. Melick, Mt. Roth, Roscomon, Roseray, Ballihourican and many other little places, but those I have often heard of and have tried to spell them as I have heard them pronounced which is not as spelled on the map. They got ready and left home for America with such cooking utensils and bedding as would be permitted on shipboard, stercage passage. There were when Father left home, two boys, John and Michael, and a girl born after Father left, the latter dying very young. Michael died when about five years old. That little crooked stick in Mother's things was preserved by her and brought here and kept in memory of Mike. You will see one end of it is burned a little by him; he called it his "hurling stick". John was about twelve years old. He walked from home with the party to Dublin and sent their things on a cart ahead. The deck passage on the *Dundee*, a sailing vessel, was rough and tumble, but the captain was very good in many ways.

On landing in Montreal they soon found the Halpin quarry, where a messenger was sent to inform Father that there was a woman there who wished to see him. As there was no place for Mother to wait, she went with the messenger to the quarry, where Father on seeing her threw up his hands, exclaiming, "It's Judy!" Mother's name was Judith.

Some years before, Patrick, Eagan, who married a sister of Mother's, Margaret Dunn, had come to this country. He and his wife were employed by George C. Connont, a large owner who lived on the river road a short distance below the new state hospital. The former was a good farm hand and his wife a domestic, both good in their places. They had at this time purchased the lot of twenty-five acres now owned by the Eagans on the road to where we all live. Thus it was that Father, Mother, Uncle and Aunt Dunn came up the St. Lawrence River most of the way on the Durham boat, not unlike the present scow, pushing and poling around swift points till they came opposite the "Red Mills" (now torn down), and opposite the road leading from our place to the St. Lawrence River, sometimes called the "Gallousi" (Galloup). Here at the little town of Lisbon they landed their little goods, their all, in "America".

Patrick Eagan was soon sought out and the spring of 1832 found Father, Mother and John in a house of their own with a deed of fifty acres of land with some cleared, for I think \$400. It was what was called in those days a

good log house, hewed inside, with large fireplace and an oven in the wall on one side, with a "stoop" (now called porch-piazza-veranda), a fair log barn and horse stable. There were about a dozen young apple trees over which was much controversy subsequently, for the former owner claimed there was nothing said about the fruit trees passing with the farm and unless he got ten dollars for the trees he would cut them down. Father wanted peace and apples, and fearing he would carry out his threat, paid him his claim. His grandchildren enjoyed the fruit from those trees years afterwards. From the above little orchard came the beautiful and well known "Tuck apple", from which tree so much grafting was done. In the long blackberry season this lot was infested with men, women and children seeking the long blackberry which was prolific on this place. Considerable damage was done the little crop by these young people who came many miles distant. We had to put up with this for years, until by hard labor their growth was prevented.

This lot of land at that time carried great large pine trees and had been lumbered over, the best pines removed to the banks of the St. Lawrence River and sent to Montreal and from thence to Quebec to be made into masts for boats. Much of the timber when hewn was built into great rafts, so-called, and floated down the St. Lawrence River and much of it sent to Europe. In this would be hewn timber over thirty inches square. It was first scored with narrow axes and then the "hewer" (the man of the job) came with his broad axe, an axe weighing nine to twelve pounds, swinging that tool over his shoulder and standing by the side of that scored tree, giving blow after blow with no strokes repeating. He would always split the line and leave that huge tree about as smooth as planed, as it should be, in order to be marketable.

There were *men* in those days of the early settlers, but this was not so early—1832. There was a marked difference in the judgment between the emigrant and the American in the selection of farm lands, particularly the Washington county men. The Irishman wanted some place where he could secure something to eat for a family within the shortest time possible which meant high dry land. This later meant an enormous amount of hard work removing and replacing huge stones for fences, the thought of durability of which seemed to give those men pleasure and the impetus to work harder. Meanwhile the man with the elm and ash farm escaped the apparent pleasure of no stone fences, found fence timber more reasonable and much easier land to cultivate unless in an unusually wet

year. While I am on this land situation I want to acknowledge a mistaken judgment of my own. There was a time in my life when I thought that such sand as found on the "down home" place was not very valuable. Of course, there are sand hills of which I would not change my judgment yet, but such sand and sandy fields on the farm my father bought, which for many years I thought little of, is much better, year in and year out, than what is known as the "south farm" or the Jim Craig place for which I caused to be offered at one time eighty dollars per acre, since bought for little more than half. The fields along the southerly side of the lot purchased by Father, and adjoining the highway, are fit examples of what can be done with gravel and sandy soils, which stood so far out of favor for years. When it stops raining, if you do not go back to work, don't blame the soil or the weather.

As I said above, Father had money sufficient to pay for the place he was living on and some more, and bought what was called the Ginning place of fifty acres, south of us and along the highway about 120 rods distant, for about \$450. He paid some on it, expecting to get sufficient from his old employer, Halpin, to pay in full, but he never got it. He always had confidence in Halpin's honesty and believed that, if he ever got out of his insolvency, he would pay. He went to Montreal and got two horses, a cart, a plow, and I think harness, but never got it all.

If Father could have gotten all the money due him, he would have been clear of debt. He saved his money and had the respect of all who knew him and the implicit confidence of his employer.

It is over eighty-one years ago since I first saw daylight in that little smooth hewn log house with its copious stoop. It compared very favorably with the average settler's house.

Here I was born about the 9th of November, 1833—I had no exact date of my birth—but the consensus of those who ought to be good authority is that it was about the 9th of November. Anyway, it does not matter much for I never would have a birthday, nor an attempt at it, until my eightieth year when I received many very kind letters, which satisfied and pleased me very much. Some time subsequently, and within a few weeks, a cousin, Catherine Dunn, and I were taken to Prescott to be baptized and named. The itinerary consisted in going around by what is known now as the Campbell Cemetery to the Canton road. It was then rough in many places as "the two mile woods" which consisted of logs "acrossway". Then we went to Ogdensburg and the St. Lawrence River in a row boat to

Prescott (for there was no priest in Ogdensburg at that time), then to the church where I received baptism and where I was first named and called Andrew Tuck. I must see if the record of my baptism can be found in the church records. Kate Dunn was in that same row boat. Think what risk was in that trip, about seven weeks after the 9th of November, sometime in the last days of December, for surely parents would not take a child on such a trip at two or three weeks old.

Within five years after this, Father passed away on the 20th of November, 1838, at the age of sixty-three, so that I never knew or realized what a father meant, except insofar as my brother exercised a father's care over me. That I always felt, yes and feared, yet I can say he never struck or punished me bodily, but when he was displeased he made it felt and I always feared him. He was a noble father to me. My mother has often said that Father said to John when he knew he would leave the world soon—among other things—“to send Andrew to school” which he did in summers when I could have helped some at home when were in debt. Brother John did not have much learning. He could read and write his name, could do a little figuring and it was often remarked by those who knew him well that he had unusual ability, and if he had had the learning would have shown it. His features and build were noble. His picture shown in the photograph album with a silk hat on was brought about by a friend of his at Flackville, Mr. Frank Willson. There being a temporary studio there I planned with Mr. Willson to secure John's picture, as the latter was opposed to those things as gush. That silk hat was Mr. Willson's and he thought this sitting was a take off and not to be preserved.

I was about five years old when Father passed away so that I knew but little as to how he looked, although I heard many say afterwards that John looked like his father. I have some recollections of the day he died. He requested to have his bed changed to a certain place on the floor. I remember the place well. Mrs. Glass was there cutting out my first pants—an event which all boys will remember—Mother spoke to her saying, “I am afraid he is dying” as he put one hand on his forehead and the other on his breast and stopped breathing, not a motion.

It was during the last days of his sickness, November 1838, that a few foolish fellows calling themselves “American Patriots” assembled at a point opposite Ogdensburg, and finally took refuge in what was in time long gone by a stone windmill, still standing, and during the cannonading of

this place many of the cannon balls struck the opposite bank of the St. Lawrence River. John was a messenger for the priest for Father, as a priest by the name of Father Folley came here and was having Mass in a little house, and on one of John's trips he saw the sand on the road ahead fly up and the cannon ball roll in the sand and saw the dust fly in many places along the bank. John was at a neighbor's the day Father died. These conditions caused Mother much uneasiness. Mother had some reason to be alarmed for John's loss would surely crush Mother. The people of Ogdensburg were terribly excited—as they should—when a common ball went through the gable end of a building used as a town hall. Later, during repairing and painting the same, the mark was retained in black to be remembered till the building was torn down. The building stood where the Customs and Post Office buildings now stand.

I can now remember but few things about Father. He was lifting me into the cart at the near corner of the Ginning place and he said, “this will be your place soon.” It will be observed here by those who knew me well that it was a quality I developed early in life under certain conditions, in fact, all through life—when much interested. But the snow did not fall until Mother had a good mark where Father's body lay—a marble slab with name, date and age inscribed on it—which was a great satisfaction to us many years later when that cemetery had become a commons, with many graves in doubt. As soon as our cemetery was laid out, John bought our present lot and would not consent to divide it. Uncle Dunn had a child, Mary, buried by the side of Father and that body was removed at the same time and is now where it was placed at that time by the side of Father. While the Dunn family have a nice lot of their own, they have never proposed to remove the body, but the women seemed to feel better by our accepting the price of the marker. Money was not plenty in those days. The price of that headstone was \$25, but because of that chip off the side it was sold to Mother for \$18, on a year's time; she nearly paid for it that winter when she sold a barrel of pork for \$10.

Now Mother's care and anxiety began, in debt, and with a boy about nineteen years old and another about five years old, sickly, not very strong. Mother was a short strong woman but not very heavy, about one hundred and twenty-five, but not fleshy. John was nearly six feet high, raw boned, not much flesh, very strong, with heavy shoulders and wide chest. He was an athlete at bees where there were strong men. But John and Mother paid the

debt and I think the main thing that prevented him from marrying was another woman coming into Mother's house, and many others who knew him well thought the same. John never married, never wanted to take any chances of causing trouble for Mother in her old age. He knew what she had endured in Ireland and America and I hope I will not forget this point later on when I am married.

And now about that school. Well, it was like all schools, I guess, of that day, reading in the Webster's spelling book, spelling from the same book. I wish I had one of those books and I would fasten it in here. We learned our letters from it also. We also “learned to figure”, that is what it was called; I have the book, Adams Arithmetic. To go the road to school would be to travel about two and one-half miles but to cross the fields would be to make it about a mile, which meant in winter we broke our own roads and climbed seven fences—and girls did it also—and here is where my first boots came in. The snow would work in under my heels and crowd my foot up in my shoe, making it hard to walk. John took a load of hemlock to Ogdensburg and bought me my first pair of boots. After that for a long time no snow was too deep to prevent me from making the schoolhouse.

In those days and for years after, books contained no analysis for examples. Each example had its answer immediately underneath, and if we struck those figures, the slate was immediately wiped, but not with water.

As I said above, my brother gave me the summers as well as the winters. I think I must have been about fourteen years old or perhaps a year older when I was given a calf to raise. We did not have many cows then as the land was not all chored. In fact, I can recall when we did not have but three cows. Anyway, I took care of the calf. Unlike many gifts to children by parents, when the gift began to have some value it would be otherwise appropriated, ostensibly in the interest of the whole family. But this case was surely an exception, for I sold it, or John sold it to Mr. Lowrey, a buyer of cattle. Then we called those men “drovers”; they often in early days drove the stock to market. But I was given the money, six dollars for a yearling heifer. I kept it safely, looking at it once in a while, and that fall I hired Samuel Dings, who lived near the Covenanter Church near us, to cut twelve cords of wood on the rear of the Ginning place at fifty cents a cord, which took all my funds. In those days wood was chopped in four foot lengths. I think doing this must have been a thought of my brother's, for I don't believe at that age (about

sixteen years) I would have done it. We drew the wood to the road near where Mr. McFarland lived—the “cemetery road”—and the next winter, 1851, drew it to Ogdensburg and sold it for \$1.50 a cord. It was good hard wood four feet long; I got my \$18 and took good care of that. The following winter, 1852, I took my things in what we called a “chest” with hinges and lock, but no key—and put it on a load of wood my brother was taking to Ogdensburg. We both got on top of the load and started for school in Ogdensburg without knowing where I was going to put the “chest” nor where I was going to sleep. But I was lucky that morning for there was a man running an ashery near the entrance to the village by the name of Lawler, with whom my brother was acquainted and of whom he made inquiry as to where I might find board, a place to sleep and put my “chest”. To our surprise and delight he said, “take it (the “chest”) up to my house and I think we can take care of that fellow.”

I generally went home Friday nights and back Sundays and my expenses were \$1.50 a week. I found boarding there the man after whom Heuvelton was named and for whom your grandfather Lynch worked when this man lived at Heuvelton. Many years after this I heard your mother tell the story how her father took a pair of nice horses to Albany where this man had sold them, riding one and leading the other. Mr. Van Heuvel at times was out of his right mind, was constantly engaged in writing on subjects interesting the people, and I was told wrote some books which were published. At this time there was some revolution in Hungary in which the noted patriot Kosuth was the leading figure and for whom Mr. Van Heuvel has great sympathy and admiration. But when he got “off” he was likely to destroy all his work and begin it over again. We could often hear him talking aloud and walking his room in the night, and he would sleep the next day.

To enter the academy was the crucial test. I knew nobody, nobody knew me, nor cared, except possibly the teachers. The stone academy building stood on the corner immediately opposite the Customs and Post Office buildings, and easterly of the latter. Some of the walls of the same are standing at this writing. I had a talk with one of the teachers, Mr. Pettibone; the other teachers were Mr. H.L. Lawrence, and a lady teacher. I arranged for the kind of work I was going to do—arithmetic, algebra, philosophy (physics), government, some bookkeeping and some other small studies later. I found I could saw wood in the back yard to pay for my books if I wished, and Mr. Pettibone thought that a little exercise would be good for

me—coming from the country—and I did it. I never had much work in algebra but Robinson’s algebra, with my experience, came near driving me out of the class and out of the academy, if it did, clear home. There were such young people as Henry James, James Hobkins, a Sheppard boy, a son of Mr. Hosbrook (Hasbrouck?), Miss Fairchilds, afterwards Mrs. James, in the class, a lot of young people who had good drilling all the way up, but I stuck to it and came out alive.

In the Fall of 1853 on a Saturday night I was at the home of the grandfather of all the Murphys in Lisbon, except the family who lived near us. The man in this story was Edward Murphy and lived towards Canton. A man by the name of John Hanna in passing Mr. Murphy’s place inquired where he could get a teacher for his school; Hanna was the trustee. Mr. Murphy replied that there was a young man at his house who might be engaged—and between them decided that if he would remain over Sunday and present himself at the trustee’s (Mr. Hanna) residence Monday morning, and with good daylight (it was then dark) he would look the fellow over. He thought he could make a very good guess. The teacher they had the prior winter was an absolute failure and had to leave the school in somewhat of a hurry. But that was under the administration of the preceding trustee, whom the patrons of the school district refused to continue in office. I thought things well over during Sunday and went to Mass to Canton with Mr. Murphy—on horseback. We had a horse each, somewhat of a contrast, on one horse the father of six kids and the other horse just a kid. It was about ten miles to Canton. It was not all devotion with me that day. I was doing my own coaching for Monday morning. The authority of the school district was going to look me over, and we two were to agree on the wages. I was wondering where I ought to draw the line in conversation for I might say too much and lose the job or too little with a similar result. But on Monday morning I appeared at the trustee’s residence and was soon employed to teach the school for four months at \$15 per month and “board round”. I was entertained most royally and could have remained their guest for dinner and supper all that day, but I was very anxious to greet my mother and brother with the good news that there was sixty dollars in sight at least and I would be soon on the high road where school teachers traveled, a full fledged school master. I greeted Mr. Murphy and thanked him.

I soon learned my employer was a brother of David Hanna who had taught our school a few years before

and to whom I attended school and who made our place a home in boarding around when he taught the school, so that I was in good favor in that district when those things were known.

I had good luck that winter, had night school. Some of the men of the district were constant students; some who never could write or figure became quite proficient.

I heard some feeling against me when it became known that I was a Roman Catholic. The trustee was severely criticized for hiring me, but he claimed his act was constitutional. I realized it was up to me to teach a school and not discuss religion. Little children would be heard saying amongst themselves, “Why he is a good fellow, he is just like us.” It would seem they had been led to think that a Catholic was somewhat mal-formed, unlike human beings. Catholics would sometimes say to me, there are a lot of orange men in there. How are you getting along? Now I want to say here that in the years I was away from home teaching school and always boarded around, I never met a more friendly society than in that and the adjoining district. There were men like the Hursts, the Bells, the McLaughlins and the Stephensons. Those men were reputed as denouncing the trustee for engaging me to teach. Those people were fair; all used me well, children as well as parents.

Before the close of my term the trustee of the school in the Pray district came to me about teaching their school. Thinking that my wages would be surely rejected by him, I asked twenty dollars a month for four months and “board round”. He immediately accepted the offer. I felt I would have to go to that school but I also felt that I was not using the people just right where I was, for they were more than good to me. They said they would have given me the same wages and, to help them out, I said I would leave the matter of employing a teacher for the winter following my term at the Pray district optional with them at the same wages that I was then getting. I would come back there for those wages, whether I was offered more some place else or not, and so we left it. I came back there the following winter. Here is a part I always like to dwell on, for Dennis O’Brien, afterwards Judge O’Brien, the great jurist of the State of New York, who lived near Ogdensburg, taught this school (Pray school) the winter before I did but could teach no longer as he was going into the study of law. Since I did about as well in that school as the afterwards Judge O’Brien did, I am wondering if I too had put my time into law might not have made my mark, if not so big but big suffi-

ciently to help my family. Marks are empty honors unless accompanied with something tangible, something real, something that can be seen and handled. The mark is a good thing when accompanied by good fruit, like the "good fellow".

I taught my third term, the second in this district, for four months and eighty dollars. During this latter term of teaching in this Nona school, the adjoining district was having trouble with their teacher and I was offered twenty-five dollars a month for three months to teach that school next winter. This was more than the Hanna people could pay. I said if they would give me three and one-half months work I would go. Here again I found good friends, many of whom were reported to me to be very hostile. I saw none of it. There was none, I enjoyed it. There were several young men, many twenty, twenty-two and twenty-three.

While here I had an offer of thirty-two dollars to go to the Bush school on the Canton road. The adjoining school was where your mother lived. This winter I had a still larger school with many more large scholars. We built a long table in the center of the room and placed chairs around it. Here was the first school in Lisbon where a program and bell were used to call and remove classes. The bell was suspended at the ceiling over the table and attached to a wheel from which a cord was suspended. One of the boys, always Wm. Henry Modill, had the care of the program which lay on the table in front of him, and at the proper time touched the string, the bell rang, and the class left the recitation seat and the next class came on. After a little while all knew their time. If I was in the middle of the explanation of an example all stopped right there; nobody spoke. By this system we could easily know when school would close. It was a fine and somewhat of a surprise to many.

It was in this district where I performed the act so much talked of in the district. Three girls, young women, annoyed me very much, which meant they were not doing school work and of course preventing others from working. I decided that before I would report them to the trustee to be expelled I would try another plan. Mr. Bush loaned me his horse and cutter one morning, as I assured him I would return it in an hour. I first drove to the home of the Kelly girl and said to the mother that (I have forgotten the girl's name) was a great annoyance to me and to most of the school. She was learning but little, she had exhausted my patience and, if you cannot control her, you'd better take her out of school. If she doesn't improve and you don't take her out of school, I shall request

the trustee to do it under the complaint I am making to you. She (the girl) was about eighteen years of age. The mother sat down and cried. I left and went towards Canton to the home of Emma Duffey and made a similar complaint, but this woman did not sit down and cry; as I remember neither did she thank me nor have I ever blamed them. I then went to the home of Sarah Kennedy, where I made another complaint, nor did this mother sit down and cry or thank me.

I wish there was some way of describing the church-like condition of that school room that forenoon. I said nothing but thank Mr. Bush for his horse and cutter. The latter lived near the school house and as I hurried away exclaimed "Where in h--l were you, it'll do no good." But it did lots of good, it was all good.

I was here two winters and it was the last winter here when the Commissioner of Schools called my school, your mother's school, the Flackville school, the Daffin school, where the Murphy factory now is, and the McCarter school near the Mein butter factory, together at the Methodist Church to show what the teachers were doing with their schools under his administration. It was here where I first saw your mother when the teacher called one of his pupils to rise and explain something in geography. Your mother was selected and she did so well and acquitted herself so nicely; though she was very young then, I was much impressed. I never go over it. I'm not ashamed now to confess it—nor never ought to have been—the man who would be is not deserving of a blessing that follow those thoughts which might be erroneously called soft or foolish.

It was at this meeting of schools where it was shown that the rapidity with which a pupil may pass through text books did not usually mean learning. Oh! yes, Tim Brosnan was there with his school from Flackville. He was the best teacher in this part of the country. From now on more thought was employed by school teachers in the country and less rote.

I was in the Bush school for two winters when I was offered thirty-three dollars in my own district and of course would board at home, that was a comfort for I had to tread the same path which I did in years before when I got my first boots from the load of hemlock tan bark. I was here three winters, with about sixty scholars and many grown up students, and a long desk in the middle of the floor. I was then offered thirty-five in the school at the Canton road, near the Murphy factory and was there two winters at thirty-five dollars for four months. The last winter I reserved the right to leave

for Ogdensburg if I should be employed—where I was so employed—in what was then known as No. 1, a little north of the Catholic Church, since taken down and replaced with a better house, of course.

This school had the reputation of being hard to govern. It may be well to state how I came to be employed here as I could hardly say that I desired more responsibilities than the country school. The highest grade of scholars were Dr. Zina Bridges and Stillman Foote. I could control the school—the upper room with the whole upper floor in one room and over eighty students—but had an assistant who was afterwards the wife of Mr. John Magone, brother of the well known attorney Mr. Daniel Magone. Mr. John Magone taught this school just preceding my employment there and seemed to be much interested in the school and it took time for me to learn why. My assistant Miss Cummings was also an assistant of Mr. Magone's and he managed to continue it through life, for they were married and had one child well known as "Chick" Magone. But the latter knew very little of her father for he died with consumption soon after her birth. The daughter proved to be a very bright girl—very much of the make and character of the Magone family. I think my son Charley more capable of doing justice to the character of this young woman for I think she deserves it. It was when he was preparing for admittance to Cornell that he took private lessons from her. Now, Charley, go on, and do her justice, and take lots of paper. I have plenty.

One would readily be led to believe that I was possessed of a panacea—a charm for controlling wayward boys—for when I went to Ogdensburg, Isaac Seymour of the noted Snyder family came to me to talk about his boy who was not doing much work in school. The boy was what was called "wild", and Mr. Tallman, proprietor of the Seymour House, would also like to see his son, Frank, do better at school and thought it would be for the boy's interest and the father's if I would board with him at the Seymour House. He would make it an object for my by boarding and rooming me for eleven dollars a month, which was very low for that house, first hotel in the place, but I assured them both that I would give their sons' case my best thoughts and would be glad to go to their home if necessary for special work, without charge. But those were the sons of well-to-do parents, and they knew it, and were going to enjoy life and did till there was no more to enjoy it with—I could hardly feel that I knew enough to

'Like Cheap John's Razors':

A Review of Evert's *History of St. Lawrence County*

To mark the upcoming reprinting of the helpful and interesting 1878 Evert's *History of St. Lawrence County*, we now present our readers with a rather unflattering review of that book which appeared in some unknown newspaper by some unknown writer shortly after the original was published. In retrospect this is amusing, for the book is a valuable resource today. See the back cover for details about the reprint.

History of St. Lawrence County, New York, with illustrations, biographical sketches etc. etc., published by L.H. Everts & Co., 714-18 Filbert St., Philadelphia. pp. 621.

We cherish the hope that the sense of duty will never again, as now, urge us to write a review of one of these publishers' county histories. Our ideal of the dignity and self respect of men in general, our faith in the natural modesty of our fellows, and our estimate and appreciation of the true province of history, are far too dear to be endangered and affronted again by the study needed to adequately perform such a work.

Messrs. Everts & Co.'s *History of St. Lawrence County* is handsomely printed on good paper, and tolerably well bound. As it lies on a table, the casual observer would take it for a cheap family bible, and without further thought might open it, expecting to find the usual wood cut of Moses, with the tables of the law, or perchance of an abnormally prayerful infant Samuel. He would be disappointed, however. "There is that within which passeth show." As he turns the leaves he will find much that will cause him to forget all about Moses, and Samuel, and if he is a "a vial of wrath" to violate one of the commandments he so confidently expected to find in "the cheap family bible."

The book is an odd, unsystematic arrangement, in fact a jumble of reliable and unreliable history, attempted fine writing, bold and silly commonplaces, statistics, biographies so called, wretched lithographs of people, places and animals, with here and there a really fine engraving. "Dr. Hough's St. Lawrence County" is the basis of the work, and in fact has been incorporated nearly in entirety. This is no disadvantage. On the contrary it is the chief merit of the book, for without Dr. Hough's facts as to our early history, gathered by him with such conscientious pains, Messrs. Everts & Co.'s *History* would be worthless indeed. Where their people have tacked their work upon the Doctor's the line is very strongly marked, much to the disadvantage of the former. so strong is the con-

trast that one is reminded of good, honest, old fashioned homespun pieced out with shoddy.

The portraits and biographical sketches are the principal feature of the book. Of the former there are upwards of three hundred and eighty. Nearly every portrait has its corresponding biography. With the exceptions of some score of wood and steel engravings, worthy of the name, the portraits are lithographs or poor wood cuts, copied from cheap photographs. If these likenesses (heaven spare the mark) were of prominent men in all or most cases, one might forgive their usually wretched execution. But this is not the case. They are, in a very large majority of instances, pictures of people and their wives, who are utterly unknown beyond the limits of the towns, we were about to say school districts, in which they live and "farm it".

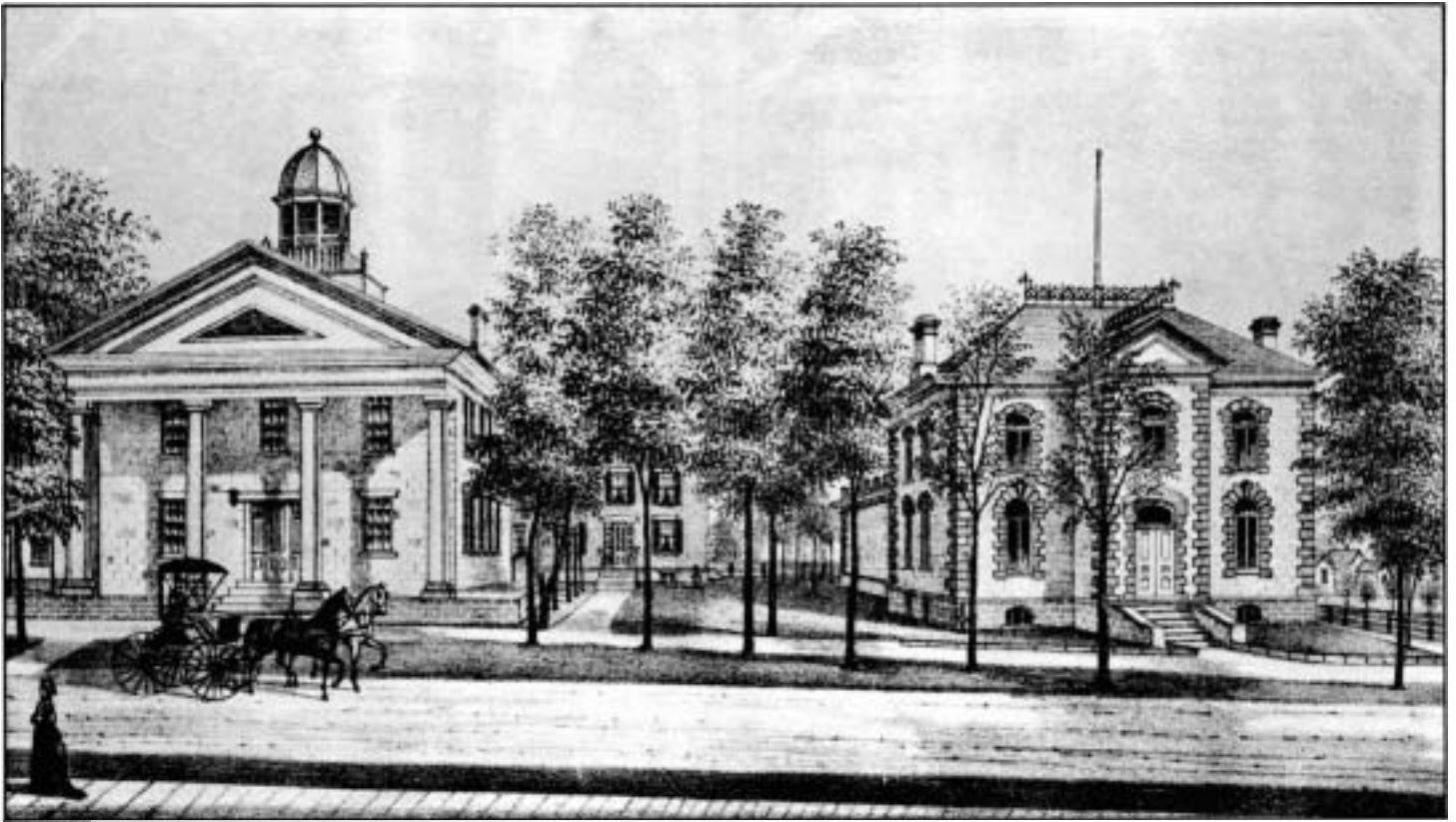
Were these pictures and biographies inserted through the mistakes of zealous but indiscriminating agents of the publishers? Not at all. For a consideration, \$50, or thereabouts, per page, almost any man and wife could have their portraits inserted in the book, and their names thus sent "ringing down the ages to the remotest syllable of recorded time," as the Western congressmen say. How much better and cheaper this method is, than to "seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth." Who would "death and danger dare, to to his grave like a bed," when he can purchase fame at the unprecedentedly low price of \$50 per page?

Not content with thus sending down to posterity, these "monuments of enduring brass," otherwise lithographs and wood cuts, of themselves and their wives (how happy we are to have pictures of their wives!) very many people have had portraits of their cows, calves, colts, and other cosset stock inserted, along with fine views of their cottages, neat and otherwise, their barns, front and rear, their mowing machines, stump lifters, their children, and in some, remarkable instances, of their mothers-in-law. The heart is touched by these evidences of thoughtful and tender regard for the instinctive desire of posterity to know how

everybody of the former time looked, and how their barns looked. We remember how the dwellers in caverns of the stone age carved pictures of their reindeer on the bones of captives whom they had taken in war and devoured, in order that posterity might have pictures of the premium farm stock of the primitive times.

In one case an aristocratic granger, whose features no doubt bear the traces of high breeding and lofty culture in his family for many generations, whose manners have all the repose "which marks the caste of Vere de Vere," although his lithograph doesn't say so, has the pedigree of his family, lineal and collateral for half a dozen generations, set forth at length, and a coat of arms to which he has about as much right, doubtless, as did Boss Tweed to my lord of Tweeddale's, emblazoned on the page: Argent, on a bend Bules, two crescents and a mullet; or, for crest, a ducal crown surmounted by a stag, trippant; for supporters, two dairy maids, with hands a la kangaroo droop, and turnips growing out of their heads; motto "Amo." A careful study of this gentlemen's biography, and of old Guillem and Boutell and other writers of heraldry, convinces us that the motto of this coat of arms should properly be "Memet amo." Thank you, dear Sir Knight, for this coat of arms and pedigree. You recall the happy days of our youth when we read "Ivanhoe" and "Marmion." We are glad to know that the accursed leveling doctrines of the republican party have not yet blotted out, even in old St. Lawrence county, the fine spirit of chivalry, which enabled the brave knights who fought in "the gentle and joyous passage of arms at Ashby de la Zouche;" that there is one man in the county who sports a coat of arms, whether his own or not, and who knows all about his great-great-grandfather's third cousins. Once more thanks! you have lifted a heavy weight from our hearts.

The poor fellows who wrote the biographical sketches for this *History* are to be pitied. Theirs was a task indeed to fill the space paid for, and nothing to fill it with! *parvum in multo*. No wonder the style they inevitably fell into is bald, execrable. They had to say



First county courthouse and county clerk's office building as they appeared in Evert's History, 1878.
(Courtesy of SLCHA Archives)

something, and they said it for nearly every man whom they immortalized. Happy the land that has so many honest men, respected by their neighbors, as has this county! Their biographical sketches say so. Doubtless these men never sold addled eggs in the market, nor old hens for chickens. What a standing rebuke to the grasping middlemen are these portraits! There is not a single picture of a middlemen in the whole book, and surely there ought not to be. This manly and virile yeoman, the history says, "did much for his native town." How, pray? Why, in becoming the sire of fifteen children.

"What constitutes a State?

Not high raised battlement or moated gate, But men."

Sum Quioque. In Greece or Rome, where the man was born for the State and its advancement, this patriarch would have been honored above his peers. Put him in the County History by all means. Another aged (under thirty) pioneer, who has been in the county some three years, and teaches school somewhere, has a place in its History. Why not? Put in every school-marm. We want their pictures and their biographies, with full statistics.

There are portraits and biographical sketches of some men in the book who have a place in it by just title. It is almost a wonder that the historian was

prevailed upon to insert them. In many cases their portraits do them no justice, however. The honorable work and fame of such men as Preston King, Silas Wright, the Russells, the Judsons, the Sanfords, W.H. Sawyer, Darius Clark, Ebenezer Miner, Charles O. Tappan, Wm. A. Dart, the Hodskins, the Baldwins, and many others, will be remembered with respect, whether their names are in the History or not. But for the crowd of commonplace names and faces, the honest, well-meaning, but injudicious people, who figure here in "counterfeit presentment," we must be allowed to say that their immortality is nearly as unhappy as was and is that of the wretched preacher, orthodox and absurd, who followed Ralph Waldo Emerson's Middlebury address with prayer. We fear they will be remembered only to be laughed at. Their fate was not of their own seeking, as a general thing. They were besought, flattered, cajoled, and fairly bored into investing in a page of fame by the smooth-tongued agents of the publishers. But for these broders in immortality the honest yeomen's "sober wishes would never have learned to stray from their cool, sequestered walk of life."

The book abounds in doubtful grammar and preposterous rhetoric. One or two will suffice. "Such a town has so many inhabitants of the human per-

suation." "Such a man being of a speculative turn of mind"—Studies Kant and Spinoza? Not at all. "He takes certain contracts."

The History of the great county of St. Lawrence is an advertising medium withal. One man who takes pictures, and whose name appears, we had almost said *ad nauseam*, as the artist who made nearly all the photographs from which are copied the lithographic likenesses, has half a page in the middle of the book, which he devotes to a picture of his shop, and a modestly couched advertisement of his wares, containing statistical information of immense value to students of history.

We are constrained to say, that as a comprehensive and reliable history, the work falls far short of what, from its prospectus and the representations made by soliciting agents, we were led to expect. Yet much of value has been collated in the way of statistics, & c. Everts & Co. are to be criticised, not so much for a failure to fulfill their promises as for making their book an object of deserved ridicule. Its excellencies are covered by a mass of "slush."

The book was gotten up for the purpose of making money out of it, this is not the spirit of the Historian. Like Cheap John's razors, the History was made to sell, and unlike them it has had many a man who could illy afford the operation.



R. Barnhart, Newsboy, Crarys Mills. (Courtesy of Herbert Judd)



Steers Family Playing Tennis, Crarys Mills. (Courtesy of Herbert Judd)

The Golden Years— A Nineteenth Century Photograph Album

This is a selection of photographs from the current large exhibition of nineteenth century photographs and photographers of St. Lawrence County at the Silas Wright Museum. They are reprinted from glass plate negatives recently given to Special Collections at St. Lawrence University and the SLCHA Archives. We hope you enjoy the images of work and play, of scenes and people and celebrations, again and again.



Chinese Women Entering Port of Ogdensburg, 1895. (Courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University, Gift of Thomas Jenison)



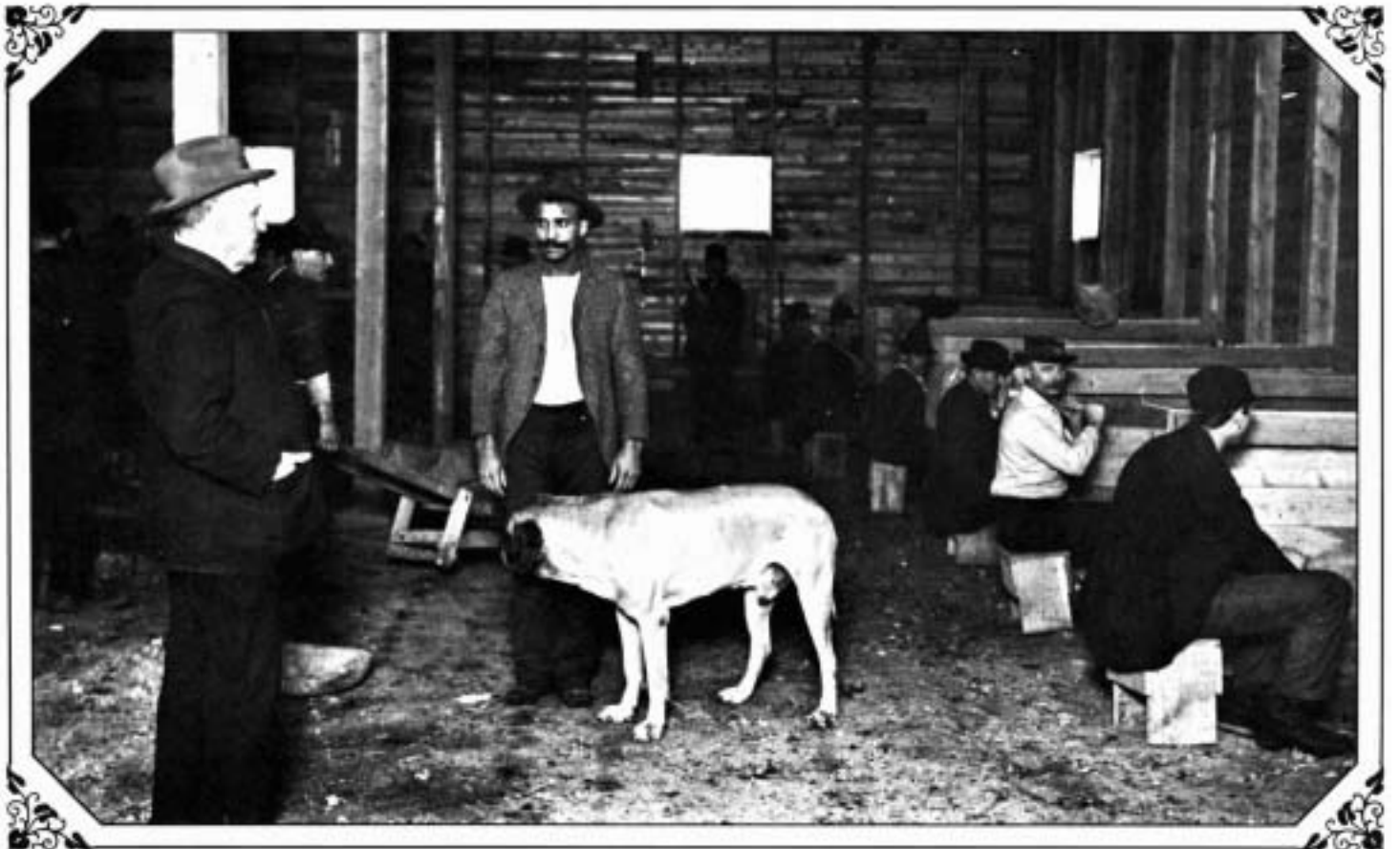
Potsdam Sandstone Company. (Courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University)



Pyrites or High Falls Log Jam. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



St. Lawrence County Jail, ca. 1870. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



Prisoners Crushing Stone, Interior of St. Lawrence County Jail. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



Sen. George Malby House, Corner of Caroline and Washington Streets, Ogdensburg. (Courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University)



Porch of George Malby House, Ogdensburg.



Interior of George Malby House, Ogdensburg.



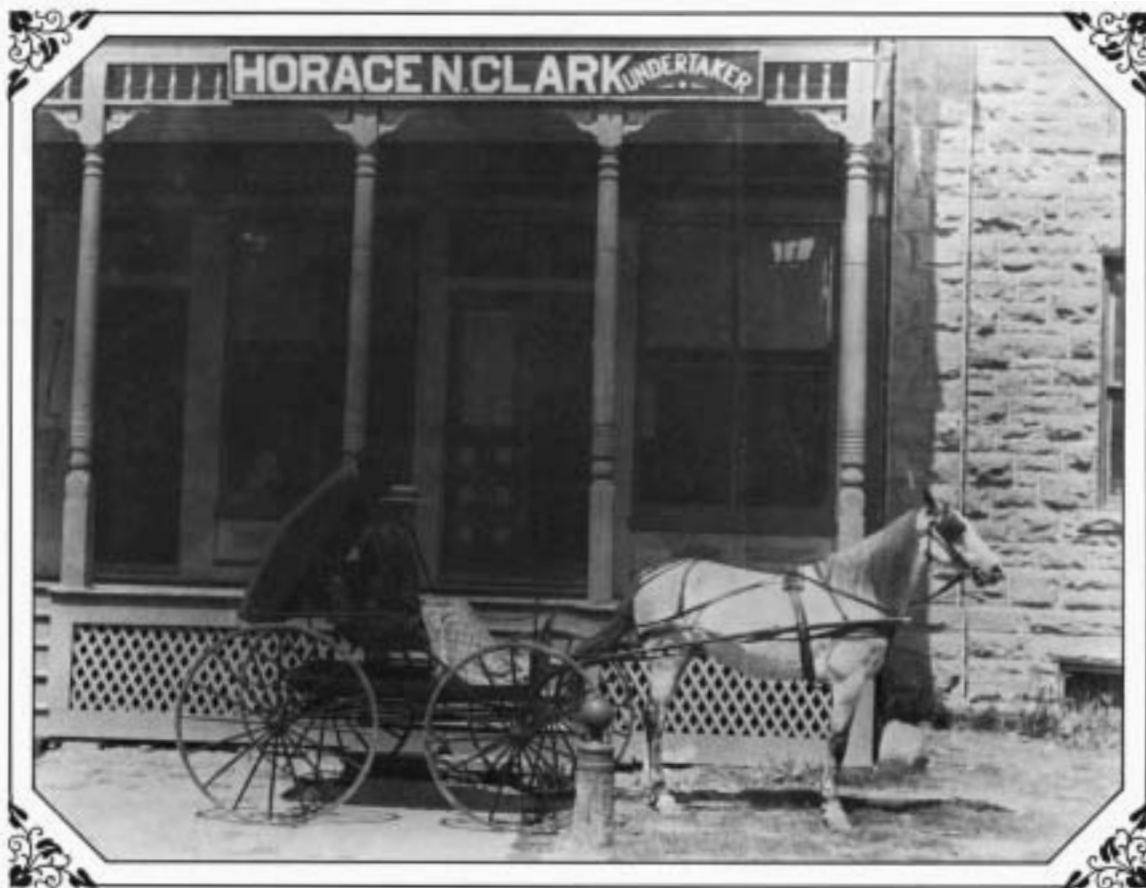
Interior of George Malby House, Ogdensburg.



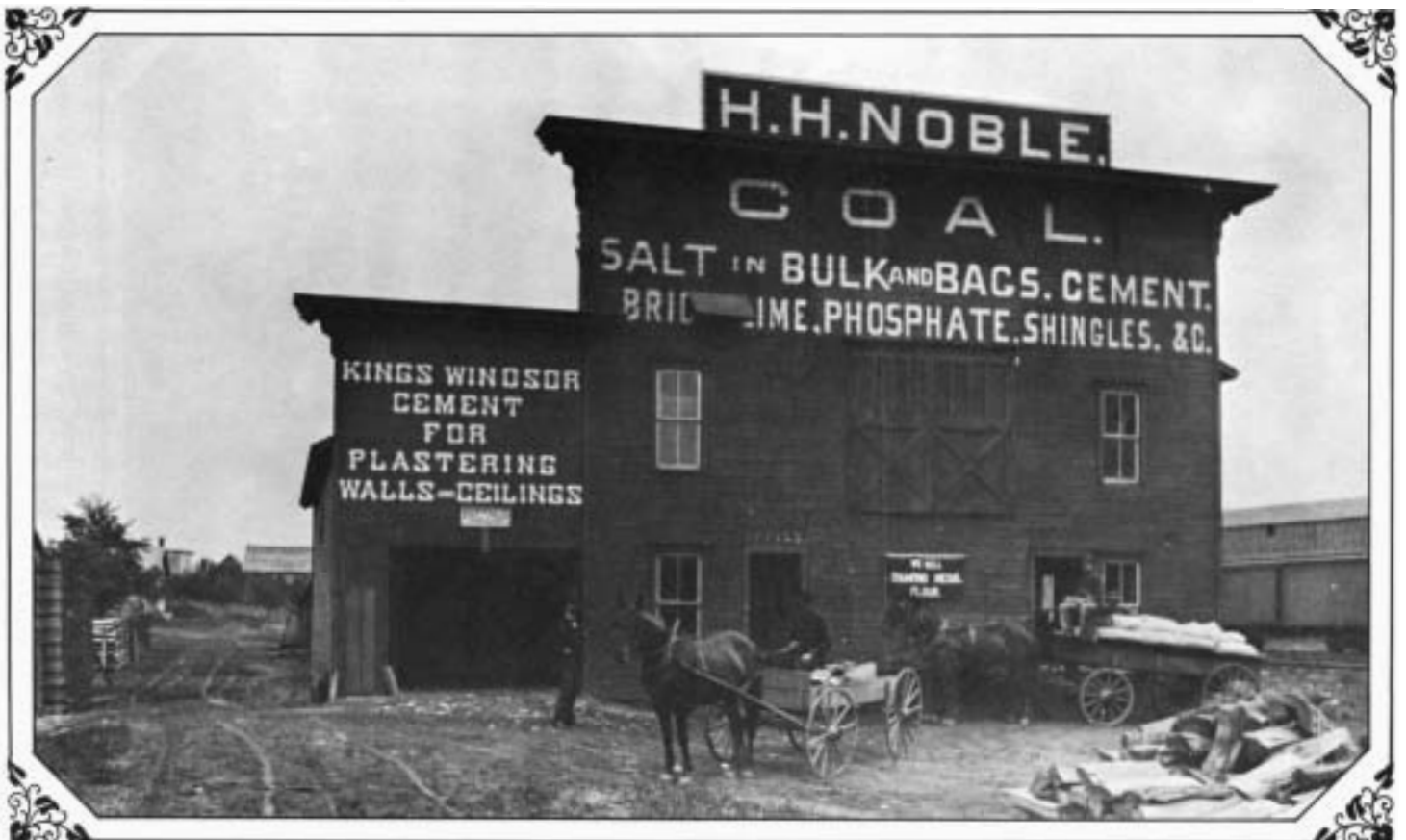
Sideshow at the St. Lawrence County Fair, Canton. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



Winnie Taylor's Boats on the Grass River. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



Exterior, Horace N. Clark Undertaking Parlor, Potsdam.
(Courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University)



H.H. Noble Coal Company, Gouverneur. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



Harvie, Sidney and Lawrence, ca. 1893, Canton. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



The Tea Party, members of the Conkey, Paige and Ogden Feathers families, Canton. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



"Merry-Monic" Minstrel Show, Canton Town Hall, Canton. (Courtesy of SLCHA Collection)



Family with a toboggan, February 1898, probably Ogdensburg. (Courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University, Gift of Thomas Jenison)



The Oswegatchie in Indian River, proceeding toward Rossie. (Photo courtesy of the author and Gouverneur Museum)

Steamboating on Black Lake

by Harold A. Storie

For over seventy years steamboats were a common sight on the waters of Black Lake, carrying cargo and sightseers. The author here tells the complete story of those years, including some personal reminiscences of those sometimes-glorious days.

A good many people of the North Country do not know that steamboats used to run, carrying freight and passengers, from Rossie to Heuvelton, travelling the Indian River, Black Lake and the Oswegatchie. The streams and lakes were the only easy means of transportation before the advent of good roads and the automobile, even after the railroads were established. The Indians in the bark canoes and dugouts, travelled these streams to reach Black Lake and other sections where fish and game were plentiful and they could get the ash from Black Swamp to make baskets. As late as the 1870's, several families of the St. Regis Indians would come up the lake in the Fall by canoes, navigating the Racquette, Grass and Oswegatchie rivers, carrying across at the nearest points. They would set up their camps in Black Swamp and stay all winter to trap and to get out and prepare the ash. The Indian name for Black Lake was O-tsi-kwa-ke, meaning "where the ash-tree grows with large knobs for making clubs".

In the early 1800's, there was a rush of settlers into this section, promoted by the land owners Gouverneur Morris, David Parish, Alexander Macomb and their agents. They were probably influenced by the great amount of timber and the natural water power. The roads were mere Indian trails widened out for teams and wagons. They were long, roundabout and treacherous and at some times of the year impassable. It was only natural for these settlers to take to the numerous rivers and lakes for transportation.

In 1831 transportation was so sorely needed that the Oswegatchie Navigation Company was formed for the purpose of improving, by means of locks, canals and dams, navigation through Black Lake, up the Oswegatchie to the Town of Gouverneur and up the Grass River to the Town of Canton. Later, it was planned to bring the Black River and the Black River Canal into this system. For some reason, possibly for lack of funds or leadership, this plan was never completed although a lock

was built at Heuvelton but never used.

In 1850 the Northern Railroad was finished from Ogdensburg to Lake Champlain and 1857 saw the Potsdam and Watertown line in operation. The Ogdensburg branch to DeKalb was completed in 1862 connecting the two main lines. The Utica and Black River Road to Ogdensburg was opened in 1878. These railroads opened up this section to the outside and no doubt had some effect on the canal plans although they were again proposed in about 1880.

The first steamboat to appear in Northern New York was on the waters of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. This was the Ontario, built by Charles Smyth and associates which made its first trip from Lewistown to Ogdensburg in ten days in 1817. It is interesting to note that it was only thirteen years later, in 1830, that the first boat appeared on Black Lake.

This boat was the Paul Pry, built in Heuvelton by Paul Boynton for some parties in Ogdensburg to run on Black

Lake to Rossie. About 1834, she was taken into the St. Lawrence at great delay and expense, and used as a ferry to Prescott. She was connected with some of the affairs of the Battle of the Windmill in 1838 and became obnoxious to the Canadians.

About 1812, iron was discovered in the Town of Rossie and in 1815, a blast furnace was built at the village of Rossie by David Parish, owner of most of the land in that section. This furnace wasn't too successful and after several years of experimenting and several managers, it finally got under production in 1837. The iron ore was taken from the Caledonia, Sterling and several other mines between Somerville and Spragueville, drawn by teams thirteen miles to the smelter at Rossie. About this same time, lead was discovered near Rossie. About this same time, lead was discovered near Rossie village and a mine opened. By this time, Rossie was quite a busy place, having a blast furnace, lead mine, saw mill, hotel and several stores. Some sort of transportation was needed to carry the pig iron and lead out and merchandise and necessities in. Mr. Parish contracted with two Morris-town men, Henry Hooker and Erastus White, to transport the lead and iron to Oswego.

In 1837, they built the *Rossie* at Pope Mills for the purpose of carrying the lead and iron to Edwardsville, where it was taken overland to Morristown, then shipped by water to Oswego. Some went to Ogdensburg by way of Heuvelton. She was too small a boat to be profitable and, after two or three years, was abandoned. There seems to be no record of what became of this boat. One story is that while being loaded with iron, she rolled over and sank. Another is that she was reconditioned and renamed the *Evening Star*. Another *Evening Star* appears later and was possibly named after this one.

In 1858, the *Indian Chief* was built at Theresa and launched April 24th at Indian Landing. This boat was 70 feet long with an eleven foot beam, Captained by C.F. Ryder, she made runs from Red Lake down the Indian River to the rapids near Rossie. She was bought by two men, Warren and Gray, in 1863 and taken overland around the falls at Rossie to carry passengers and freight between that point and Heuvelton. Later, she was taken to Morristown and in 1865 was licensed in the Customs at Ogdensburg as a ferry to Brockville and worn out in that service.

In 1865, a Capt. Jillson was operating a boat, making regular trips from Heuvelton to Rossie carrying freight and passengers. She was called the *Morning Star*. I haven't been able to



The Evening Star, built at Popes Mills in 1888, at Edwardsville. (Photo courtesy of the author and the Gouverneur Museum)

find any information of how long this boat operated or what became of her.

The next boat was the James S. Bean, brought to Heuvelton in 1876 by some Ogdensburg men. She didn't have a very long career, burning in December of the same year at Wardwells Bay about half way between Heuvelton and the Lake.

In 1888, Fred Coates and Theodore Storie, an uncle of mine, assisted by my father, Arthur Storie, built a boat at Lee bridge near Popes Mills. This boat was called the *Evening Star* and was launched in the Spring of 1889. They operated one or two years and sold it to a man named Prouse. He didn't have much success and abandoned her in Fish Creek after removing the engine. About this same time, a boat called the *Luck*, was operating out of Heuvelton by Fred Lanning. This boat was thought by some to be the *Evening Star*, but records show that the *Luck* was a smaller boat and they were both in service at the same time. It is possible that Mr. Lanning came into possession of the *Evening Star* later.

The last steamer to operate on the lake, and the one that I am most familiar with, as the *Oswegatchie*. She was built by my father in 1905, near the old stone mill at Rossie. She was sixty feet long with a twelve foot beam, built with a flat bottom and a Mississippi wheel. This enabled her to navigate the shallow waters of the lake and rivers. It has been told that when someone asked him if this boat would navigate safely the shallow waters of the river, he said "Yes sir, she will navigate safely on a heavy dew". His experience with the *Evening Star* paid off as

it decided him on this type of boat which proved to be the most successful boat to operate on these waters. All previous boats were side wheelers which made it difficult to land in shallow water. At first he used gasoline motors, one mounted on each side to drive the stern wheel, but they didn't prove reliable. Later, a steam engine and boiler replaced the gasoline power, providing steady and sure service from there on. We ran from Rossie to Heuvelton, carrying freight and passengers, mixing in picnic parties and excursions. Monday was cheese day. Leaving Rossie in the morning, stops were made at all of the factories down the lake.

Loading points were at Rossie, Hutton's Landing for the Brasie Corner's factory, Rollway Bay for the Ruby factory and Popes Mills. From there we went across the lake to Morse's and Edwardsville. This cheese was taken into Heuvelton to be shipped by rail to its destination. Feed and freight of all kinds were taken back. One day a week was excursion day, starting from Heuvelton in the morning, reaching Rossie at noon in time for dinner at the hotel, and return in the afternoon. This was about a sixty mile trip and required all day. It was a very pretty and interesting and can best be described by the following article written by a Syracuse *Herald* reporter, who made this trip with a group of Ogdensburg friends in 1907.

Black Lake Steamer Trip

Much has been written of late of the enjoyment among the Thousand Islands and other favored lake resorts, but seldom is a prettier outing found or

better enjoyed than was taken up Black Lake this week. A party from this city boarded the early morning train for Heuvelton and there went on board the flat bottom steamer Oswegatchie for a run to Rossie. But there were some misgivings as to making the trip without accident or mishap and wondering if the party should return the same day as that on which it started, as the steamer is noted for happenings of all kinds and these latter were finally able to say "I told you so" before the trip was really finished.

The party gathered upon the deck of the steamer, which soon pulled out and off for the lake. It had been declared an ideal day many times and just judged so, when a little bend in the river made the boat turn, a lot of dirty black smoke descended from the smoke stack, covering some of the party, spotting faces and white waists, bringing forth hearty laughs from the more fortunate ones. All tried to feel good natured, asserting that little things like that were of no moment.

On the run down the Oswegatchie River from Heuvelton to Black Lake, the scenery is quite commonplace, the banks being low and the land most tillable to the water's edge. Here and there were cattle standing in shallow places and then again a shaded little inlet where the tall trees threw their reflection and the stream looked black and deep. The rapids were passed in safety. The first stop was at Devoy's Landing, where passengers were taken aboard. From that point to the mouth of the lake, the river broadens and the current grows swift. The second rapids are reached, the engine is stopped and the steamer is allowed to drift, while the passengers watch the jagged, cruel looking rocks that lift their sharp points almost to the surface of the

water. There is a moment in which all seem to hold their breath, then the engine commences to throb and you feel that another danger has been met and safely passed.

As the boat left the shelter of the Delaney woods and swung her nose around into Black Lake, someone remarked that the wind was rising.

Just below the old pile bridge, the famous flat Peat Dredge was at anchor and another little steamer tied alongside. We kept on our way, passing between broken and decaying piles, which extend across the lake, all that remains of the bridge that but a few years ago connected the Town of Oswegatchie with the Town of Depeyster. On the right to the entrance of the lake, the land is gradually sloping and is a rich farming and grazing country. On the left are heavily timbered lands, low and marshy in most parts. On the shores are the cranberry marshes and the peat lands, where such wonderful results are expected and fortunes are to be made or sunk.

A stop was made at the Lord cottage for passengers, and by this time the wind, which had been steadily increasing, was blowing a gale. The steamer headed directly into it and made slow progress. Some of the party began to get timid and anxious. Some of the canvas awning began to split and go to pieces and, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, it was whipped into ribbons and torn from its fastenings by the gale. Great waves now met us and dashed over the lower part of the steamer which did not seem to mind it much, but kept plowing away.

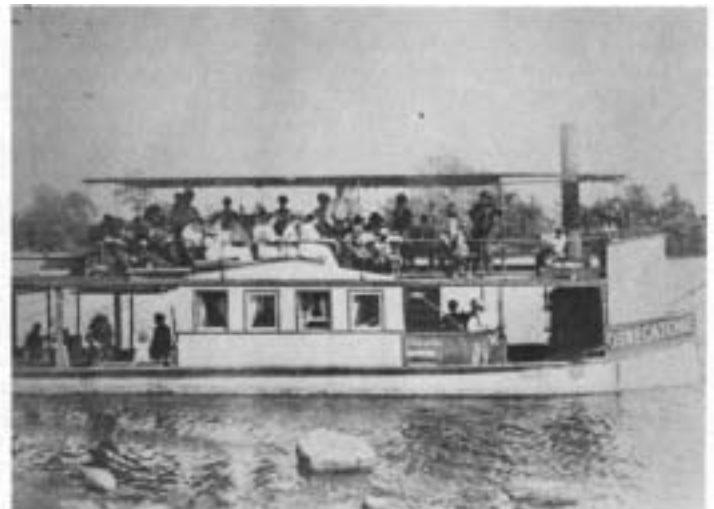
At Edwardsville, the smoke stack had to be lowered to pass under the new iron bridge. Not an object was to be seen stirring except a peddler's cart, so a stop was not made, the party con-

cluding that business must be dead at that little town. Soon the steamer reached Broad Lake, which is four miles at its widest point, and the scenery there is romantic and picturesque, banks of rocks rising straight out of the water to a great height, trees capped with dense shade. There are many beautiful islands, some of them dotted with tents and cottages. The last stop was at Rollway to let off some passengers, and the boat left the bay around a great point of rocks and out onto the bosom of the lake again. After a long run against the wind and waves, the boat glided into the mouth of Indian River, and a great calm fell upon the party as they were completely sheltered from the wind. Large overhanging rocks and trees which could almost be touched from either side of the boat, the river being so narrow, met the delighted eyes, and the blowing of the whistle announcing the arrival of the sleepy little hamlet of Rossie came almost too soon. Telegrams had been sent ahead for dinner for the party, and a stampede was made for the hungry ones for the waiting meal.

Just as the steamer was swinging out from the dock for the return trip, one of the Ogdensburg ladies found that she had forgotten her umbrella at the hotel. The boat had to wait until the missing umbrella was found and restored to its owner. It was long after schedule time for starting and the other Ogdensburg party was getting anxious about reaching Heuvelton in time to catch the train for home. At last after an hour's delay, the steamer started, the return trip being by a different channel and affording a view of the Black Lake Club House and other interesting places on the lake. The run down was being made in good time and at just 8 o'clock, the boat swang from



The Oswegatchie being built at Rossie in 1905.
(Photo courtesy of the author and Gouverneur Museum)



The Oswegatchie on an excursion at the Eel Weir.
(Photo courtesy of the author and the Gouverneur Museum)

the lake into the Oswegatchie which meant twenty minutes to reach Heuvelton in time for the last train. A stop was made at Devoy's Landing, the boat gliding gracefully up to the shore. There was a snapping sound heard at the stern, and when the steamer attempted to start, the tiller was found to be useless. Now there was something doing among the passengers at once, and anxious speculation as what was to be done.

Captain Storie made an inspection and reported, "We will have to remain where we are until morning gives us light enough to repair the damage". Then the passengers decided to try their luck on shore for the remainder of the trip. All were safely landed and William McMillan secured to take the crowd to Heuvelton. Farm wagons were prepared with hayracks upon which straw was thickly scattered and onto which the party joyfully climbed. One of the ladies sat by the driver of the first team and carried a lantern which went out immediately after starting, leaving the party in darkness. It was nearly ten o'clock when Heuvelton was finally reached and livery rigs hired for the drive back to Ogdensburg. The steamer did not reach Heuvelton until the next day. Those attending will not soon forget their railroad, steamboat and straw ride, all on the same excursion trip.

I have been told by one who was on this trip that two of the ladies were a daughter of General Curtis, and her friend from New York.

We were on the move most of the time and encountered many experiences such as the above.

The end came to the Oswegatchie on Aug. 13, 1908. The only ones on board at this time were Mother, Dad, Bismarck Turner, who was engineer, and me. We had a heavy load of coal and feed going to Popes Mills. While running around the foot of Bigge Island in a heavy sea, she shipped enough water to become unmanageable, rolled over and sank. Dr. Glen Coe from Watertown, fishing near Wood's Island, took us off and landed us on the shore near Lower Deep Bay and we walked through the woods to Popes Mills. The boat was later raised and taken to Marsh's Bay, now Seakers, where she eventually went to pieces in a few years. The boiler was removed later and used to heat Storie Brother's store in Gouverneur.

In 1905 and '06, a peat dredge was built in Heuvelton by Isadore Padraza, a Spaniard, who had raised the money in England, France and New York City. According to the reports at that time, this venture cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000. The living quarters were as modern as a first class hotel. There



The Rollway Hotel at Rollway Bay. It burned in 1908. (Photo courtesy of author and Gouverneur Museum)

were two large brass balls, two feet in diameter, mounted on the top. A large bronze plate, weighing several hundred pounds on the stern, told the onlooker that this craft was the Heuvelton.

There were some tall tales about what they could get from the peat. One was that alcohol could be distilled from it and the rest pressed into brickettes for fuel. Another story was that the peat was to be reduced to powder which would produce a fuel gas, much cheaper and more effective than any fuel now in use. Large steel mills were to be built on the bank of the St. Lawrence above Ogdensburg. The scheme also took in the making of the Oswegatchie River navigable from Black Lake to the St. Lawrence. Even the Ogdensburg Board of Trade was taken in by the Colonel. Following is an article from the Gouverneur *Northern Tribune* of July 18th, 1906.

The Ogdensburg Board of Trade has secured the deed for 100 acres of land on the shores of the St. Lawrence River above the city, being the Wilbur farm, through which the main line of the New York Central runs. It is the property selected by Isadore Padraza and his associates as the site for the smelting works to be erected.

Option has been taken on hundreds of adjoining acres of peat land along Black Lake. It is expected that within two weeks, the peat plant will be in operation. The New York Central will lay a spur, running from the main tracks of the Rome Division over to the Eel Weir at Black Lake so that the peat can be loaded into cars and

carried in the form of dry powder or as bricks directly to the smelter.

There is no way of telling how many fell for these tales, but no doubt, a good many of the local people as well as foreign, were taken in.

In the spring of 1907, the Heuvelton was taken down the river. This proved to be quite a task as the rapids had to be blasted to make a deeper channel. After a big celebration and a lot of work, she finally reached the lake. A little peat was dredged and a few brickettes made but it didn't prove to be practical and one night in September 1908, she burned to the waters edge thus ending the peat industry on Black Lake.

Another boat appeared on the river at Heuvelton in 1907, smaller than the Oswegatchie and used mostly for pleasure. She was built by William Backus and used gasoline engines for power. They weren't too successful at this time and were finally taken back by the manufacturer, and the boat taken to Star Lake. Today, many motorboats and otboards ply these waters but the era of the steamboat is long over.

About the Author

Harold Storie has always been interested in Gouverneur and Black Lake history and in the fascinating era of steamboats in America. This article was first written almost thirty years ago. Mr. Storie has contributed to *The Quarterly* frequently over the years.

Virtually Impossible to Stop: Smuggling in the North Country—1808-1815

by Harvey Strum

Even in its earliest days the North Country, being along an international boundary, was setting for considerable trade and traffic. The author here presents documentary evidence that that trade was not always legal. Smuggling of contraband was big business and often found citizens and law enforcers at considerable odds. This article also appears in the current issue of NAHO. (The original text of this paper, with extensive footnotes and bibliography, is available from the author or the editor).

In response to the British attack upon the American warship, *Chesapeake*, and British violation of American neutral rights, Congress imposed an embargo on trade in December 1807. The embargo severely damaged the economy of northern New York. In 1807 settlers lived in a scattering of small communities in the lowlands around the Adirondacks. Along Lake Champlain settlers lived close to the lake shore with few living more than thirty miles inland. On the west, settlements lay clustered along the St. Lawrence and nearby lowlands. Ogdensburg, for example, was a flourishing community of fifteen houses, two of them of stone, and it boasted a courthouse, a jail, several mills and asheries.

With few roads and poor transportation facilities to connect them with the rest of the state, frontier settlers depended heavily upon trading with Montreal by way of Lake Champlain or the St. Lawrence. The settlers used the products of the forest to pay for clearing and purchasing their farmlands. Settlers burned trees, preferably ash or elm, to ashes. After leaching the ashes, they boiled down the lye to form black salts or potash. In this form settlers sold the ashes to asheries which burned the ashes at high temperature to remove the carbon, leaving pearl ash. Ogdensburg emerged as the major center for the production of pearl ash in northern New York.

Settlers also cut down the trees for lumber, and the lumber along with the potash and pearl ash was taken by boat or raft to Canada. The British imported the potash and pearl ash for use in the manufacture of cloth, glass, soap and explosives. The sale of lumber, potash and pearl ash provided farmers with their major source of cash. Consequently, the embargo cut off the settlers from their major market.

With the imposition of the embargo the price of potash in Montreal jumped from \$100-120/ton to \$300-350/ton. Also, while the prices for farm produce dropped in New York City they rose in Montreal. During the winter of 1807-1808 settlers began taking sleighs loaded with potash and pearl ash across the border into Canada. As the ice melted on Lake Champlain and on

the St. Lawrence, settlers built rafts carrying goods worth between \$5,000-30,000. Manned by twenty to fifty and sometimes a hundred armed men for protection, the rafts on Lake Champlain waited for the south wind to carry them into Canada as they evaded customs officers near Rouses Point and Windmill Point. On the St. Lawrence, the Thousand Islands provided cover for the smuggling and smugglers built a road from Brownville to the mouth of French Creek on the St. Lawrence.

Incensed by the widespread violation of the embargo, President Thomas Jefferson denounced the violators of the law, and on April 19, 1808, proclaimed the Lake Champlain region in a state of insurrection against the federal government. Jefferson authorized the use of federal troops and requested Governor Daniel Tompkins to call out the militia to help enforce the law. Agreeing with the President, Governor Tompkins declared, "on the shores and waters of Lake Champlain there exists a combination of individuals who have repeatedly indulged themselves in armed and forcible resistance" to the embargo. To halt the smuggling, Tompkins ordered out the militia from Clinton and Essex counties. Militia and regular army troops were sent to South Bay, Champlain, Plattsburgh and Ogdensburg to help customs officers enforce the law.

Customs officers and the militia did manage to intercept some of the smugglers. In May, government forces seized the *Essex* at Champlain along with its cargo of 157 barrels of potash and 92 barrels of pork. After a gunbattle on May 29th, government forces captured a bateau manned by residents of Plattsburgh trying to take twenty-five barrels of potash to Canada. In August, Melancton Woolsey, Collector of Customs for the Champlain District, seized the sloop *Dolphin* off Plattsburgh. Smugglers killed two soldiers and a civilian in a gunbattle near Burlington, when government forces captured the *Black Snake*, a former Essex to Charlotte ferry, and one of the most notorious smuggling vessels on Lake Champlain. Between May and October 1808, Woolsey and Jabez Penniman, Collector at Colchester, Vermont, captured twelve

vessels.

However, neither the President's proclamation nor the enforcement activities of the militia, the army and the customs collectors stopped the illicit trade. Stephen Thorn, a militia officer and resident of Whitehall, at the southern end of the lake, complained to the President that in spite of the proclamation large numbers of rafts loaded with provisions and potash continued to pass from Whitehall up the lake to Canada. Smugglers bribed customs officers to look the other way. Contemporary accounts and later historians have noted the extensive smuggling activities in Clinton, Franklin, Essex, Warren, Saratoga, Washington, St. Lawrence and Jefferson counties.

Whitehall emerged as the southern terminus of the Lake Champlain smuggling route. A British traveler, Edward Kendall, noted the widespread smuggling activities on the southern shore of the lake. One smuggler he met, a general in the militia, resorted to smuggling to pay off his debts. Some of the residents along the lake resorted to smuggling because of contracts they had with Quebec merchants prior to the imposition of the embargo. Others had prepared timber for sale and needed the cash the timber would fetch in Montreal.

In Clinton and Essex counties, potash provided the chief commodity for smuggling. Essex emerged with a notorious reputation for the manufacture and smuggling of potash. Virtually the whole population engaged in it. At the northern end of the lake the smugglers rendezvoused at the taverns at Rouses Point. The smugglers would wait until dark and a favorable south wind. In June 1808, Kendall saw two rafts, containing masts and lumber, waiting off the customs house near Rouses Point. Smugglers had built breastworks made of logs and were armed in case they had to fight the customs officers, the militia or the army. Another British traveler, John Lambert, observed the bravado of the smugglers. He saw a huge raft of lumber waiting off the customs house at Cumberland Head, near Plattsburgh.

To encourage interference with their trade, smugglers threatened to kill

Woolsey and his deputies: Ezra Thurber (Rouses Point), Samuel Buell (Windmill Point, Vt.) and Judge Hicks (Champlain). The smugglers left coffins at the homes of the customs officers, and on one occasion a gang of armed men, disguised as women, waylaid Judge Hicks and threatened to murder him. Samuel Buell endured the humiliation of baptism in the Richelieu River.

Besides using bribery and threats, smugglers also tried to outwit the customs officers, and if necessary outfight government authorities. In May 1808, Woolsey ordered two sloops from Whitehall seized near the New York-Canadian border, but before Woolsey could station a guard, the crew on one of the sloops slipped the cable, and the sloop escaped into Canada. On June 25, 1808, smugglers stole the revenue cutter at Champlain. Woolsey and an officer tried unsuccessfully to stop them. In exchange for returning a boat and its cargo of pork and potash Woolsey had previously captured, the smugglers agreed to return the cutter. Three months later, smugglers managed to steal seventy barrels of potash Woolsey had stored at Plattsburgh, and Woolsey never did catch the men involved.

During the summer of 1808, the Vermont militia captured a huge raft of timber near Windmill Point, and Judge Hicks and his men joined the Vermont militia to protect the prize. However, the next night fifty smugglers recaptured the raft. As they made their escape the militia and Hicks' men opened fire. For two hours a battle ensued during which the government authorities and the smugglers fired over 1,000 shots at each other. The fire from the raft drove the militia into some potash-kettles and forced Judge Hicks to flee to the New York shore to escape capture by the smugglers. What could have been a tragedy turned into a farce as the smugglers evaded the militia and got across the line. In the wake of the battle, rumors circulated that Judge Hicks had fled across the lake in a potash-kettle.

While the rumor of Judge Hicks fleeing in a potash-kettle was ludicrous and untrue, another incident involving a customs office proved just as ludicrous and actually did happen. John Lambert reported that when his sloop stopped at Cumberland Head for inspection a customs officer, probably Woolsey, emerged from the tavern. The intoxicated customs officer got into a half submerged canoe and paddled it out to the sloop. When the canoe arrived alongside, the captain of the sloop made the mistake of trying to get into the canoe, dumping both the captain and the customs officer into Lake Champlain. Stories of Woolsey's incompetence and possible corruption led

President Jefferson to remove Woolsey just before the embargo ended. Peter Saily succeeded Woolsey, but even before he took office he learned how difficult it was to enforce the law. As a judge in Clinton County he observed the reluctance of local juries to convict defendants charged with smuggling.

Embargo violations were not limited to the Lake Champlain region. Along the inland towns of northern Clinton and Franklin counties smugglers built temporary shacks in which they stored goods to be smuggled across the line. Under the cover of darkness they evaded the customs officers and the troops sent to enforce the law. During the winter of 1808-1809 the firm ice on the St. Lawrence made it easy for smugglers to slip across the river with sleigh loads of illegal goods. Hart Massey, the Collector of Customs responsible for the region between St. Regis and Sacketts Harbor, found it virtually impossible to stop the smuggling.

Smugglers threatened Massey's life and the lives of his deputies. In a letter to Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, Massey admitted, "if I have not armed men with me the inhabitants will assemble in the night and take the property from me." At Oswegatchie, smugglers formed a combination to prevent the stationing of additional troops in the area and threatened to take a cowhide to any customs officer who dared appear in the town. Smugglers overpowered his deputies and forcibly liberated captured goods. Many of the residents of St. Lawrence and Jefferson counties refused to cooperate with the customs officers, and refused to sell food to troops sent to enforce the law. When the embargo finally ended in March 1809, and the troops left Ogdensburg, the residents celebrated by beating tin drums and shouting insults at the soldiers as they left town.

With the removal of the embargo, settlement picked up in St. Lawrence County as settlers moved into Hopkinton, Stockholm, Russell, Potsdam and DeKalb, but especially into the towns along the St. Lawrence with access to Montreal. The respite from the embargo proved short-lived as the hoped-for accommodation with the British failed to materialize. Once again, the United States resorted to economic coercion to pressure the British into respecting American rights at sea.

Once again, residents of northern New York began to violate the law. At Lowville, for example, customs officers seized a drove of smuggled oxen in November 1811. In late 1811, Peter Saily captured the sloop *Rising Sun*, with a load of contraband goods. As a result of a tip, Saily confiscated a load

of goods in the store of Roswell Watt of Plattsburgh. Reflecting the deep hostility of local residents the Plattsburgh *Republican* denounced the person who tipped off Saily for sacrificing, "in this shameful manner, his own honor," for a few dollars. Along the St. Lawrence smugglers threatened to kill anyone who assisted the customs officers.

The danger customs officers faced became quite apparent to Saily. On the night of January 29, 1812, five men armed with pistols, guns, axes and clubs broke into his home with the intention of recapturing goods Saily had confiscated. When the smugglers opened the door of Saily's bedroom he quickly grabbed a pistol and fired it, wounding Joseph Colberth of Plattsburgh. Taking their wounded friend, the smugglers fled, leaving one of their sleighs and enough evidence to identify the smugglers as residents of Plattsburgh. Colberth escaped to Champlain and then across the border to Canada.

Then, in June, Congress declared war against Great Britain. Even the declaration of war did not end the smuggling in the North Country. Alexander Richards, Collector of Customs at Oswegatchie, complained that smuggling was so widespread and so well organized in St. Lawrence County that the customs officers could not stop it. Unless the government did something quickly to stop the trade, Richards feared, virtually the whole population of the county would engage in it.

Trade between St. Lawrence County and Canada became so extensive the Postmaster General ordered no mail deliveries beyond DeKalb. British officers regularly visited Ogdensburg without fear of molestation and dined at the home of David Parish, one of the largest landowners in St. Lawrence County. In a two day period, July 21-22, 1813, farmers drove over three hundred oxen from Ogdensburg to Prescott. Agents of David Parish regularly shipped flour to the British. General Izard reported that, "the road to St. Regis is covered with droves of cattle, and the river with rafts." On Lake Champlain, smugglers on both sides of the lake used rafts to ship potash and even spars and naval supplies to the British and brought in British manufactured goods. John Banker, Jr., masquerading as a privateer, used his lightly armed sailboat, *The Lark*, to smuggle goods into the United States. He arranged with his Canadian associates to conveniently capture barges filled with British goods which he could then resell legally. These activities incensed Saily, but he could not do anything to legally stop Banker's smuggling.

Efforts by customs officers to stop the trade met with resistance. In one

incident, a donneybrook developed when customs officers attempted to seize a load of goods brought down the lake to Whitehall. The government forces retreated from the battle with "many a broken head and bruised limb." To hinder the smuggling activities Richards asked Colonel Zebulon Pike to despatch regular army troops to Antwerp, at the junction of the main roads leading into St. Lawrence County, and to Oswegatchie.

Smugglers got around the troops at Antwerp by arranging to get the captain intoxicated and, leading a caravan of drunken revelers, the smugglers got past the sentry with five sleigh loads of illegal tea. The captain never knew what happened. Troops sent by Pike, under the command of Lieutenant Lorin Austin, to stop the smuggling at Oswegatchie proved more dilligent. On the night of April 2, 1813, Austin and forty-eight soldiers surrounded the village of Americus in the town of

Massena. After arresting thirteen men, two of whom they dragged from their beds, the troops took the alleged smugglers to Hamilton. Austin released five and marched the remaining eight to Sacketts Harbor. When the alleged smugglers managed to get released, they filed charges against Austin. The Court of Common Pleas for St. Lawrence County ordered Austin arrested and brought to Ogdensburg where a bail was set of \$90,000. The arrest of Austin for enforcing the law against trading with the British reflected the deep hostility in St. Lawrence County to any efforts to stop the trade with Canada.

The efforts of Richards, Austin, Saily and other customs officers and soldiers to stop the trade with Canada proved futile. In 1814, Elisha Jenkins, New York's Secretary of State between 1811-1813, complained that from Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence and up iver to Ogdensburg, New Yorkers were

smuggling cattle, hogs, flour, candle soap, butter, cheese and leather to Canada. According to Sir George Prevost, British Governor-General in Canada, residents of New York and Vermont provided two-thirds of the beef consumed by British troops in Canada. In frustration, Jenkins suggested the confiscation of all cattle, hogs and farm produce within twenty miles of the border from Vermont to Ogdensburg as the only means to stop the smuggling. From 1808 to 1815 many of the settlers of northern New York refused to obey laws against trading with the British. The declaration of war did not end the illegal trade nor did the enforcement efforts of government authorities.

About the Author

Harvey Strum is currently a graduate student at Syracuse University.

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get in and out of the Seymour House. This closes my career of the "school master", but I have this consolation and I absolutely enjoy it, that I was among the first, if not the first, who threw to the four winds of the world the mechanical exercise of what was called learning in our country schools. I surely must not neglect to enroll Miss Eliza Craig, my neighbor, as one of those early pioneers in this noble work of leading the child and adult to think it out. She, with a few others, never received the everlasting credit which they deserved in being the means of laying the true foundation for a successful person, always good in every department of life, the enduring foundation of all we are. I wish I could do justice to this. Why doesn't somebody who can, do it?

Along some time during my teaching I bought a second hand set of Kent's Commentaries on Law and found many interesting things to read, and I was saying to myself and others that I believed them a good thing for any one to read. The style I thought was nice and easy to understand. I knew that Blackstone's work was on the same line foundation of law, so I borrowed Blackstone, but I found that much heavier and did not follow it very long. When I was teaching in Ogdensburg, Arnold Smith organized what he called the young lawyer's class and we met twice a week at the home of Judge Fine who then lived in and owned the noble stone

house occupied now by Dr. Benton. There we met around the large table in the Judge's dining room; I think there were eight of us sometimes. The judge was very cordial with us, donating his services, and gave us a work written by himself on Jurisprudence; of course, we paid for it.

And with me, now what? The schools were all closed, I was not going to teach any more—of course, I was going home where there was lots of work and lots to eat and wear. I had \$1,115.50 saved and most of it on interest, all from teaching, and a much better scholar than when I began, but not just decided what I was going to do. I think I was willing to work. Anyway that Fall I went into the law office of Morris & Vary and boarded at a hotel, since destroyed by fire, which stood on the corner opposite Mr. Marceau's blacksmith shop and now occupied by barns owned by the Hall Coal Company teams. I did some work in the office, read all I could and that which I was advised by those men who were very good to me. But as time went on and the weather became warmer, I began to get uneasy and began to fail in flesh, little bits of puny arms. I left for home not entirely resolved to remain there, but before the weather grew cold and before the snow flew, I was about settled to the soil, of which I knew but little for many years after, and then but little.

To be continued in October 1982

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The book will be available for distribution in time for Christmas giving. The retail price at publication will be \$40.00. A special SLCHA prepublication price of \$35.00 has been until August 15, 1982. Afterwards the membership price will be \$37.50. 7% N.Y.S. Sales Tax applies for all orders delivered to individuals within New York State.

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