



**THE
QUARTERLY**

Official Publication of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association

January 1984

**The Goldfields of
NEVADA**

A Drama in Three Acts

PRESENTED BY

The Brasher Stock Co.

MUSIC

ROLFE'S FULL ORCHESTRA.

Dance after the Play.

Baldwin's Print, Brasher Falls, N. Y.

THE QUARTERLY

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Editor: Varick A. Chittenden

Cover: The theater broadside was as important to theater managers and the theater-going public as radio, television and newspapers are today for the purpose of publicity. The information put on the broadside varied, depending on the event being advertised and the creativity of the promoter, but generally no amount of writing was too much. The effect was that the broadside "spoke" to the reader, as in the large bold play title *The Goldfields of Nevada*, which not only attracts the eye but seems to announce. One can almost hear and easily imagine the "barker" calling to passers-by. (*Courtesy of Town of Stockholm Historian*)

The Enduring Tradition: Notes on St. Lawrence County Farmsteads

by Robert H. McGowan and David Zdunczyk

For a county where locals jokingly used to describe the population as "more cows than people," one might add that at one time there were more farmsteads than any other architectural forms. The authors here present an interesting and helpful report of their findings in a survey of vernacular farm architecture in the County, subsidized by the New York State Council on the Arts. What we have taken for granted - the houses, barns, silos, granaries, corn cribs, etc. - take on new meaning as we begin to think about and look at all the examples around us. Sketches used to illustrate are selected from Everts History of St. Lawrence County, 1878; photographs were taken in 1983 by David Zdunczyk.



On the Tallman farm English side opening barns were arranged around a courtyard or barnyard. Note that the scale of farming in the 19th century made the use of several small barns more effective than resort to one or two very large barns. Note also the absence of silos from all the Evert engravings in 1878.

Unlike the way most of us live today, farmers live in the midst of their work. The words farm and farmstead have never meant just a house or barn - they have meant house and barns together. On the farm daily life and daily work are the same. Both center around the production of food. In one sense farm buildings are food factories - places where grain becomes milk and beef. The larger a farmer's barns the more successful a producer he or she is (or appears to be). Yet if farm buildings have an economic and symbolic importance, many of them are also valuable in their own right as works of craft. Farm buildings are the most common artifacts that St. Lawrence County's early residents left behind.

Because farm buildings do have artistic significance, the New York State Council on the Arts has provided funds to the St. Lawrence County Historical Association for a county-wide farmstead survey. The survey has three goals. The first is to produce an historical record of rural architecture in the county so that future generations will not lose sight of county traditions. Already over seven hundred slides of farm buildings have been taken, and are stored in an archive at the Silas Wright House and Museum. The Historical Association invites contributions of slides or photographs of farmbuildings to this archive. The second and third parts of the farmstead project grow out of the first. The society has

developed a slide-tape program to briefly explain the architectural and cultural value of county farmsteads to visitors to the Museum, school classes and other groups. The third step of the project is this article - an attempt to put county farm architecture in historical perspective.

In a county the size of St. Lawrence (2,842 square miles) an in-depth and very detailed study of farmstead architecture would have been a massive undertaking. We chose to begin with a broad survey of farm buildings past and present, in hopes that others will continue our efforts and give these buildings a closer look. We traveled down side roads that appeared on an 1870s map of the county, hoping that on old highways we would find old farms as well as new ones. Throughout the county we recorded abandoned farms and farms boasting new metal pole barns. Included in this study are farms on the outskirts of Ogdensburg and Canton and farms isolated in the countryside.

Through conversations with members of the Historical Association and with Don Huddleston, formerly of the Co-

operative Extension office, we learned of several farms with a particularly rich assortment of buildings. These were termed "control farms," and we spent more time photographing these farms, talking to their owners, and measuring buildings than we did at other farms. Control farms are important because together they illustrate the continuities as well as the changes in local agricultural construction.

Many of St. Lawrence County's farmsteads began between 1812 and 1850, when immigration into the county seems to have been heaviest. During those years people from New England, Canada, the British Isles and even other areas of New York came here to find better land and new opportunities. By 1894, when Curtis composed his *St. Lawrence County, New York* still only 54 percent of the 994 biographies in that book were county born. Surprisingly, 147 of the 994 came from other counties in New York, while 108 had been born in New England, usually in Vermont. Ninety-three of the biographies were from Canada. A sample of 125 farmers selected from Curtis's biographies owned an average of 251 acres



Note the diamond window in the central barn's gable end, and the cupola vents on both barns. Contrast this with the absolute plainness of the barns in the slightly more traditional Crouch homestead.



Here house and barns seem very close together, although not connected, as they might have been in Massachusetts or New Hampshire. The house and one of the barns have similar lean-tos on the rear.

of land each. Another sampling of 55 farmers reveals that they kept an average of 23 cows. In light of those figures it was not illogical for Curtis to refer to the 300 acre farm of James Baum as "vast", but there were farms even larger than that. Anson Hall, a St. Lawrence County native, had 225 acres in 1846 and 450 acres and 25 cows in the 1890s. Nelson Rutherford, born in St. Lawrence in 1827, owned 360 acres and 35 cows, a farm which Curtis calls one of the largest in Waddington.

Of course the value and productivity of a farm does not depend only on the size of the farm acreage. Harvey West, who was born in Michigan in 1834 and came to St. Lawrence in 1857 bought 160 acres of land in 1860. By the 1890s he had 23 Durham and Holstein cows on his farm. While dairy cattle were and are the mainstay of St. Lawrence County agriculture, early farms were remarkable for the diversity of livestock they supported. Peter Allen, son of William who came from Scotland in 1818, bred Jersey cattle, Oxfordshire sheep, Cheshire hogs, Clydesdale horses, while Plymouth rock and White Leghorn hens, and was a butter maker as well.

The many small barns on early North Country farms illustrate the different jobs a farmer had to do to keep his farm running. There were barns for horses and cows, machinery and grain, corn, chickens and pigs. The work represented by the cowbarn and the granary were essential to the farm's - and the farmer's - survival. Today the long metal cowbarns and Harvestore silos that dominate the rural landscape are even more central to the farmer's life than were their wooden counterparts of the last century. While the difference in scale between past and present working farms is clear, the buildings and layouts we see

today are variants of earlier forms. To understand the way farms look now we must understand how they have looked in the past.

Typically farms break down into two clusters - one centering on the house and the other around the cowbarn. Sometimes the clusters are sharply distinct, as when the farmhouse is on one side of a road and the barns belonging to it are on the other. Such "Split" farms are a significant minority locally: most farms are arranged along one side of the highway. While the farmhouse may boast Greek Revival or Victorian trim, it may also have a series of unpretentious minor buildings attached to it. Tacked on to the house may be a woodshed, outhouse, carriage house, even a horse barn. A typical house complex includes the woodshed with a connected outhouse attached to the far end. In St. Lawrence County, however, the house and the main barns are almost never joined. Connected farms are a feature of New England architecture which did not survive immigration

westward. In the cold climate of Northern New York why didn't farmers latch onto the New England custom with which many of them were familiar and build connected farms? The answer is really one of the mysteries of American cultural geography.

Located functionally, if not always physically, between the house and barns was the smokehouse. Few farms actually had such structures, because salt pork rather than smoked pork was a staple meat in the county. When smokehouses did exist they served a transitional purpose on the farm, taking raw agricultural product and turning it into food useful for the farmer and his family. The large scale processing of farm products took place off the farmstead - at the butter factory, grist mill and stockyards.

Just as the farmhouse had its dependencies so the cowbarn was surrounded by other buildings large and small. The granary and corncrib were "feeder" barns, storing the fodder which the cows gave back as milk. The milkhouse,



A split farmstead with a very well developed classic cottage, complete with eyebrow windows, was the farm of W.H. Wright of Buck's Bridge.

where milk was stored before going to the butter factory, was very close - and in later years attached - to the cow barn.

While the buildings on a farmstead were built to serve each other efficiently, county farms do not conform to rigid patterns. The initial impression of most farmsteads is that they were laid out at random. The number of different structures on a farmstead, their roofs jutting out at all different levels, give complexity and interest to buildings not ordinarily thought of as artistic. We shall now look more closely at the chief components of the farmstead: the house, main barns, and outbuildings.

Farmhouses

The name farmhouse is almost a misnomer. It indicates that houses on farms were somehow different from houses in town. Yet it is characteristic of St. Lawrence County and of the Northeast in general that houses which happen to be located on farms would fit right in with their surroundings if suddenly transported to a village street. Greek Revival trim, Federal mouldings, and Victorian scrollwork were not limited to the towns. Even as the nineteenth century drew to a close and houses became more elaborate than ever before carpenters and builders continued to treat farmhouses and village houses much the same.

It is always tempting to assume that the first generation of settlers in any American region lived in log cabins. While some immigrants to St. Lawrence County did build log houses, most of them seem to have replaced log with frame construction as soon as possible.



The Ira French tavern and homstead, Town of Potsdam, is a good example of an early New England Georgian structure.

One indication of the rarity of log construction is Curtis's pains to note, in his *History*, that Fisher Ames and Washington Adams, two settlers of the 1820s, built log houses. There were many other settlers who came earlier or at the same time, but there is no indication they all built with logs. As the number of sawmills in the county increased it is likely that settlers coming about 1850 were able to build frame houses immediately. The number of early frame barns in the county suggests that if settlers could use sawn boards to shelter their animals, they could use them to shelter themselves as well.

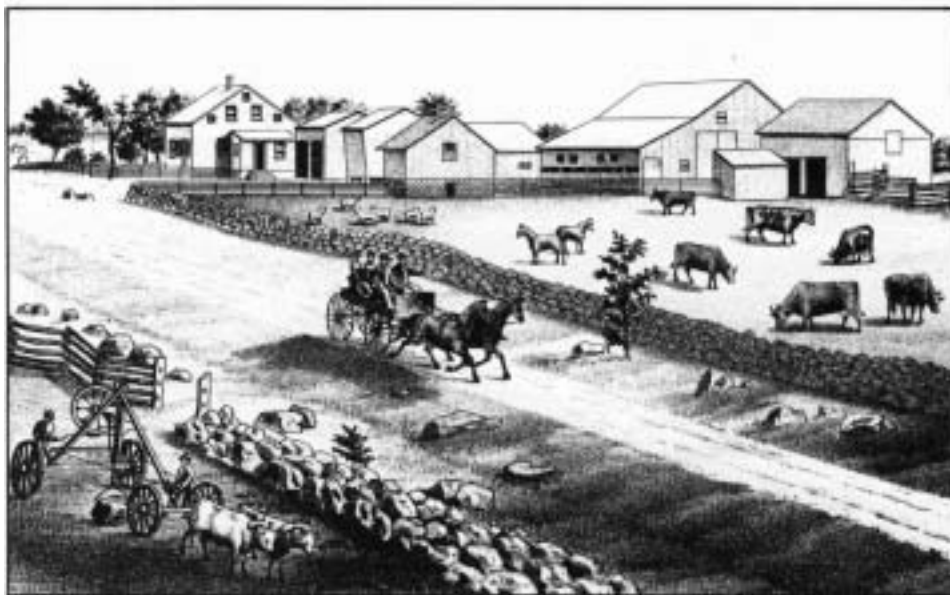
When early residents built houses they generally used the New England architectural vocabulary. We know

that French Canadians, Irishmen and Scots settled in St. Lawrence, but their houses by and large have a New England, not a European look. New England contributed three basic house types to St. Lawrence County and Northern New York.

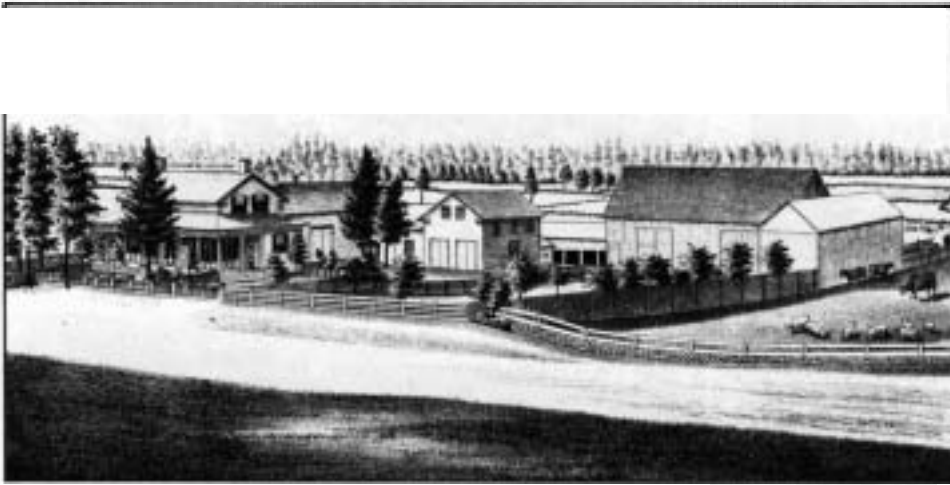
Dwellings in the Georgian style stood a full two stories high and ran parallel to the road. Five windows looked out from the upper story and four windows and a central door ran along the lower level. This door usually opened into a central hall running to about the midpoint of the house. A good example of an early New England Georgian structure is the old Ira French inn, now owned by the Anderson family, on the Potsdam-Canton road. Any two story stone house in St. Lawrence County is also likely to be a classic example of the Georgian style. Builders seem to have followed more conservative and formal patterns when working with stone instead of less permanent wood.

The second New England form is a variant of the full Georgian type. Called the Cape Cod, it was one or one and a half stories high, and usually aligned parallel to the road like its Georgian ancestor. That the Cape Cod was a more informal house than the Georgian appears from the often asymmetrical arrangement of windows and doors which it presented to the road. Early in the nineteenth century builders began to raise the Cape Cod's roofline, often putting diminutive "eyebrow" windows in the newly available space between the eaves and the main windows. With their higher rooflines and the addition of Greek revival trim around the doorways and at the corners, Cape Cods became Classic Cottages, the most common house form in St. Lawrence County to this day.

The third popular house type in nineteenth century St. Lawrence County



Harrington's is quite a traditional farmstead. The house has a Cape Cod form without the classic cottage ornamentation seen on the W.H. Wright house. The window arrangement in the house's gable end is often seen in New England. The second building to the right of the house is a cornerrib with characteristic tapered sides, and set on blocks. Note the lean-to roof on the main barn.



Here the house and its dependency and the two main barns are both joined in a T shape. The large barn is a double version of the English side-opening barn.

was the Temple Front. A combination of forms that already existed separately, the Temple Front consisted of a Georgian sized main block with Greek Revival trim and a wing the size of a small Classic Cottage. As the nineteenth century passed Temple Fronts became smaller and simpler. By the end of the century versions of the Temple Front were being built more often than Classic Cottages.

The houses of rural St. Lawrence County say something about the people who built them. They were traditional, but willing to change old patterns if it could be done gradually. They drew on ideas that were circulating in the culture at large - Greek and Gothic revival trim, for example - but wedded those innovations to old forms. As a result the St. Lawrence countryside shows visible evidence of a nineteenth century cultural phenomenon: the melding as well as the conflict of traditional ways of life with the ways of mass production and the popular ideas of national agricultural and architectural publications.

Barns

If early county houses were sometimes built of stone or brick, the same was not true of barns. Wood was almost the only material used in barn construction in the nineteenth century, and only recently have metal barns begun to rival wooden ones. While a few log out-buildings still exist in the county, there apparently are no log barns. It is the framing timbers of barns (and houses) not their exteriors, which testify to the ability of nineteenth century farmers to work with logs. The king posts and queen posts that held up barn roofs were the squared-off trunks of trees, while secondary posts were often small trees left in the round, with the bark still on. Upon these log frames farmers hung walls of sawed lumber. The same reasons which explain the absence of log houses in the county probably also

explain the scarcity of log barns. Not only are boards easier to handle than logs, in the long run it probably was more economical to pay the sawmill for boards than to spend the human energy needed to hew logs oneself. Cultural influences, however, may have proved as strong as economic calculation. The English, Irish, Scottish, and Yankees who settled St. Lawrence County carried a culture from which log construction was largely absent. Log architecture is found chiefly in those areas of the country where German influence is strong - Pennsylvania and the upper South. While French Canadians may have been more adept at log architecture than Yankee settlers, there are so few log buildings in the county that one is forced to conclude that the French also preferred to saw their lumber rather than to hew it.

Nineteenth century builders had only two basic ideas about the form a barn should take. Its roof would be either gable (A shaped) or gambrel (∩ shaped). The gable roofed style is the

most traditional for barns, while the gambrel style was long used in England and the American colonies for houses, not barns. Only in the late nineteenth century, as farms grew larger and farmers needed more hay storage space, was the gambrel adopted for barns.

The "old fashioned" gable roofed barn of St. Lawrence County and much of the Eastern United States is what folklorists have termed the English side-opening barn. Early examples are usually quite small, in keeping with the herds of 10, 15 or 20 cows that local farmers kept. An average English side-opening barn would be 40' by 60'. It would have three sections, or bays. The farmer drove his wagon into the central bay and pitched hay into the hay mows, the second story bays on either side. One side bay on the first level housed livestock, the other often served as a granary.

Few farmers could get by with just one barn, so it is rare that we see any barn, whether gable or gambrel roofed, standing alone. In St. Lawrence County it is very common for a "barn" to actually be two barns joined together. Sometimes the barns are connected end to end, or very commonly in a T shape. The trunk of the T may be a long cow-barn, and the crossing a smaller hay barn or horse barn. At other times barns were joined together like a Temple Front house - a main barn and a wing (-I).

If a farmer did not build two barns together he would often build a lean-to onto an existing barn. In rare cases barns have symmetrical lean-tos on either side, like wings. Instead of tacking on a lean-to, farmers could build a barn and lean-to all of one piece by simply extending one side of the barn roof almost down to the ground. Interestingly, the lean-to roof is common in New England domestic architecture,



Farmhouse, Roger Huntley farm, Pierrepont. View of rear with attached woodshed and enclosed outhouse.



Abandoned granary (upper portion), Rte. 58, Gouverneur. Owner unknown.



Detail of barn framing, abandoned barn, Rte. 58, Gouverneur. Owner unknown.

but full lean-to roofs are more common on St. Lawrence County barns than on local houses. In the first half of the nineteenth century, at least, domestic architecture changed more quickly than barn styles. What was too old-fashioned for a house would still do admirably for a barn.

The only ornamentation that appears on English side-opening barns are diamond shaped openings in the gable ends. Often these are simply rectangular windows stood on end to look like diamonds, a practice directly carried over from New England. Sometimes in our oldest wooden barns one sees diamonds carved right into the wood of

the gable end. Usually there will be another design - a cross or a triangle - carved at the end of each point of the diamond - resembling a Maltese cross. Such designs are probably related to the "hex" signs famous in the Pennsylvania Dutch country. They appear as far west as southern Indiana, and are almost certainly European in origin.

After the Civil War barn architecture grew more elaborate. The large gambrel roofed "Victorian" barn on many prosperous farmsteads might boast two different colors of paint, round windows in the gable end, elaborate lightning rods and ventilators. Where English

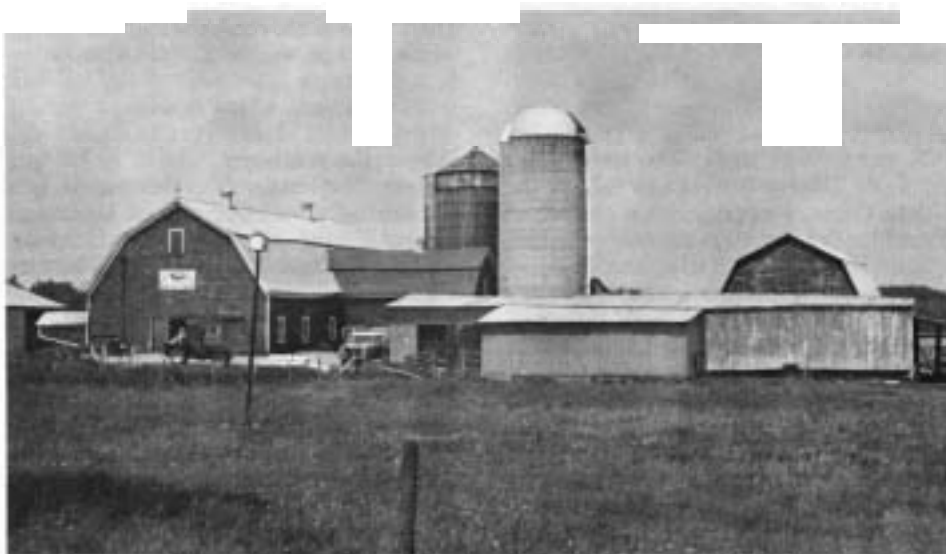
side-opening barns had none of the Greek Revival or Georgian trappings of contemporary houses, Victorian barns boasted many domestic details. There is as much stylistic distance between a gable roofed side-opening barn and its gambrel roofed Victorian counterpart as between a Classic Cottage and a gingerbread villa of the 1890s.

In the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth centuries, farmers used more and more stone, concrete and cement for barn foundations, but not until the last twenty or so years have entire barns been built of material other than wood. Metal barns doubtless have more virtues than drawbacks, but as far as style is concerned they have none at all. They are significant in being a complete break with tradition, and as such have added a new chapter to the definition of the word barn.

Silos

More than in any other structure, the history of farming in St. Lawrence County is written in its silos. Silos did not appear in the county until after the Civil War, and the first were narrow square structures with gable roofs hardly taller than the barns to which they were attended. The first were often built-in the barn itself and appear as a kind of dormer window in the roof. When the silo "dormer" had a gambrel roof and the barn a gable roof, the effect could be complex and whimsical.

Perhaps because silos are small specialized structures they seem to have undergone more rapid changes than barns. In addition to building them



Courtyard farm layout, Roger Huntley farm, Pierrepont. Buildings group behind.

square, farmers built silos in hexagonal and octagonal forms, finally settling on round silos as the most satisfactory. Were round silos best because they had more room and no corners for the grain to compact in? (The very recent appearance of pit silos is the latest chapter in this progression.) When form had run the gamut of change, farmers experimented with new silo materials. In the nineteenth century wood had been used even for round silos, but the twentieth saw the introduction of cement blocks, tile, plexiglass and finally aluminum.

Today's large farm has tall silos and many of them. In the countryside around Lisbon this is particularly striking. Nothing has changed the face of our farms more than barns getting lower and silos higher.

Outbuildings

In the nineteenth century most of the structures on a farm were outbuildings. We tend to dismiss them as sheds which look all alike, but they are worth distinguishing. Like the silo, they are a record of how farming in St. Lawrence County has changed.

The most barn-like of the outbuildings was the granary - built like a small English barn but with a door in the gable end rather than on the side. Granaries, like silos, seem to have been a post Civil War development, and they appear to be more common in the North Country than downstate. Some early barns, like that of Don Smith on the Dezell Road, had built-in granaries over-hanging the central bay. Separate granaries must have become necessary as farms grew larger in the last half of the nineteenth century

Solidly constructed and neatly fashioned, granaries usually have two stories, with bins on both levels for storing oats and grain. Occasionally one finds a building that served as both granary and cornerrib, but what one does not find is a granary used for its original purpose. Now they are storage places for cast-off equipment and machinery.

Similar in function to the granary, the cornerrib was distinctively different in appearance. Cornerribs exhibit clear regional variations across the United States. The Eastern cornerribs original to St. Lawrence County are built with tapering sides and are usually raised off the ground on blocks. They are small buildings; the casual observer may assume they are toolsheds.

The observer would make no such mistake about the newest cornerribs being built in the county. Amish settlers from Pennsylvania and the Midwest are constructing the type of cornerrib they knew in their former homes: large, open basketwork structures built of crisscrossed poles and covered with a roof. At first the Eastern and



Aerial view, Curtis Benham farm, Nicholville. Split farmstead. Notice ice house and corn crib to right of house. (Photo courtesy of Benham family)

the Midwestern cornerrib seem totally unrelated. A closer look reveals that even though from a distance they appear tightly joined, the boards of European cornerribs were in fact spaced apart for ventilation. The basketwork Midwestern cornerrib merely takes ventilation to an architectural extreme. Together the Eastern and Midwestern cornerribs are a good illustration of how different architectural traditions meet similar needs.

One of the most common outbuildings in this dairy country is the milkhouse; almost every farm has one. The older milkhouses seem to have been built away from the cowbarn, often over a spring where the milk was stored and cooled. Later milkhouses are attached to the side of the main barn, and are most often built of matched lumber (or now, of metal). Few farmbuildings were constructed with more care than the milkhouse. A small milkhouse might show more detail than the barn itself. Near Canton is a milkhouse with gently flaring eaves of a type very unusual in this area. The only other example the writers know of in the North Country appears on a church in Franklin County.

Sugarhouses, with the exception of the occasional "field barn" are the only farm buildings located with the crop, not with the other barns and outbuildings. Besides the farmhouse, the sugarhouse was the only other structure on the farm built solely for human use - and the only other one with "house" in its title. Sugarhouses are instantly recognizable - by their location in the sugar bush, their low, one story construction, and the long vent running along their roof ridges. Sugarhouses are one of the auxiliary buildings - like

cider mills, grist mills and butter factories - which were more or less essential to the operation of a farm economy. Curtis indicates that some farmers had small butter factories on their own property. Such buildings are gone now, or used for other purposes. The services they rendered are provided centrally.

What is also gone from farm life - if it ever existed - is the placid and seemingly untroubled modest prosperity reflected in the nineteenth century engravings that illustrate this article. Farming is now and probably was at the time these drawings were made a far riskier and more disorderly business than they indicate. To obtain a true picture of farm life we must study the farm buildings of yesterday and today first hand, observing closely their size, construction, details, and use. We will then have a more accurate knowledge of the past as well as the present.

About the Authors:

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Irving Bacheller -

Interpreter of the Old America to the New

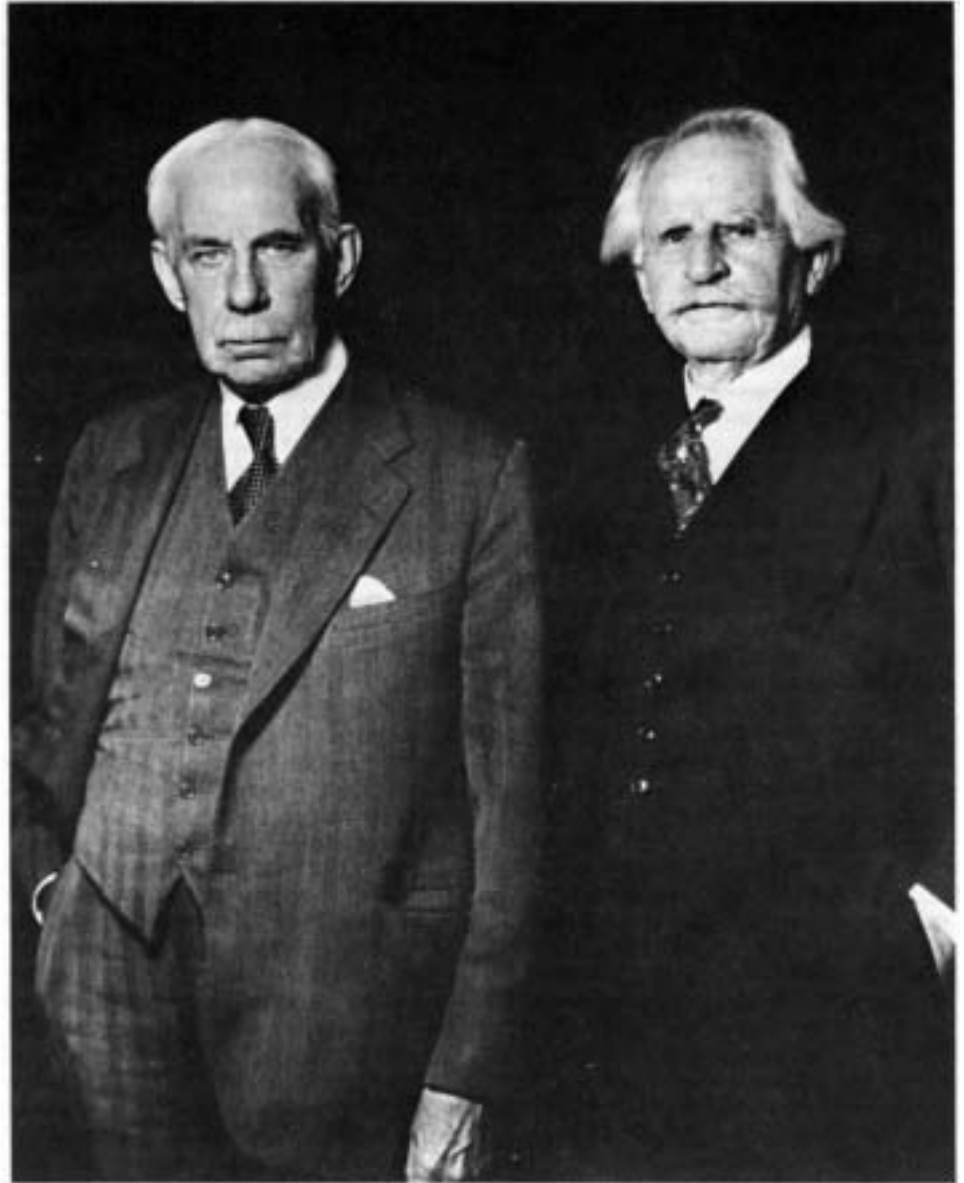
by Hamlin Garland

Addison Irving Bacheller - one of America's most popular local colorists of his time - was born in Pierrepont in 1859, just 125 years ago. In his long career he travelled widely and came to know many of the leading literary figures of his day. One of his especially close friendships was with Hamlin Garland, the Iowa writer and raconteur whose work and name have endured more than Bacheller's. But for one brief period, the summer of 1915, Garland and his family visited Canton, when the Midwesterner trailed around after the local celebrity, at home in the land of his youth. Here we reprint a very personal account of Bacheller as writer and Bacheller as chronicler of the North Country way of life, published by Garland in the March 1920 Red Cross Magazine.

Although I had known Irving Bacheller for many years it was not till 1915 that I came to know his birthplace, the land which had nurtured him and which had been the background of all his stories; the land he calls "The North Country"—St. Lawrence County, New York. On his account (because he was spending the summer there) I took my little family to Canton one hot July day and so came to see the slow streams, the rich meadows and the granite ridges which made this at once a wild land and a beautiful land to the pioneers of a century ago.

In truth Bacheller is a son of the Border but in his case it was the North Border as mine was the Middle Border. His people are my people and his training substantially the same as mine. I had known this in a general way but spending the summer with him in the midst of what Henry James would have called his *Scene*, I came to know it in an entirely different and more vital way. With him I saw the remains of the forest in which "*The Light In The Clearing*" first appeared. Some of the houses of the people who gave their lives to the soil, as Silas Wright wrought for the good of the state, were still standing, and in the company of their genial historian I visited them and heard their tales of the older, sterner, yet grander days.

It was plain to me at once that Bacheller was a prophet who had much



Irving Bacheller and Hamlin Garland, around 1915-1920. (Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University)

honor in his own country, for his neighbors, like Riley's Hoosiers in their attitude toward their poet, freely rendered him their praise. They were proud of their novelist who had adventured forth armed only with a pen and had conquered the great City to his use. It was known that he had lived for a time in Carnegie's castle at Skibo and that he was on intimate terms with millionaires but these things were not held against him; on the contrary, the citizens all spoke of him pleasantly and greeted him affectionately as we walked down the street. His wealth and fame

were taken as just rewards of his devotion to a high ideal and not as results of exploiting his fellow men.

From them I learned that the boy Bacheller had taught school, peddled books and worked on a farm; pinching and saving in order to go to college, conforming in all ways to the recognized pattern of youthful genius. Canton was a remote community in those days and while it is no longer the Border—hardly the town in the forest—the traditions of both the Border and the forest persisted in the sixties in such force that Irving's education was

as much by way of the gossip of the aged survivors of the past as by way of his teachers in the schools. In all that he has since done he has made use of the men and women who were the neighbors of his parents—not so much in actual delineations of their characters as of their lore, their humor and their wholesome outlook on life.

It was from one of these survivors that he drew the inspiration for "*Eben Holden*" and, in the character of Silas Wright, an actual resident of Canton and one of the greatest men of his time comes into *The Light In The Clearing*." Nearly all the quaint characters of "*The Hand-Made Gentleman*", "*D'ri and I*" and "*The Blessed Isles*" have their prototypes in real people of the back-country of the St. Lawrence Valley, even in "*A Man For The Ages*" (his latest story) Bacheller has been aided by his perception that the settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois, were his first of kin.

In 1882, he again conformed to the youthful genius type by coming to New York to seek his fortune—varying a little from the norm by *finding* his fortune whereas most of us are still in search of it. He came a little earlier than I and almost as green. A big, blond, absent-minded youth with a powerful desire to achieve something—just what I don't believe he knew himself but that it was to be something highly honorable I am sure, for Irving Bacheller's never was a mean or calculating soul.

My first meeting with him, however, came after he had been through the usual vicissitudes of newspaper reporting, space writing and an editorship. He was starting out for himself in a syndicate which was to be a rival of the McClure Syndicate. He had written to me for some material and it was in the course of the negotiation that I called upon him at his office which was on the north side of a building on Twenty-Eighth Street or thereabouts. As I entered his room, I found him sitting at a desk looking out on a blank alley wall, dreaming — as I afterward learned—of The North Country.

He came out of his abstraction slowly and with painful effort and I recall a sense of wonder that a dreamer of such a poetic temperament could make his way in a tumultuous and hostile city. I lost a little of this wonder when he came to bargain for my manuscript, for a layer of native horse-sense ran beneath his absent-minded simplicity of manner. He was careful not to over-pay his authors and to that degree he was a good imitation of a business man.

It came out a few years later that he was at that moment writing a story but when he sent it to me in a little magazine which he was printing, I got back

at him by saying "You'd better stick to your editing." It was a short tale of no special distinction. His real self was as yet unexpressed.

Don Seitz of *The World* relates that when Bacheller was Sunday Editor he came to him one day and said, "I want a leave of absence for three months. I want to complete a tale I am writing."

"I gave him some friendly advice," says Seitz, "and asked him if he had the consent of his wife. He said he had and went away."

The result of this hopeful experiment was the novel of "*Eben Holden*" which has sold over half a million copies. It didn't do this all at once, however, indeed for several weeks it went along in the usual slow way of unnoticed books. Then suddenly and for no discoverable reason, it began to sell in tens of thousands—to the bewilderment of the author as I can testify for my wife and I visited him in the midst of the first groundswell of that sale. He was in an apartment house in Harlem—think of that! In Harlem—and we went out and dined at a restaurant.

This book, of which Howells said, "It is as pure as water and as sweet as bread," has in it the Bacheller who was dreaming at his desk that first day of our meeting. It is the story of the North Country pioneers put into fictional form with a curious quaint humor and quiet pathos which made it new and individual. There was in it also the poetry, the sturdy manhood and the hopefulness of the typical American, qualities which Bacheller has carried into all his later books.

The Century bought his second novel "*D'ri and I*" as a serial, and several publishers contended for the book rights. The blond, absent-minded giant had become, almost in a week, one of the best sellers, and in doing so had sacrificed nothing of his idealism. One of his high distinctions is just that—he has never written down to the baser natures of his readers—on the contrary, he has always been the valiant upholder of decent writing and decent living. In "*Keeping Up With Lizzie*" and other works of satirical humor he has shown a keen insight and a manly patriotism as well as a delightful skill in characterization.

Naturally, as soon as he had attained success, he set about establishing himself a home and a hearth for he is the kind of a man who loves above all other things a big open fire, a circle of friends and a song of the Other Days.

His first Hearth and Home was at Sound Beach about thirty miles northeast of New York City, and when I visited him there a year later I found him in an ideal condition for the writing of books. His study, set apart from the house, was based on arches

which spanned the great rocks of his shore front so that as he wrote he could hear the waves roaring beneath him. It was not as inspirational as the sound of the wind in the trees of the great North Woods—so familiar to him—but it had a fine suggestion of poetry about it.

What an evening we had! David Henderson, ex-Speaker of the House of Representatives, was also a guest and after dinner we fell into a ballad-singing contest, Henderson presenting some old Scotch songs; Irving recounting the hymns and ditties which his forefathers had carried into the North Country, whilst I sang a dozen or more of the tunes my mother used to sing on The Middle Border in the days of Sixty-One. For audience we had only Ann Bacheller and Mrs. Henderson and part of the time we forgot that we had any audience at all!

One cold raw morning a few months later, Bacheller asked me to take a walk with him "to see the site of my new home."

"Your new home!" I exclaimed, "What's the matter with this one?"

"Oh, I've sold this one," he calmly answered. "It doesn't quite suit me."

Leading the way over to the little bay and around a big grove of tall trees he halted on a smooth slope leading to the Sound and said, "See that ragged hole in the ground?"

The pit which he pointed out looked like a small quarry and had no attraction whatsoever save a big lone tree which over-hung a small rill.

"I see the hole," was my unenthusiastic reply.

"Right there is where my new house is to stand!" said Bacheller with quiet emphasis.

In less than a year from that time "*Thrushwood*" was completed and as we were seated in the glow of its hearth—a hearth so ample and so beautiful that it was like a poet's dream of hospitality—I acknowledged that it was a fitting shrine for the spirit it symbolized. Generous of room, based upon the rock, fronting the sun, it was as distinct a creation as any poem and, in the years which followed, it took on added charm and significance. Flowers sprang up around it; a garden, a swimming beach and a "berm" were added. I never knew what a "berm" was until I saw this one. It was only a dam and a water gate but it put a lake where, at low water, a muddy flat appeared.

It was a pleasant sight to see the old Woodsman clad in a pea-jacket, carrying a stout stick and superintending a small army of Italian workmen. He looked more like a retired sea-captain than a novelist and when I thought of the wages his crew of Italians represented I realized that a full cargo of

peacocks and tamarinds would be necessary to provide the gold of their demand.

Right then I began to revise my notions concerning this slow-spoken North-Country man. I discovered that most of his apparent extravagances were profitable!

The costly berm added thousands of dollars to the value of his estate. By making the house large and beautiful and providing rooms for servants and stalls for automobiles he was able to rent it for the summer months at a high rental. In his easy-going way, Bacheller succeeded in out-financing the financiers. This was a surprising revelation to me. I ceased to patronize him; indeed thereafter, I watched him narrowly in the hope of finding out how he did the trick.

Meanwhile he busied himself as a writer of fiction and all of his books were successful—not in the same degree as *Eben Holden* and *D’ri*—but far beyond anything I could do and the best of it was he not only made each one according to his own wholesome humorous pattern but he contrived to put into all of them the spirit of the sturdy American whose philosophy had nothing mean or bitter or despairing in its lines.

Night by night, in the glow of that splendid hearth, we sat to conspire how we might work against the forces which tended to corrupt and degrade the ideal Republic of Washington and Lincoln and Grant. We appointed ourselves a committee of two with the purpose of embodying, so far as we could, the best traditions of our fathers, in order that they might be handed down to the generations whose narrow horizons included only brick walls and bristling sky-line water-tanks. We invented speeches, composed poems and outlined novels to this end; all of which amused us and did no harm to anyone else. In Bacheller’s case it resulted in a series of satirical tales like *“Keeping Up With Lizzie”*, *“Charge It”* and other of the Old Soc Potter monologues, whilst I composed *“A Son of The Middle Border”* and set down other stories and poems of the wondrous days of early Wisconsin and Iowa.

As I look back upon those nights at “Thrushwood” from this side of the World War their outlines are as softened as if half a life-time had intervened, and this beauty is accentuated by the fact that the lovely place was destroyed by fire and exists today only in the memories of those who loved it. With it went many of the manuscripts, pictures, autographed letters and books which were associated with *“Eben Holden”* and *“Darrell of The Blessed Isles.”*

Bacheller, in his books, loves to take

an historical character like Horace Greeley or Silas Wright and by careful study bring out the message of Americanism which such a life illustrates and so when he told me that he had started in on a study of Abraham Lincoln I was sure that the result would not only be a credit to himself but an inspiration to the young men and women of his audience and, in this belief, I am sustained. After pondering long, reading carefully and slowly all available records, newspapers and biographies of Lincoln’s time, he produced a very moving and characteristic book, a book which by its simple English and its reverent tone will give pleasure to thousands of people to whom Lincoln is but a far-away half-mythical figure.

Hardly was this story in final proof before its author set himself a new task, a sterner task, the task of combating the un-American teachings of foreign radicals and the corruption which flows from the congested centers of large cities. This work—a story which is to appear in *The Red Cross Magazine*—contains much of what we have often discussed beside his fire and is in every way a logical outcome of Bacheller’s belief in the corrective value of the sturdy virtues of the North Woods. It is at once an expression of his love and faith in the Republic and his hatred of those who would alienate or debase its citizens.

As a literary man, he is liable to obsessions. Once started in contemplation of some objects he forgets everything else for the time being. He fails to hear what you say to him and comes out of his daze with some remark which has nothing to do with your remarks but which has a great deal to do with his own subjective processes.

One day at the club, for example, he gave us the most detailed and vivid account of the Baltimore Convention of 1844, to the bewilderment of the other men at the table who did not know (as I did) that Irving was in the midst of writing *“The Light in The Clearing.”* It is this almost Brahministic absorption in his theme which enables him to do the work which has made him famous.

He is in high demand as an after dinner orator. A quaint drawing tone and a certain precision of phrase combine to make him highly effective and amusing. His addresses to the New England society have been so successful that he has been a star performer again and again. There is always a handful of wheat in the midst of his chaff, and he usually selects some ungentle, un-American habit or custom as the object of his attack.

Whatever he does is worked out in a way of his own and there is no use attempting to get him to do it in any

other way for, with all his gentleness and sweetness, he is a rock when anyone tries to shove him. He hates all that is base and sly and sensual and in the story which he has written for this magazine he has made his hatreds plain. The vulgar play, the cheap low song, the false and corrupting moving picture, all come in for his condemnation. “Why should all these wonderful agencies for the education of the people be turned over to the conscienceless New York exploiter of the young?” he inquires.

Just now he is full of a new project of Americanization. He is dreaming of a vast out-door permanent stage whereon the great drama of our National Development may be re-enacted for the instruction of those men and women who know America only as a crowded place a little less miserable than the one from which they fled and whose children know only the sordid city ward and precinct in which they were born. Bacheller would embody the traditional America for the immigrant American. “I would assist the young Jew, Pole, Lett or Slovak to visualize the work and character of the men who made the civilization which he is about to inherit, by placing on this mighty stage certain epochal scenes in the century-long march of the pioneer—the prairie schooner, the clearing of the forest and the battles with Indians. I would put before the ‘New’ American, scenes like Valley Forge, The Surrender of Yorktown, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, The Meeting of Grant and Lee at Appomattox, and other of the splendid events of our history.”

It is of no use to tell him that his plan is too costly, he continues to dream his dream and, whether it comes to realization or not, a discussion of it will serve to point the moral of his thesis, which is, that we should not sit quietly by and permit the forces of evil to monopolize the recreational agencies of the people.

It is deeply heartening to remember that this very successful man has never written a line that is base or suggestive. His stories are simple in structure, his characters helpful and his philosophy cheerful and altruistic. Such a man proves that success is not dependent upon sensationalism or mawkish sentimentality. Through all his written chapters he still remains the genial and kindly interpreter.



"Strike Up the Music!"

by Richard Rummel

In the fall and early winter of 1983 an exhibition devoted to musical and dramatic entertainments in the County before World War I was installed at the Silas Wright House and Museum. The exhibit and accompanying programs centered around the amazing variety of performances which people enjoyed at home, in local opera houses, and in village parades and parks. Here the author, who researched and organized the entire series of activities, summarizes the breadth and depth of his findings. Photographs included are of the exhibit and of individual examples included in it.

In 1963 a project was undertaken by the county historian to record as much history as could be uncovered on the musical heritage of St. Lawrence County. Reports and photographs of town bands, choral and theater groups, newspaper stories of same, and any

information on the men and women who played roles in the drama of musical culture of the north country were gathered into one comprehensive file. Now, twenty years later, with that voluminous package as an invaluable resource, the St. Lawrence County His-

torical Association has brought to life in dazzling fashion the county's rich and varied musical past with a four-part exhibit entitled *Strike Up The Music*.

Before the scope of such a project as a music exhibit can be understood, it is important to realize that the extraordinary achievements in the cultural development of the North Country were mirrored achievements of the country as a whole, and that the cataclysmic effects upon America of, first, the Civil War, and, second, the Industrial Revolution touched city, village and hamlet alike. From the social fabric produced during this period of great dynamic change came the threads by which we, as researchers, could find our way back to comprehending the local experience. How towns across America interpreted, then reacted, in their own way to the "signs of the time" of the emerging nation is what makes St. Lawrence County's contribution to culture and the arts so clearly remarkable. *Strike Up The Music*, made up of brass bands, parlor music, opera houses and music halls, and local artists, is a tribute to that glorious period of what can be called a true era of live entertainment. Music halls and opera houses sprang up across the county, with packed houses nearly every night as there was never a scarcity of minstrel shows, professional and amateur drama troupes, orators, and singers and actors of local and national fame. The music of Patrick Gilmore and his successor John Philip Sousa generated a clamor from the Adirondack hills to Main Street, setting young and old alike to marching, clapping hands and tapping feet to the brass band beat. By the end of the century music, here as elsewhere, was at the center of life. The gaiety it provided lasted until the shattering effects of World War One and the cultural revolution brought on by radio, the automobile, and jazz changed American life forever.

Brass Bands - Some History

While marching bands reached their greatest popularity on a national scale in the 1880's and 90's, the history of bands goes back to the early days of St. Lawrence County. Gates Curtis in his history of St. Lawrence County relates



Mildred Ford, "Little Miss Mildred." The diminutive Miss Ford shown here around 1920. Her dress contains 10,000 spangles sewn on by hand.



A partial bandstand was constructed in the exhibit gallery as the focal point of the music exhibit. We titled it, "Playing This Evening: The Village Band. The bandstand became a common sight around St. Lawrence County by the 1890s.

the following: "In the summer of 1817 President James Monroe made a trip to northern New York. He was met by a party of men from Ogdensburg on August 1, 1817, where he was received by a band of music. David Parish was his host for the day."¹ Instrumental development was well along by this time, but whether a band in 1817 Ogdensburg would include a variety of horns and woodwind instruments is unclear. It is quite unlikely that it would not. A military contingent made up of fife and drum and possibly a few other woodwind instruments is a more likely description of the band that greeted the President that day.

"The development of the keyed bugle led to the formation of all brass bands."² The Boston brass band is credited with being the first, forming in 1835.³ St. Lawrence County got into the swing of things shortly after the first organized town band assembling in Canton in 1841. Given the excitement and sense of pride this early band must have brought to the little northern village, its harmonious effect undoubtedly carried far and wide, stirring other villages to get in step with their own band. By the time of the Civil War bands were playing a major role both on the battlefield and the homefront. With bands forming to raise the spirit of patriotism during recruitment and morale on the battlefield, an impetus was given to wide-spread popularity of brass bands following the war.



This unusual bass drum with a scene painted on its front and a lightbulb inside, was played by King Wilcox of Parishville in the early 1900s. In background, women musicians were rare in marching bands. The uniform on display here was worn by a member of the Brasie Corners Band. (Courtesy of Parishville Historian)

Gather 'round the Piano - Music in the Home

If the popularity of band music in America was akin to the Pied Piper and his following, music in the home parlor was followed and performed with no less zeal. Imagine a home today without television and radio and all the other assorted electronic toys and you can only partly understand the cultural reality of Victorian life. Entertainment required energy, imagination and talent, and rare was the family who didn't participate in some form of musical endeavor, either singing or playing instruments or both. The mass production of the piano and organ made these instruments relatively easy to purchase by the average family. In St. Lawrence County Edward Badlam was manufacturing pianofortes in Potsdam and Ogdensburg up until the 1880's. Famed musician William Sudds of Gouverneur did a highly prosperous business selling organs and pianos at the turn of the century.

The piano and the assembly of family members around it in the parlor where it usually sat, defined two significant sociological ideas about Victorian life: music participation among family members in the home was a natural outgrowth, or extension, of the pervasive involvement in culture by society as a whole; and, unlike the disintegration of values that would occur after the world war, the Victorian family enjoyed a cohesiveness created by its members participating as a unit in the filling of leisure time.

Houses and Halls

Theater life in St. Lawrence County during the period in question was impressive indeed. If the description "golden era" can be applied here, it would without question be a fitting term for that by-gone time of the opera house and music hall. One of the more important contributing factors to the



This section of the exhibit was entitled "Gather 'round the Piano" to illustrate how music and song pervaded life in the 19th century. The violin on display was made by Benjamin Besaw for his eleven year old son, Henry, who on Friday nights would be placed on the kitchen table to play "kitchen hops." (Violin courtesy of the Massena Historian)



The Louisville cornet band in the 1880s. (Photo courtesy of the Louisville Historian)

musical heritage we celebrate was the formation of the Northern New York Musical Association begun in Ogdensburg in 1861, with the first annual meeting of the group held in Potsdam in 1862. The objective of the Association read as follows: "For the elevation of musical taste and the promotion of a more general cultivation of musical skill, especially in vocal music." Opera houses were constructed throughout the county, with many of the biggest names in opera and the entertainment field booked into them. The opera house, of course, has passed on, the voices and applause only distant echoes, the broadsides and programs which boldly announced this performance and that company now sadly hollow as only paper in our hands. The legacy of the Northern New York Musical Association, however, lives on with the Crane School of Music at Potsdam State University.

The music hall with its generally raucous fare enjoyed great popularity throughout St. Lawrence County. If villages and hamlets were not fortunate enough to boast an elaborate hall, a building of some kind was usually designated for the popular entertainment that passed through on the show business circuit. Plays might be performed or the local band might be scheduled, but the biggest attraction in the music hall was the minstrel show. Minstrelsy, as it was called, flourished after the Civil War, with the freeing of

the slaves creating much grist for a fearful white society. Women were not permitted to enter a hall that was performing a minstrel show until after 1870. The antics of actors playing out their fantasies and prejudices about the negro were considered too corruptive of the female sex. "The minstrel show usually featured two sets of characters: the southern plantation black and the northern Jim Dandy, two

'types' who portrayal on stage meant to reinforce white people's images of blacks, as, first, the pretentious urban black who didn't know his place and, second, the happy ducky, protected and controlled by whites."⁴ This unfortunate side of minstrelsy, or even the fact that a race of people could be held up to such ridicule, was lost, however, on the average music hall patron. Here was, first and foremost, popular entertain-



This photograph, from the 1880s, illustrates the typical home musical entertainment as pasttime in St. Lawrence County.



*The Ogdensburg opera house opened in 1881 with the play *The School for Scandal* and burned in 1926. Its location was at the present site of the town hall. Some of the biggest names in theater, such as John Barrymore and Lillie Langtry, graced its stage.*

ment. Whatever its deeper and darker motives the minstrel show played a bright and significant role in the popular culture of America.

And the Show Must Go On

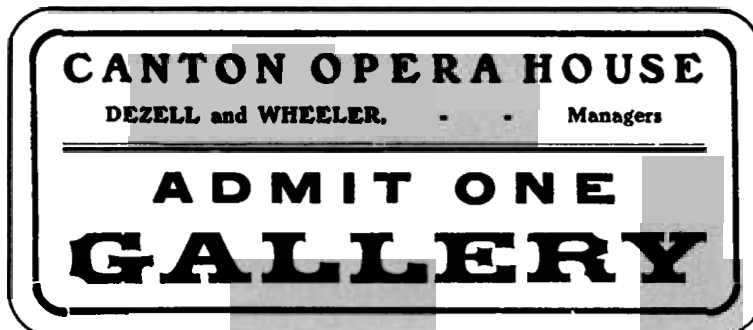
The American entertainer has, to a large extent, carried the reputation of someone out of step with the so-called "normal" people of society. Still, the call to the stage for the showman, the singer, musician or whatever talent and ambition drives one to perform beckons across time, place, and the

social milieu. Every region, city or town had its traveling show, its favorite singer or dancer, or best of all, its favorite local "people of the stage." Walter Brown Leonard, the "Morley Minstrel Man," was probably St. Lawrence County's most famous complete showman, writing and publishing his own songs and minstrel skits, as well as performing. W.B., as he was called, played all over New York, and at the height of his career was a leading theater entrepreneur. But with his suc-

cess he always found time to return to St. Lawrence County and to the people he had such a fondness for.

The trio of Bart Ford, Harry Gormand and Bart's wife, "Little Miss Mildred," known in the business as Gormand and Ford, played out a forty year career from Broadway to Brush-ton. Bart, it was said, loved dearly the area around Catamount Mountain, near Colton, which gave the team ample reason to return again and again to St. Lawrence County. They were the classic vaudeville act, with comic skits, song and dance and impersonation. The three, as in life, now lie side by side together in the hamlet of Stark.

Nick Goodall was a brilliant light to those who had the fortune of hearing him play his violin; and that, according to the little that has been written about him, could not have been many - or not many at one time. His reputation was that he was a mixture of unmistakable genius and baffling mystery, wandering over the St. Lawrence County countryside like a forlorn Alan-a-Dale. Very little was known of his personal life, except that he was quiet, unpredictable and a loner. But of his violin playing



Canton opera house ticket. Canton was a major stop on the theater circuit tour through the north country. The opera house was a grand structure which burned in 1962. (A gallery seat usually sold for 25¢.)



W.B. Leonard's show banners, trunk, shoes, etc. Leonard as successful show business entrepreneur (shown in photo inside display case) is an interesting contrast to the great talent and performer he was on stage.



Nick Goodall's violin. After being sold to pay for Goodall's burial, the violin, fortunately, was given to the Jefferson County Historical Society, who kindly loaned it for this exhibit.



Cornet played by Ella McBride in the Waddington Ladies Orchestra. (Courtesy of the Malone Historical Society)



Display case with programs and broadsides.



Sudds music store. William Sudds' musical gift was equaled by his business acumen. This very successful music store, with Sudds standing on the right, was in the old union block of Gouverneur.

there was unanimous agreement - his playing matched many of the great masters. Some would say that it is a great misfortune that Nickolas Goodall, the man, was not known. There is solace, perhaps, that in his marvelous gift of playing he *was* known. Goodall spent his last days in a Watertown almshouse, where he died at the age of thirty. His violin was sold to pay for his burial.

St. Lawrence County's favorite musician son was Benjamin "Benny" Rolfe, virtuoso on the cornet and trumpet and nationally known leader of his own orchestra on radio and, ultimately, at

the end of his career, television and films. Rolfe grew up in Brasher, attended school there, where he was already showing great promise as a musician. His talent and showmanship led him to vaudeville, stints with various circuses, and stardom of sorts when he signed a contract to make records for Thomas Edison's company. The pinnacle of his career was reached when at age fifty he became conductor of the Lucky Strike Dance Orchestra for NBC.

Culture in the North Country in the latter half of the 19th century would not have shown quite so brightly were

it not for William Sudds of Gouverneur, who became a nationally recognized composer and virtuoso of the piano, organ and violin; and Julia Crane, who more than any single person shaped local musical culture when she organized the Crane Normal Institute of Music in 1886. Together, William Sudds and Julia Crane epitomized the depth and richness of the classical tradition in music that we enjoy today.

The extraordinary theatrical history of St. Lawrence County is quite legitimately cause for pride, both for the glamour and style of its theaters, and performers who walked their stages in bygone times, but for the "gifted" who by right called the towns of St. Lawrence County home. Bessie Pickens, born and raised in Heuvelton, possessed a voice of such beauty that it would lead her to Europe and the court of King Edward and Queen Alexandria, and back to America and a reception as a prima donna.

NOTES

¹Gates Curtis, ed., *Our County and its People: A Memorial Record of St. Lawrence County* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1894), p. 153.

²*Oom Pah Pah: The Great American Band*, The New York Historical Society Exhibit Catalogue (New York, 1982), pp. 7-8.

³*Ibid.*, p. 8

⁴Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in 19th Century America* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1974, p. 12.

About the Author

Richard Rummel is the Programs Coordinator for SLCHA, and a free lance writer, and an experienced amateur actor, specializing in dramatic recitations and kazoo solos.

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Gormand & Ford "Ladies Night" coupon [note misspelling of Colton]. (Courtesy of Gormand Ford, Bart Ford's grandson, who lives in South Colton)



"A Nostalgic Christmas," Silas Wright House and Museum, December.

SLCHA Annual Reports 1983

Director's Report

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association has just completed its 36th year of operation. Trying to summarize the organization's activities over the past twelve months is not a particularly easy task precisely because the Association continues to evolve into a multifaceted group. No longer can a simple listing of summer tours or community lectures suffice as a record of the year's accomplishments. With the support of nearly 1,100 members, countless volunteers, and the general public, I am pleased to report that the SLCHA is advancing toward its overall goal to preserve and promote the history of St. Lawrence County.

The operation of the Silas Wright House and Museum continues to be the major program of the Association. It is hard to believe that only six years ago, the Wright House was still being reconstructed, exhibit galleries were non-

existent, and the general public could not gain access to what had been promised as a new county-wide museum. During the past twelve months, the same house has hosted a wide variety of special exhibitions, programs, and other activities for our membership and the general public. The exhibition schedule included *What is Victorian: Too Much is Not Enough*, an interpretive explanation of the nineteenth century culture; *St. Lawrence County Collects Ironstone*, a study of the types and chronology of this popular china; and *Strike Up the Music*, a major showing of the county's past glories in village bands, opera halls, and home musical entertainment. This year, in conjunction with all exhibits, special programs were offered such as a February afternoon of Victorian foods and parlor games, an April lecture on evaluating ironstone, and various October programs on local musical personalities and events. The production of *Heart-*

song was a total re-creation of Victorian parlor entertainment and was jointly coordinated by Malcolm McCormick of Gouverneur and Virginia Christiansen of Canton. The year closed with the most successful Christmas season ever at the Wright House. Decorations, spectacular food, a reader's theatre presentation, and an original children's play combined to make the week of holiday programming very special.

The inauguration of coordinated exhibitions and programming has been through the efforts of Richard Rummel who, with the support of the New York State Council on the Arts, became the Association's first full time programs coordinator in February. Mr. Rummel has also worked on other Association activities, including the development of a summer road rally, in which drivers followed route directions written in a manner similar to early twentieth century automobile guides.

All of these exhibits and programs

are offered as one means for the Association to publicize the county's heritage. But tours remain a popular offering and trips to Ottawa, Rochester, Burlington, Montreal, Brockville and Camp Pine Knot in the Adirondacks proved to be both educational and entertaining for the many participants. (And our list of wonderful restaurants in the Northeast is growing steadily!)

The Special Events committee under the direction of Betty Coots and Ruth McKean once again outdid themselves in providing monthly candlelight dinners, a combination antique auction and cocktail party, and a fall brunch. Coupled with an ice cream social held in Massena at the Festival of North Country Folklife in August, these events not only generated over \$5,000 in operating revenues but also provided many days of tasty leftovers for the Association staff and volunteers.

Physical plant maintenance and improvements are highlighted by the completion of a long-overdue project - the total replacement of the roof on the archives/storage building. Even though some funds had to be borrowed to augment gifts from Corning Glass and from the estate of Frank Newman, the roof had been in poor repair for a number of years and could wait no longer. Furthermore, the project resulted in a total rearrangement of the building's second floor. Formerly a

rabbit warren of inadequately heated and insulated rooms, the space, when completed in 1984, will consist of a well-designed costume and textile storage area, a small furniture and tool storage area, and a much-needed collection processing and repair area. New wiring, lighting, additional detection sensors, complete insulation, and repaired ceilings will finally allow the Association to approach more closely the high quality professional care conditions deserved by the items entrusted to our care.

The collection itself has continued to grow with the addition of such items as nineteenth century musical instruments, glassware, books, an Edison 1903 record player, a Brasher Iron Works stove, clothing, quilts, two wonderful plaster busts, a Victorian hat rack made with deer hooves, Atwood Manley's research files on J. Henry Rushton, an 1858 coverlet woven and embrodered in the Town of Fowler, genealogical research material, and much more. All of these items are vitally important as the Association continues to preserve and interpret county history.

The Association's strongest and most enduring program remains *The Quarterly*, now in its 27th year of publication. Varick Chittenden, volunteer editor since 1977, has turned the periodical into an award-winning model local history publication. Although Varick's commitment to the Association will change in 1984, when he will step down as editor, we are confident that the new editor, Judith Ranlett of Potsdam, will maintain the magazine's high standards.

During 1983, the Association undertook no other major publications primarily because the cost of such private printing is becoming prohibitive. The reprint of the 1878 Everts *History of St. Lawrence County*, however, was partially distributed by the organization.

All of the above programs have continued to be based upon the wealth of primary and secondary research material in what is now known as the St. Lawrence County Archives. During 1983 the reorganization of these vital records has continued with the increased use of acid-free storage materials. The process of sorting and properly housing books, diaries, photographs, unbound manuscripts, and account books as well as responding to numerous written and oral requests for information is not an easy one. Prior to October, Doug Welch toiled twenty hours a week in the archives, but, unfortunately for the Association, Doug has received full-time employment elsewhere. This has required a re-shuffling of duties and a promotion for Vivienne

Conjura, formerly Association Secretary, to the position of Administrative Assistant. The new arrangement is working well and the tedious process to improve archival management continues unabated.

Financially, the Association is certainly more stable than five years ago. The sustained operational support of the St. Lawrence County Legislature, the Village of Canton, our loyal membership, private foundations, business and industry, and friends in addition to special project assistance from NYSCA is deeply appreciated. Also, a small endowment fund will be established as soon as several estates, pending for over a year, are finally settled. However, more stability does not mean complacency, for the meeting of current expenses continues to be a touch-and-go matter. The healthy competition from other charitable institutions and our need to maintain and improve our services combine to form the Association's most serious challenge to future health. It is hoped that others will wish to contribute via bequests, insurance policies, or outright gifts to eventually make the endowment fund a meaningful source of revenue.

Volunteers, friends, and the Association's support staff remain the core of this operation. Members of the Board of Trustees remain personally committed to the success of this organization and give all of us the encouragement to solve current and long-range problems. Our many activities - from the complicated and time consuming production of *Heartsong* to the addressing of the newsletters - would not be possible without the volunteers who willingly donate their time. Their support, which is impossible to recognize individually, is greatly appreciated. Vivienne Conjura, Association Administrative Assistant, gives far more time, energy, and expertise than the Association can adequately compensate in cold hard cash. And the addition of Richard Rummel to the staff has been a terrific plus. Not only is he creative, adaptable, and capable; but he has personally made my job considerably more pleasant and manageable.

Looking ahead to 1984, the Association must continue to refine and expand its programs so that the maximum number of people throughout St. Lawrence County are served. The work of upgrading collection care and archival management must continue if we are to truthfully fulfill our goal of preserving local history. And, finally, financial management for now and the future cannot be overlooked. Unexciting or not, the business end of any charitable/educational organization is critical. I am confident that 1984 will see these goals addressed.



Clay Selleck giving recitation "when Father Carves the Duck" in SLCHA production *Heartsong*, October.

BALANCE SHEET—December 31, 1983

**GIVE A
YEAR-ROUND GIFT
Membership in S.L.C.H.A.**

- LIFE—\$250.00
- PATRON—\$100.00
- SUSTAINING—\$50.00
- CONTRIBUTING—\$25.00
- REGULAR—\$15.00

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President Ruth Blankman, Canton
 Vice-Pres..... Robert Burns, Potsdam
 Secretary Lynn Ekfelt, Canton
 Treasurer Mary Jane Watson
 South Colton

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Byron Gale, Harrisville; Dwight Mayne, Massena; Ruth McKean, Canton; Robert McNeil, Lisbon; Bernard Sperling, Ogdensburg.

Term Expires 1985:

Christopher Acker, Ogdensburg; Richard Buckley, Piercefield; Varick Chittenden, Canton; Betty Coots, Canton; Harry Wheaton, Ogdensburg.

Term Expires 1986:

Paula Faust, Canton; Dori Lyons, Canton; Beverly Markkula, Canton; Nicholas Viskovich, Massena; Harold Wilder, Canton.

Staff:

John A. Baule, Director; Richard L. Rummel, Programs Coordinator; Vivienne H. Conjura, Administrative Assistant.

Committees 1984

Finance:

Robert Burns, Chair; Varick Chittenden, Paula Faust, Chris Acker, Harry Wheaton, Mary Jane Watson, Harold Wilder.

Membership:

Dwight Mayne, Robert McNeil, Richard Buckley, Nick Viskovich, Beverly Markkula, Byron Gale, Bernard Sperling.

Special Events

Ruth McKean, Chair; Betty Coots, *Win Gulick, *Doris Wheaton, *Connie Hanson, *Anne Piskor, *Irma Markert, Dori Lyons, *Anne Musselman, *Marilyn Jones, *Betty Randall, *Claire Stuba.

Archives

Lynn Ekfelt, *Jan Treggett.

*denotes non-trustee

Current Assets:

Cash in Bank - Operating	\$ 1,047.
Cash in Bank - Special	17.13
Cash in Bank - Capital	50.28
Cash in Bank - Blankman Memorial	6,363.56
Cash in Bank - Money Market	1,396.46
Cash in Bank - Certificate of Deposit.....	3,306.59
Deferred Interest	232.86
Investments	771.88

Total Current Assets **\$ 13,186.14**

FIXED ASSETS:

Silas Wright House and Museum	196,100.05
TOTAL.....	\$209,286.19

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities:

Withheld Payroll Taxes	\$ 637.66
Advance Payable - Old Hollywood	0
Architectoral Fees Payable	1,870.00
Mortgage Payable	17,037.05
Loan Payable - St. Lawrence National	1,000.00
Loan Payable - st. Lawrence National	1,816.21

Total Liabilities

Restricted Funds:

Greenblatt Endowment	\$ 2,250.00
New York State Council on the Arts	1,850.00
Blankman Endowment	5,633.00

Total Restricted Funds

Equity.....

TOTAL.....

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENSE AND RETAINED EARNINGS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1983**

	1984 Budget	1983 Budget	1983 Budget
Income:			
<i>St. Lawrence County:</i>			
Historian	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$ 11,000.00
Operating	11,000	11,000	11,000.00
New York State Council on the Arts.....	11,000	0	0
Dues	16,500	15,000	16,263.70
Gifts	5,000	3,500	6,355.19
Interest.....	3,000	500	1,730.33
Village of Canton	5,000	5,000	5,000.00
Admissions	0	200	42.00
Cookbook/Sales	5,000	5,500	1,471.13
Miscellaneous	1,500	500	1,769.19
Fund Raising	6,000	6,000	6,749.37
IMS Grant.....	0	5,000	4,526.00
Advertising (Quarterly)	5,500	5,500	3,775.00
Total Income.....	\$80,500	\$68,700	\$ 69,708.91
Expense:			
Salary - Director	\$16,500	\$16,000	\$ 16,000.14
Salary - Historian/Admin. Asst.....	8,500	5,500	4,336.57
Salary - Secretary	0	4,200	5,034.04
Salary - Program Coordinator	12,000	0	0
Fringe Benefits	400	600	352.65
Payroll Taxes	3,900	2,700	2,204.97
Supplies and Postage.....	4,000	4,550	3,952.59
Utilities	8,500	8,500	8,771.72
Insurance.....	2,000	2,000	2,047.29
Interest.....	1,500	1,500	1,820.28
Repairs	3,000	3,000	6,458.73
Publications	7,000	6,000	4,938.00
Printing	2,000	1,500	3,308.28
Exhibits and Programs.....	3,000	2,000	2,971.24
Subscriptions	500	500	478.26
Conservation.....	1,000	1,000	1,228.10
Travel.....	500	750	176.75
Miscellaneous	500	500	659.75
Contingency	500	1,000	0
Total Expense	\$64,739.36		\$ 64,739.36
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR.....			\$ 4,969.55
EQUITY - Beginning			172,222.72
Transfers/Debt Reduction	5,200	6,900	0
EQUITY - ENDING	\$80,500	\$68,700	\$177,192.27

From the Editor's Desk . . . A Final Word

This issue of *The Quarterly* completes seven years of my work as its editor. (Not bad, considering that I only expected to do two issues as interim replacement in 1977, to bring it up to date!) Seven years . . . 28 issues . . . 696 pages. Few local historical societies in this state, yes even in the nation, produce that much written history, especially with such a diverse, qualified, and dedicated group of volunteers, in any similar period of time. As a member and trustee of the Association I am very proud of this ongoing effort. As the fifth editor in its twenty eight years of publication, I have been especially pleased and honored to serve.

But the time has come for a change. The seven years in Old Testament terms have been good times; in folkloric terms they have been good luck; and in editors' terms they have been enough. Thus this is my final issue . . . and my final word as editor. We are pleased that Richard Rummel, Programs Coordinator for SLCHA, will be guest editor for the upcoming April issue, devoted to several aspects of American military history and the County's roles in it. It will be an especially important publication. And, on behalf of the Trustees, it is my pleasure to announce the appointment of Judith Ranlett of Potsdam as the next *Quarterly* editor, beginning in July. Judith is a member of the history department at State University College at Potsdam, with particular interests in American history, women's history, and family history. She has been a prime mover in the founding of the new St. Lawrence Valley Genealogical Society. She will do a wonderful job with this journal, bringing fresh ideas and interesting perspectives to it. I wish her the very best.

I can not write this final word without pointing to a few favorite achievements and acknowledging the invaluable help of several people. Major changes in 1977 came about with a decision to use the modern, "clean," three-column page and the *Life* magazine layouts of large photographs and extended captions. We have since worked toward producing a careful balance in each issue: of a great variety of topics to interest many readers; of formal and informal styles of writing; of academic and amateur researchers and writers, both experienced and new to the experience of being published; of representing various parts of the County whenever possible; and of good copy complemented with interesting and pertinent illustrations.

With the combined diligent efforts of

the late Eugene Hatch and of Lynn Case Ekfelt, Rob and Anne Ichihana, Margaret Ringwall, John Baule, Joan Kepes, and Mildred Smithers, the first major index of *The Quarterly's* topics, titles, and illustrations was compiled in 1983, a great achievement, useful forevermore. And the decision by the Board of Trustees in 1983 to include paid advertising in the journal as a source of income for the first time should soon lead to flexible and (sometimes) expanded issues in the future.

During my tenure as editor, many interesting and very well done articles have been submitted, making this job worthwhile. I shall be especially fond of remembering the *estschrift* honoring Ed Blankman and the special issue in tribute to Mary Smallman; there was also the commemorative twenty-fifth anniversary volume in 1980, which included the contest winners from high school students and adults across the County; and there were the theme issues devoted to agriculture and to summer recreation in the County over the years. Memorable articles too numerous to mention by name have ranged from studies of the temperance movement, the Hepburn libraries, the county court house, several local artists, and entertainment, to amusing and interesting reminiscences of cattle drives, itinerant peddlers, and surviving as a recalcitrant boy in a one room schoolhouse. Many fascinating, previously unpublished photographs from family albums and the collections of Town Historians and town/village museums have enlivened the pages of the journal in recent years.

And last . . . words which will never adequately express my gratitude to so many people who have helped and encouraged the work of the last seven

years: to the authors, who devoted untold hours to research and planning and writing, out of a love for their topics and a sincere wish to share what they have found (where would we be without *them?*); to the lenders of drawings, maps, photographs and everything else conceivable and inconceivable; to the Trustees and staff who praised, encouraged, suggested, and continued to support *The Quarterly* as costs increased (perhaps they did so for fear that, if they objected, they would be editing it themselves!); and to the several volunteers who paste labels, bundle packages, keep mailing lists, and all the difficult tasks it takes to get such a publication off to members all over the nation.

Specifically, I wish to thank Paul Jamieson who, for years, patiently, carefully, promptly, and without complaint, read and corrected the many columns of proof from the printer, making the magazine creditable, professional and accurate. Thanks also to the fine and talented staff at Ryan Press who have made invaluable contributions to the appearance and the readability of our magazine. They make interesting suggestions for design and have improved the quality of photographic reproduction a hundredfold, no small tasks with some of the challenging materials I have sent them over the years.

Finally a thank you and farewell to the most valued people of all, you the members and readers who continue to support SLCHA's efforts - including this journal - and do so with patience (as in waiting for late issues), kindness (compliments are nice rewards), and enthusiasm (it helps us in getting the next issue out). It has been my pleasure.

— Varick A. Chittenden

'Tracing Your Ethnic Roots' Conference Set

The St. Lawrence Valley Genealogical Society is sponsoring its first spring conference, "Tracing Your Ethnic Roots," on Saturday, April 28, 1984 at the United Methodist Church, 28 Main St., Potsdam, N.Y. The conference will feature internationally known speakers and displays by local businesses and other genealogical societies.

In addition to the speakers and displays, we are planning to have a

short presentation by Mr. William Strong of Watertown, NY, who is in the process of organizing a Civil War Reenactment unit, "C" Company, 94th New York Volunteer Infantry, in the northern New York area.

For more information about the St. Lawrence Valley Genealogical Society and its spring conference, write to P.O. Box 86, Potsdam, NY 13676-0086.

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