

THE QUARTERLY

Official Publication of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association

July 1984



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VOLUME XXIX

JULY 1984

NO. 3

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*This publication is made possible in part with public funds
from the New York State Council on the Arts.*

The Quarterly is published in January, April, July and October each year by the St. Lawrence County Historical Association.

Extra copies may be obtained from the History Center, P.O. Box 8, Canton, N.Y. 13617, at \$2.00 plus 25¢ postage and handling.

Editor: Judith B. Ranlett

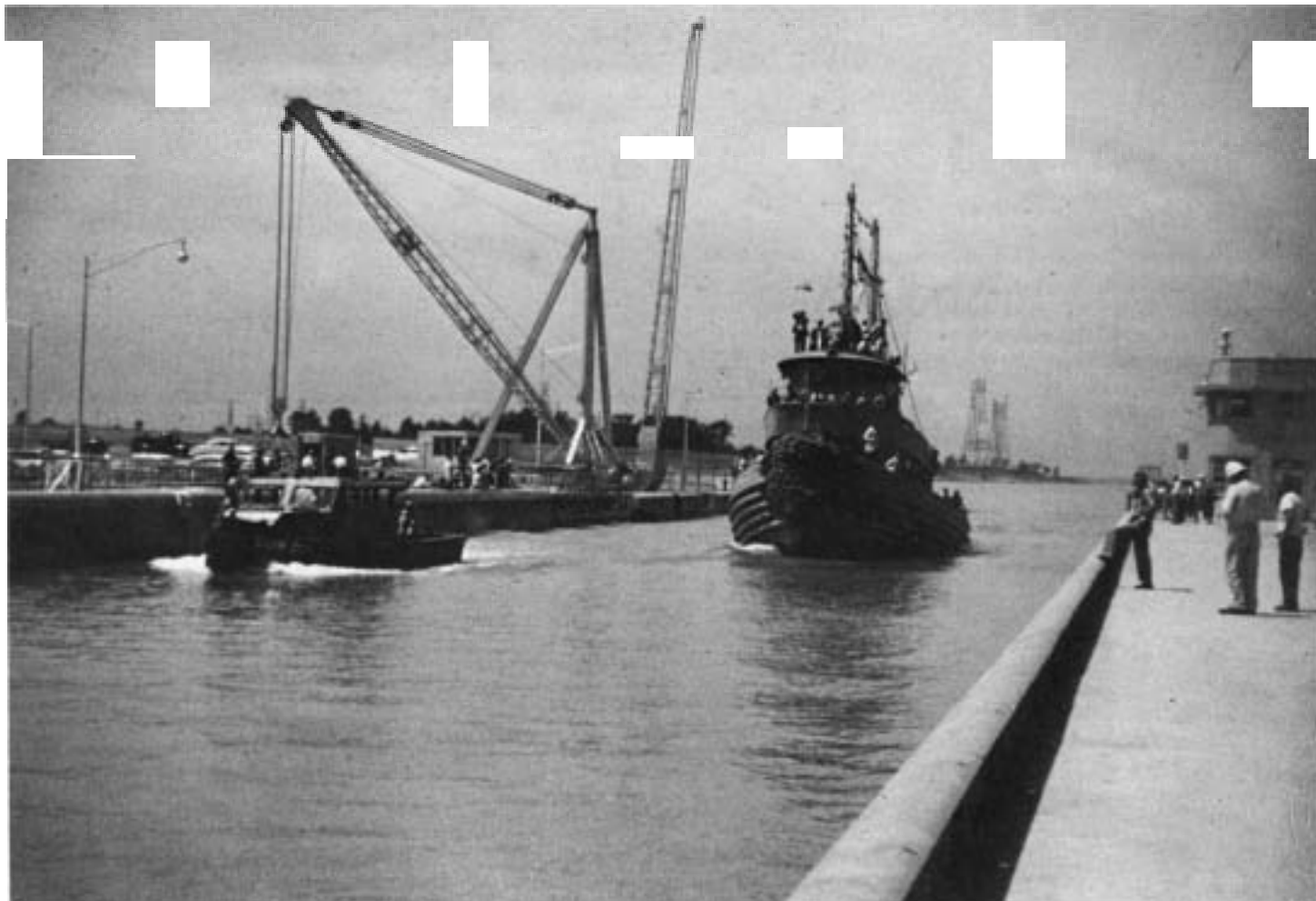
ISSN 0558-1931
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1984

Cover: President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Queen Elizabeth II of England were present in 1959 at the opening ceremonies of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a joint project of Canada and the United States. Nineteen eight-four marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Seaway.

The St. Lawrence Seaway: Twenty-Five Seasons

"In the brief time that I have been speaking to you, there has run to waste on their paths toward the sea, enough power from our rivers to have turned the wheels of a thousand factories, to have lit a million farmers' homes," asserted Franklin D. Roosevelt in his inaugural address as Governor of New York State in 1929. Roosevelt, of course, had in mind the power potential of the St. Lawrence River. Fulfillment of Governor Roosevelt's vision required thirty more years—till 1959—and the joint efforts of both the United States and Canada. This year, 1984, marks the twenty-fifth season of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a vast construction project which changed forever the river Jacques Cartier explored and Frederic Remington painted. The completion of the Seaway twenty-five years ago created a 2,342 mile "marine highway" from the Atlantic Ocean to the western end of Lake Superior at Duluth. Before the Seaway, twenty-two locks delayed passage between Montreal and Lake Ontario, and only narrow vessels of shallow draft could squeeze their way through the bottleneck. Today, 80% of the world's ocean-going vessels can have access to the interior of the United States and Canada.

The St. Lawrence Seaway has indisputably from the commencement of construction to the present day played a major role in the history of St. Lawrence County. Reflecting on this first quarter century of operation, one recalls, however, not only what is present today, but what was lost to progress: rapids and farm lands and homes and businesses inundated. The pictorial essay which follows illustrates both gains and losses.



The new locks at Massena. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)



Air view, Waddington shoreline after Seaway. White strip, right foreground, is Old Route 37. Roda Lumber Company, new location of railroad station, ruins of old pulp dock, new pulp dock, are in far right foreground. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)

Air view, Waddington shoreline before Seaway. Dam in foreground extended from Main Street to Ogden Island. White strip, left foreground, is St. Lawrence Avenue (Old Route 37). Lower left foreground shows Black Jack's dock and extension of Oak Street. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)



Dam and businesses along Canal Street in Waddington, now under water. Lower end of Main Street. Building on shore at right was moved to Maiden Lane and is now used as Gib's Restaurant. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)



Rapids Prince. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)



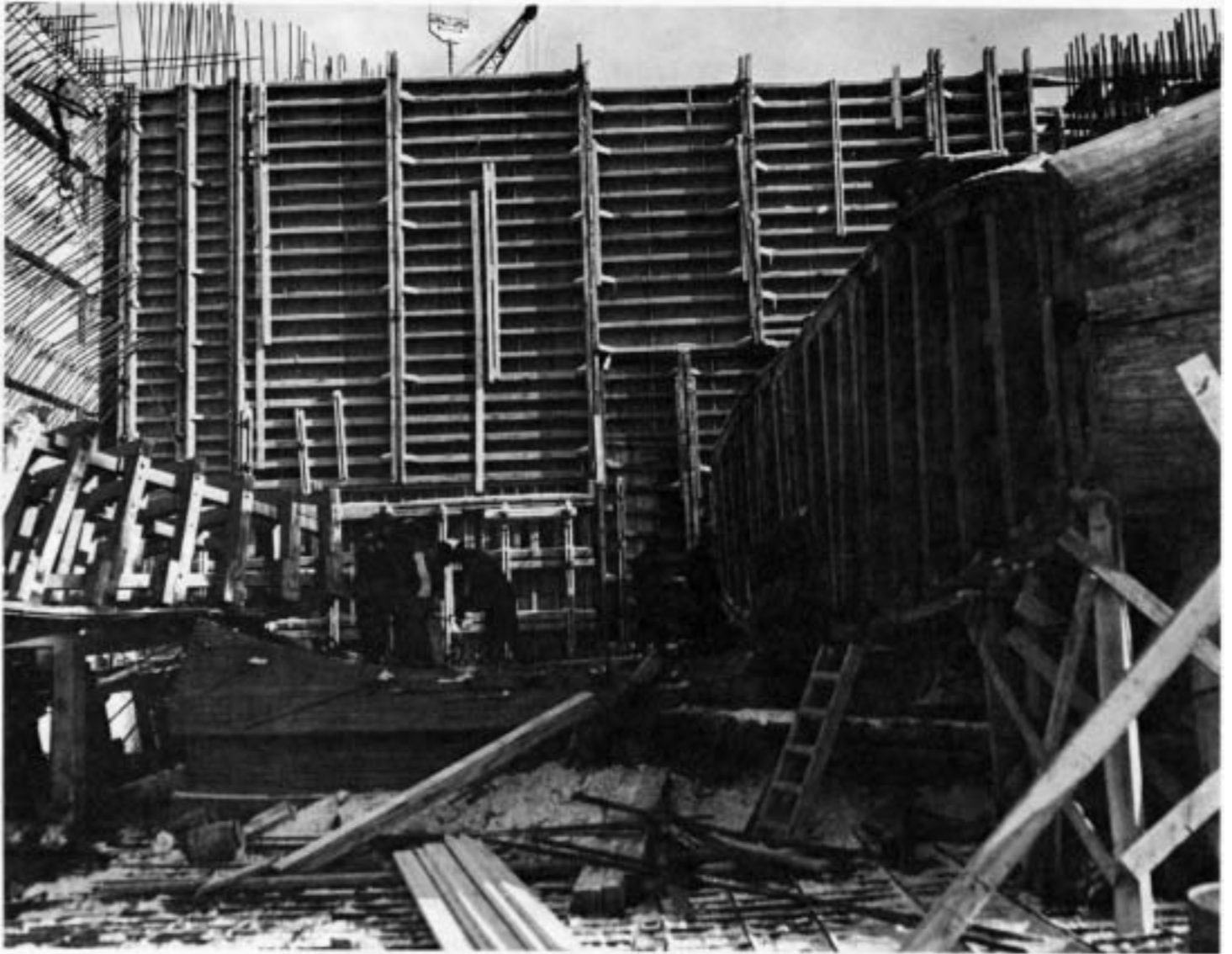
Ogden Island House, view from causeway. Demolished during Seaway construction. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)



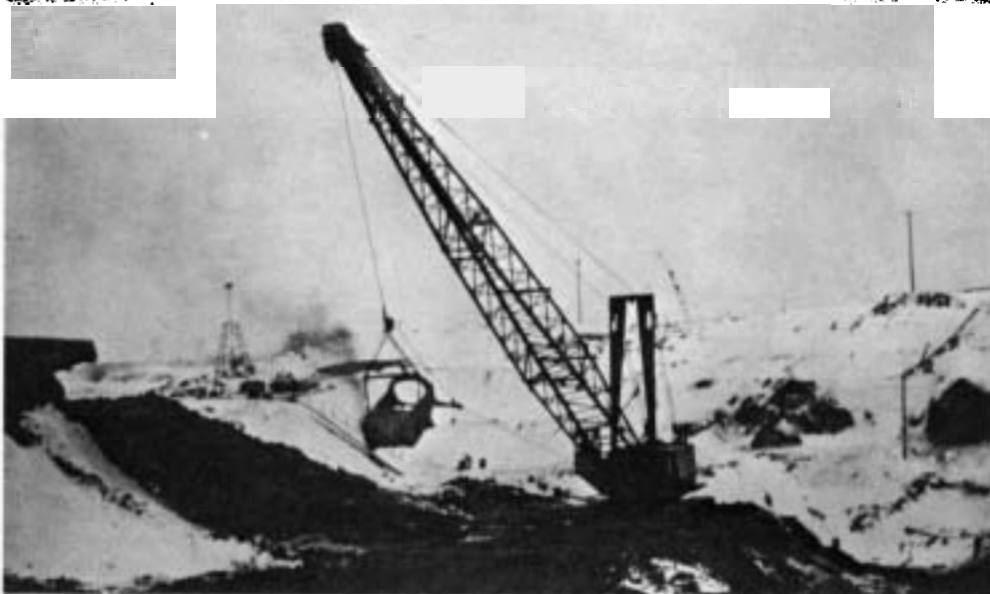
Businesses on St. Lawrence Avenue at the end of Main Street in Waddington about 1955. This area is where the town park and dock are now located. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)



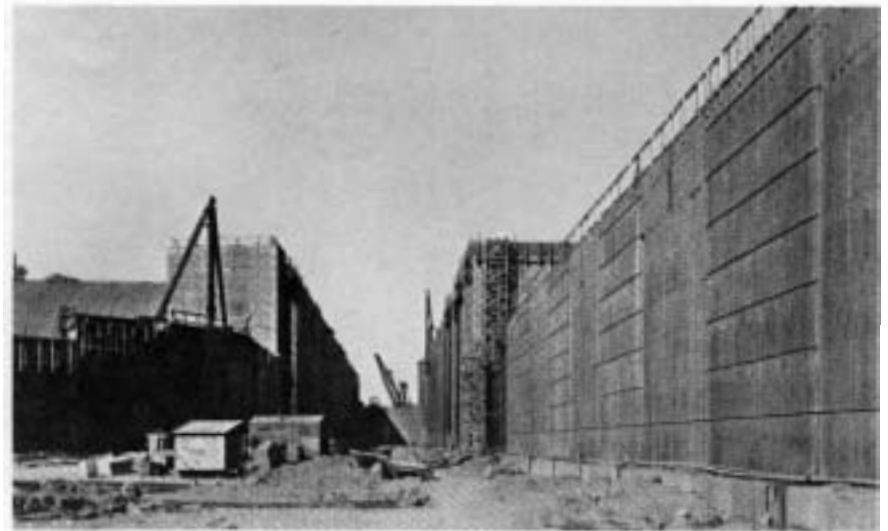
The original Waddington location of the railroad depot, Waddington Milk Company, Runkel's Chocolate factory and other businesses. This area is now under water. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Tedford, Town of Waddington Historian)



*Erection of a draft tube form suggests the scale of the construction projects involved in the Seaway.
(Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)*



Winter construction, near Massena. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)



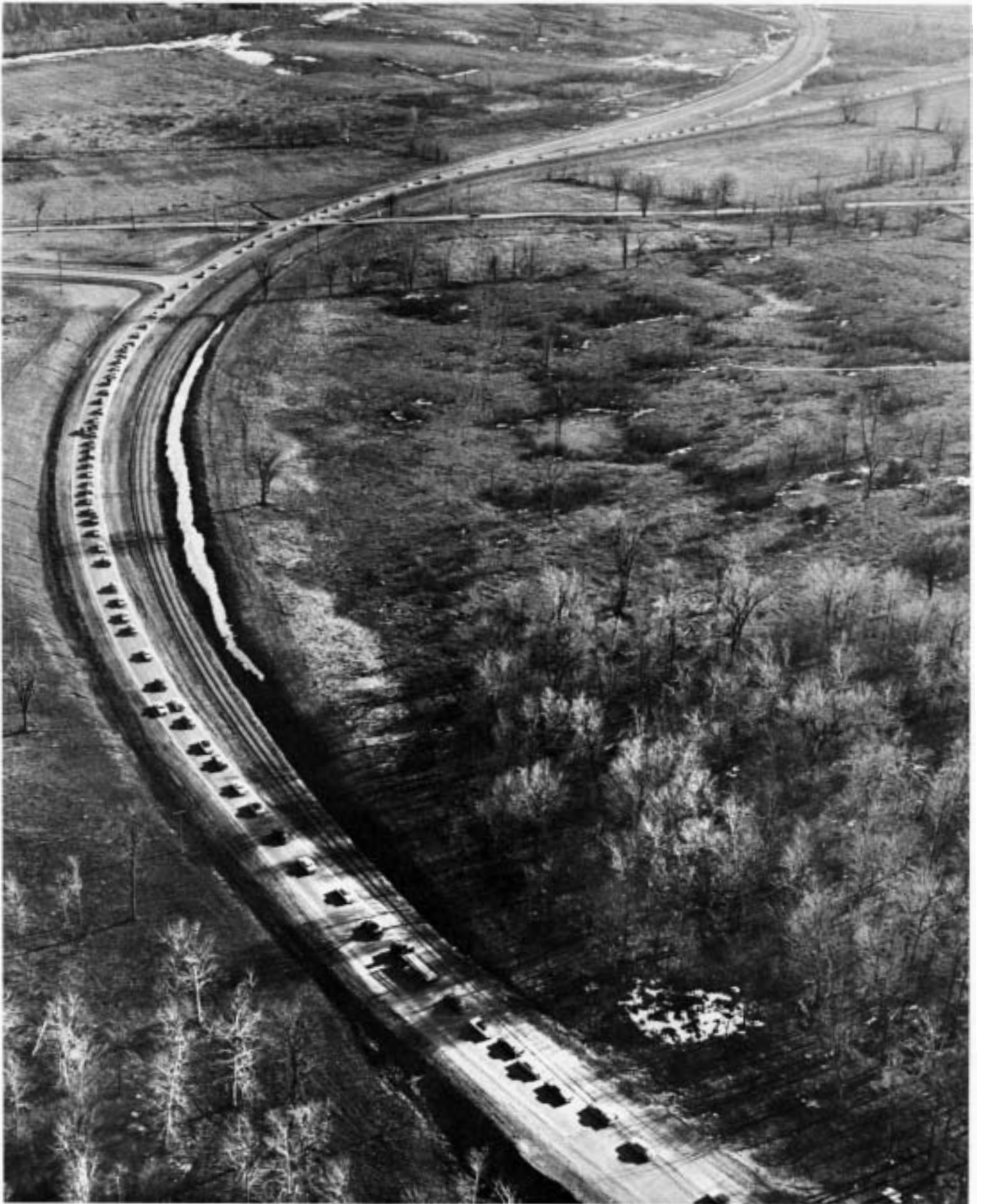
The Eisenhower Lock under construction; east end looking west. (Photo courtesy of the Ogdensburg Public Library)



The St. Lawrence power dam under construction; American half in foreground, Canadian in distance. (Photo courtesy of the Ogdensburg Public Library)



Construction of the Seaway in Massena area. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)



The impact of construction on the local economy is shown by this aerial photo of the access road taken at shift change in the Spring of 1958. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)



Retaining walls and curbs are being built in the parking area in front of the entrance plaza at the Robert Moses Power Dam. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)



General view of the downstream face of the St. Lawrence Power Dam. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)



Seaway opening ceremonies in Canada. (Photo courtesy of the Dumas family of Massena)

Remington's River: Studies on the St. Lawrence

by Carol R. Wenzel-Rideout

A frontier, to most Americans, has historically meant a region on the edge of settled territory, and Frederic Remington is strongly identified with the western frontier. Another definition of a frontier, however, is a border between two countries, and much less well known are Remington's paintings, featured here, of the St. Lawrence River—an eastern frontier where it serves as the boundary between the United States and Canada.

To the world, Frederic Remington (1861-1909) was one of the foremost artists to depict the American frontier experience. Along with Charles Russell in the fine arts, and Theodore Roosevelt and Owen Wister in literature, Remington captured a phase of the nation's history that has since become the universally-recognized essence of our cultural past. Remington helped elevate to mythic status the hero of the West, the American cowboy.

To the North Country of New York,

and particularly to St. Lawrence County, Remington is a native son, born into a prosperous, prominent, steadfastly Republican Canton family at the outbreak of the Civil War. His paternal grandfather, Reverend Seth Williston Remington, helped found St. Lawrence University; his maternal grandfather, Henry Lewis Sackrider, was an elder in the First Presbyterian Church. The artist's father, Seth Pierpont, (or Pierre) Remington, founded the *St. Lawrence Plaindealer* in 1856.

In 1861, Seth married Clara Sackrider; late that same year, he enrolled in Scott's 900, the first U.S. Volunteer Cavalry for the Civil War, only months after the birth of his only son. Mustered out of the army in 1865, "Colonel" Remington repurchased his newspaper, and resumed the course of his life.

Frederic Remington grew up in St. Lawrence County, moving with his parents from Canton to Ogdensburg at age 10, when his father was appointed Collector of Customs for the Port in



Studio, 1907—Remington signed and titled this sketch of his studio at Ingleueuk, his island in Chippewa Bay. The back of the studio, not visible here, had a porch or piazza facing the St. Lawrence River toward Canada. In broad strokes of a dry brush, Remington depicted the sharp contrast between sunlight and purple shadows. There is a feeling of cool rustling shade beneath the trees, broken by the vibration of intense white sunlight. (Photo courtesy Frederic Remington Art Museum, Ogdensburg, New York)

Ogdensburg. He continued to enjoy the usual boys' pursuits of swimming and mischief-making, while his interest in horses, nurtured at the Fair Grounds and Fire Station of Canton, grew and deepened as his father became involved with the breeding and training of racing horses.

The North Country retained its hold on Remington, even after his abortive College career at Yale University's School of Fine Arts, his Western travels in the 1880's, his marriage to Eva Caten, and his emergence as a leading author-artist. Everyone knows Remington's legacy to the North Country, knows his birthplace and resting-place in Canton, his childhood home in Ogdensburg and the Museum his wife and close friends founded as his memorial. But few people stop to think of the North Country's influence on the artist, reflected in the many paintings he did of Northern New York and Canada.

For this summer, the Frederic Remington Art Museum has mounted an exhibition of oil studies painted by the

artist during the last few years of his life, principally on the St. Lawrence River at Ingleneuk, the island purchased by Frederic and Eva Remington in 1900. There, in the Cedar Island group of Chippewa Bay, Remington enjoyed three months of every year from 1900 to 1908, boating, swimming, and visiting with friends while he worked on his illustrations for *Collier's Weekly*.

Remington painted these studies for his own enjoyment, rather than for publication, using prepared canvas or paper boards instead of stretched canvases, an indication that they were not meant to be permanent, not meant for sale. Less than finished paintings, but more than notes for future paintings, these sketches occupy a unique position in the artist's total output. In these works, unlike his paintings for reproduction, there is no narrative element, no story. Each is the product of contemplation, as the artist observed the landscape; each is an exercise of the artist's ability to capture the essence of that landscape with minimal strokes of the brush.

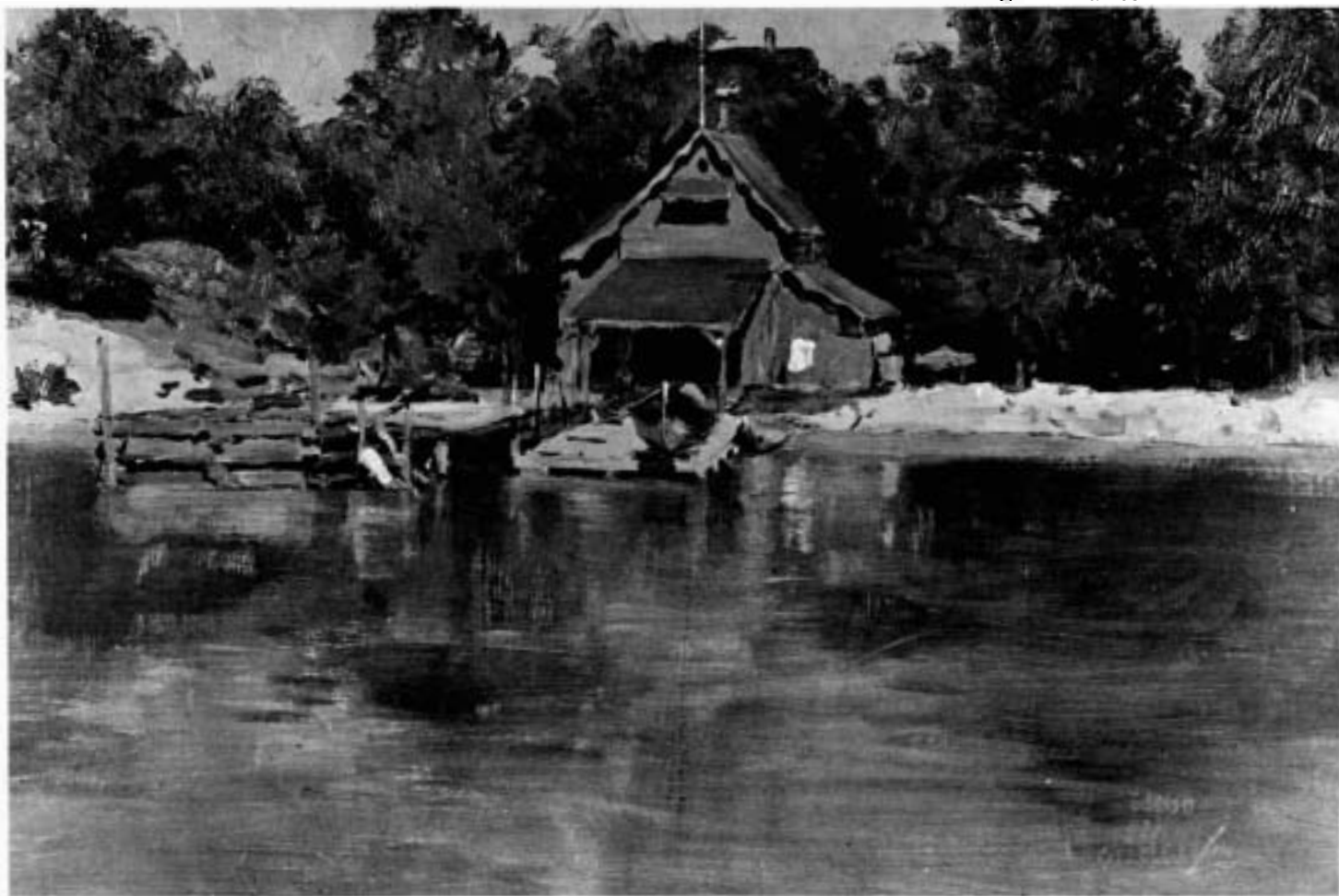
Never belaboured, these studies are quick, spontaneous evocations of scenes known to Remington from his youth. Impressionistically handled, the prime concern of these works is light and color: objects are undefined, their contours shifting and blending with their surroundings.

Despite the rapidity of their execution, and the unusual subject matter, these works do not lack significance: neither for us, to whom they reveal otherwise untold sentiments and inclinations, nor for the artist, whose signature designates those he considered complete statements of his aims.

The exhibition, "Remington's River: Studies on the St. Lawrence," continues through September 15th. The Museum is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 1-5 p.m.

About the Author

Carol R. Wenzel-Rideout is the Assistant Director of the Frederic Remington Art Museum in Ogdensburg. She is currently transcribing and editing Remington's diaries for 1907 to 1909.



Boathouse at Ingleneuk, n.d.—Contemporary photographs of Remington's skiff house with its old dock show the island name, "Ingleneuk," painted across its upper level. A single horizontal brushstroke suggests that the artist repeated the name in this painting, then thought better of the idea, and painted it out. Remington owned several types of craft, including the least one Rushton canoe, a birch-bark canoe often depicted in his paintings, and his "put-put," probably a boat equipped with a single-stroke, one-lung engine. (Photo courtesy Frederic Remington Art Museum, Ogdensburg, New York)



Chippewa, n.d.—Possibly a study executed at Chippewa Creek, this painting explores the tall grasses at the water's edge. Blues, greens, and yellows, applied in individual narrow brushstrokes, purposely scratched and scrubbed by the end of the brush handle, form a tangled web of living and dying grasses. A single blob of orange left of center suggests a butterfly among the reeds, charging the scene with color and imbuing it with movement. (Photo courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming)



Untitled, n.d.—This stark little painting is almost shocking in its modernity. What seems at first a hodgepodge of squiggles is a quick study of a point of land with trees reflected in water at sunset. Remington worked rapidly in the changing, fading light to capture the dark silhouettes against the orange sky and waters. (Photo courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming)

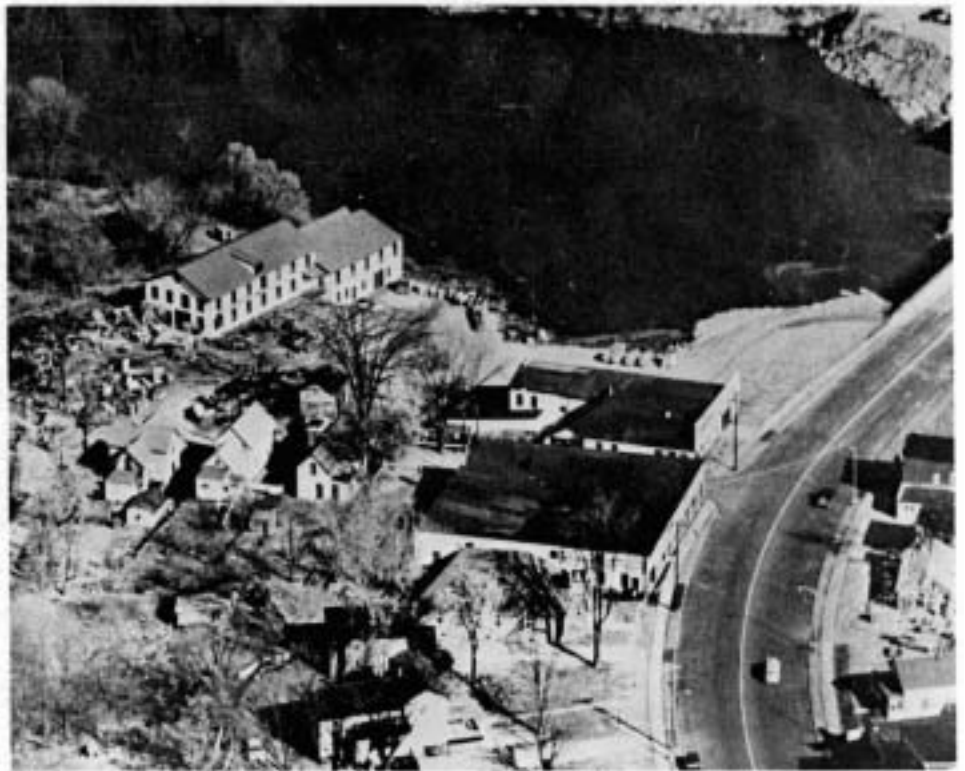
Silk Mills in Gouverneur

by Nelson B. Winters

Silk manufacture in the United States does not usually evoke images of St. Lawrence County. Here the author recounts the history from 1916 to 1935 of two silk manufacturers in Gouverneur, the Gouverneur Silk Mills, Inc., and the Cortland-Gouverneur Silk Mills, Inc.

In the summer of 1916, the Gouverneur Chamber of Commerce learned that a Cortland, New York, silk manufacturer wished to relocate its Theresa, New York, branch. It was looking for larger quarters in a community which was served by a railroad and had a favorable labor supply. By November negotiations between Terry and Jones, a New York City firm, and David Scholton of Gouverneur, owner of the Scholton Marble Works, had been completed. The silk mill would come to Gouverneur and occupy the Scholton Marble Works, located on the west bank of the Oswegatchie River about two hundred feet north of the Main Street Bridge. The industry was incorporated November 27, 1916, as Gouverneur Silk Mills with \$50,000 in capital stock. Its first directors were L.T. Jones and F.E. Terry of New York City and J.A. Moss of Cortland. The money required to move the facilities from Theresa was raised by the Gouverneur Chamber of Commerce under the leadership of A.M. Jepson and Charles McCarty.

Prior to start-up in February 1917, superintendent Fred LeRoy arrived to locate housing for himself, two foremen, and the operators who would instruct the local women in weaving. The marble works was remodelled by local contractor Joseph West and machinery installed on the second floor of the Scholton works. About fifteen looms were set up initially, and, after a short training period for the weavers, work commenced. About twenty-five persons were employed at first, but the company contemplated expansion and an estimated total employment of 150 workers. Meanwhile, Mr. Scholton carried on his monument business on the ground floor.



The silk mill in Gouverneur prior to building the new mill in 1922 is the white building in the upper left. The section nearest the river is the original mill. The longer segment is that built in 1917. The 1922 mill was constructed to the left of the buildings shown here. What remained of the structure was deliberately burned on October 14, 1969, to clear the site for construction of the senior citizens' housing development.

The Gouverneur Silk Mills lasted only about six months. On May 21, 1917, a new corporation, Cortland-Gouverneur Silk Mills, was formed with \$112,500 capital to acquire the old company.

The mill manufactured pure silk cloth in large bolts which were packed and shipped elsewhere for manufacture into finished products. The yarn was imported from Japan to New York and shipped north by rail. Some perhaps came to Gouverneur via Canada through the port of Ogdensburg.

By June, 1917, the business had enlarged to include the first floor of the building, and both floors were being expanded by a twenty-four by fifty-six foot addition. The offices were shifted to the new part, the stairway to the second floor was changed to pass the office, and a small elevator was installed. Landscaping the property included razing two old storehouses and levelling and seeding the whole area. A garage for company cars was built. Management was especially well pleased with the prospects in Gouverneur and encountered little difficulty in securing the extra help required.

Production increased substantially from the former 1000 yards daily. Winding, warping and twisting machines were set up for about twenty

new employees, bringing the total employed to eighty men and women. They worked fifty-four hour weeks: from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday.

In May of 1922 a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was held, the object of which was consideration of a proposition by the Cortland-Gouverneur Mills to establish its main plant in Gouverneur. It would represent at least an \$80,000 investment, and the company requested that first mortgage bonds on the property be issued to the amount of \$35,000 and subscribed to by the residents of Gouverneur. Chamber president James Dolan presented a complete statement of the silk mill affairs and recommended the issuance of the bonds. Investment in the bonds was endorsed by the officials of both the First National Bank and the Bank of Gouverneur. A chamber special committee to solicit subscriptions was appointed and consisted of W. Leonard Caten, chairman, C.C. Donald, Charles R. Rodger, J.J. Wallace and E.C. Curtis.

At the regular June meeting of the chamber, President Dolan reported that \$25,700 of the proposed bond issue for the establishment of the Cortland Silk Mill had been subscribed. The bonds were of \$100 denomination mak-

ing it possible for small investors to participate. There is no record what the interest rate was. At this point it might be mentioned that only fifteen years had elapsed since the bankruptcy of the original International Lace Manufacturing Company, whereby local investors had lost about \$100,000. It is unknown who, other than the Aldrich and McAllaster families, gambled a second time on the future of a new textile industry in Gouverneur. One difference between the two situations was that investors were buying first mortgage bonds rather than, as previously, preferred stock.

A Chamber of Commerce committee composed of Nelson R. Caswell, president of the First National Bank, James O. Sheldon, cashier of the Bank of Gouverneur, Barnard G. Parker, president of the Savings and Loan Association, W. Leonard Caten, manager of J.E. McAllaster and Sons, and John J. Wallace, International Pulp Company superintendent, was appointed to draft the necessary bond and mortgage and name a suitable trustee to hold the same. Mr. Caten and Burton W. Aldrich, cashier of the First National Bank, were chosen to hold the bond and mortgage which were delivered to them on August 1, 1922. Wallace J. Streeter, cashier of the First National Bank, later succeeded Mr. Aldrich on the latter's death.

On July 28, 1922, at a meeting in New York, the Cortland-Gouverneur Silk Mills, Inc., took final action in arranging for the removal to Gouverneur of their principal offices and manufacturing plant. Plans called for the erection of a new building of approximately 10,000 square feet attached to the present mill. Employees would increase to 160, 80% of whom would be female. Mr. LeRoy was to continue as superintendent and general manager of the plant. All grades of material would be made including piece-dyed and skein-dyed broad silks—the materials consisting of pure silk, artificial silk, and cotton-silk mixtures. Work on the new building progressed rapidly and on November 21, 1922, a community dance was held in it to celebrate completion. The affair was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce with nearly 400 people in attendance.

As a result of the Trust Agreement between the Gouverneur-Cortland Silk Mills, Inc., and the trustees for the bondholders, a drawing was held in May, 1929 for the retirement of \$3500 face amount of the first mortgage bonds. The lucky holders (for so they turned out to be) were F.W. Pruyne, B.O. Kinney, A.F. McAllaster, G.M. Frazier, J.C. Dolan (3), the H.G. Aldrich Estate, Roy Enos, F.E. Cox, Sol Kaplan, H. Saidel, Caswell Securi-

ties, D.G. Scholton, J.J. Wallace, Whitney Garage, F.W. Mott, G.F. Leak (2), C.C. Donald (7), the Bank of Gouverneur (3), and the First National Bank. If the reader has mentally added the number of bonds and comes up with 34, that is how it was reported in the May 22, 1929 *Northern-Tribune*. As noted earlier the bonds were of \$100 denomination.

For twelve years the mill had been a profitable operation and a decided asset to Gouverneur and its inhabitants. The number of employees varied depending on economic conditions and to some extent on changing styles. However, in July 1929 the mill shut down. The silk business in general was at a low ebb as silk substitutes took a larger share of the market. The employees were given indefinite layoffs.

By October the prospects for reopening the mill were remote, and an Assignee's Sale was held to dispose of the assets. The plant was bid in for the bondholders, with no one else making a bid. In February, 1930 there were rumors that outside interests were considering reopening the mill. In the meantime the bond mortgage trustees, Caten and Streeter, sold ten looms and some other equipment to a Paterson, New Jersey silk company. The balance of the looms and the other equipment were sold to Morris Ruderman who was engaged in the junk business. Mr. Ruderman held the equipment until all hope for reactivating the mill has lapsed.

A heavy, wet snowfall in December 1929 collapsed the roof on three quarters of the 1922 mill, and the rest was declared unsafe. The loss was estimated at \$20,000. The record does not indicate if there was any insurance coverage. At a meeting of the bondholders presided over by J.O. Sheldon it was decided that the portion of the building still intact should be made stronger and the more modern machines protected. A Bondholders Protective Committee made up of J.C. Dolan, N.R. Caswell, Charles McCarty, G.F. Leak, and E.C. Vaile was appointed with full powers to dispose of the property or act in any other manner for the benefit of the bondholders.

In July 1931 the Gouverneur Village Board authorized the purchase of certain power rights owned by the silk mill for the sum of \$1800 which, together with moneys realized from the previous equipment sale, enabled the bondholders' trustees to make a 15% liquidation payment on November 1 to holders of the outstanding bonds. That left the total indebtedness at \$28,300. The original mill had a rental occupant, and a sand and gravel pit on the property was reopened.

On May 6, 1935 the Cortland-Gouver-

neur Silk Mills property on Mill Street was purchased by Hyman Saidel for \$2500. At that time Jack Ruderman occupied the old building with a second hand machinery and junk business. This was the end of the property as far as the silk mill company was concerned.

The Bondholders' Trustees announced a final liquidation payment on the outstanding securities would be available in an undisclosed amount on and after August 15th. Some guesswork and a little arithmetic would suggest the remaining bondholders lost 75-80% of their original investment.

In the summer of 1939 Mr. Saidel offered the silk mill property and other real estate he owned in the same area to the village for a parking lot, town office, garage, and storage space for \$13,000 payable in installments over a ten year or longer period. A deal never developed.

Charles Ruderman of Ruderman Machinery Exchange purchased the old mill in 1942 and used it as a warehouse for his various enterprises. In 1969 Mr. Ruderman sold his Mill Street real estate to the Cambray Housing Corporation. The curtain act for the silk mill was a controlled fire by the Gouverneur Volunteer Fire Department on the night of October 14, 1969 whereby the old mill building was levelled and now is part of the foundation for Cambray Court, the senior citizens housing development.

Some former employees as listed in the 1921 village directory: Fred C. LeRoy, Gen. Mgr.; Carl Morrow, Foreman; Ruth Boscoe, Frances Countryman, Mertie Griffis, Sarah Liscumb, Anna Merithew, Gertrude Monteville, Nelson June, Inez Stickney, Flossie Swem, George Thomas, twister, Laura VanValkenburg, Louise Washburn.

Note: At some point in time between 1930 and 1948 the remaining portion of the 1922 addition ceased to exist. The author has been unable to learn when and how. The possibility of fire has been suggested.

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About the Author

Nelson B. Winters is the Village Historian for Gouverneur and a frequent contributor to *The Quarterly*. His most recent article was on the International Lace Manufacturing Company of Gouverneur in the April 1983 issue.

From Auchindinny Mill to Edwards

by Edith Cleland Duffy

Scotland sent many of its sons and daughters to northern New York in the early nineteenth century. Among them was the family of Alexander and Elizabeth Kerr, part of whose well-documented history is given below.

In February, 1819, Alexander Kerr of Auchindinny Mill, near Edinburgh in Scotland, a man described as "being honest & well disposed," signed a contract with Joseph Pitcairn. Mr. Pitcairn, who had vast landholdings in northern New York State, agreed to pay the passage to Edwards, New York, of Alexander Kerr, his wife, Elizabeth Hislop, and their six children, ranging in age from nine to eighteen: Helen (the eldest), Walter, Jane, John, Elizabeth and Christine. Their contract, typical of those under which many immigrated to the United States, is given in full.

"This Agreement between Joseph Pitcairn and Alexander Kerr, Witnesseth

- 1st That Alexander Kerr engages himself His Wife and Daughter, as Servants to Joseph Pitcairn (and to go with them soon as Convenient to America, to the lands of J.P.) for the term of three years to Count from the time of his arrival there—
- 2d The said Alexander Kerr will attend to whatever is put under his charge; and Labour in all reasonable & Lawfull employments diligently and faithfully—which Joseph Pitcairn or his Agents may give him to do—that his Wife and

Daughter will also attend the Cattle prepare Victuals for the people and do all reasonable & proper work on a farm as Customary for Women, during the same periods.

In consideration of which Joseph Pitcairn

- 1st Engages to pay to said Alexander Kerr forty six pounds Sterling yearly Wages as also Twenty four pounds Sterling as board Wages, making together Seventy pounds Sterling—for each year of Services as above
- 2 Jos. Pitcairn further Engages to furnish Alexander Kerr with a free house, a piece of land for a Garden, and a place where to Graze a Cow, & provide winter food—
- 3 Jos. Pitcairn further engages to Rent or sell to Alexander Kerr (if he desired either) Land, at the Lowest Rates, and most favourable terms of payment.
- 4th Joseph Pitcairn, also engages to advance Alexander Kerr what money he may need to pay his Passage and that of his family to America, as also what may be wanted when there on his Journey to Joseph Pitcairns Lands—And Alexander Kerr engages and binds himself to

repay the same fully with all charges of Insurance Interest & in the Course of three years or sooner if in his power.

The two Parties bind by this also their heirs, Administrators & Assigns.

Done in Edinburg this Eleventh day of February in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight hundred & Nineteen.

Duncan [Cowan?] Witness Alex. Kerr
James Scott Witness J. Pitcairn

Carrying a detailed letter of instructions from Joseph Pitcairn, the Kerrs embarked for the United States in late March 1819. They sailed to Quebec City and then took passage—at \$2. a person—for the 185 mile trip to Montreal. From Montreal they took another boat to St. Regis, walking at the rapids as their letter of instruction stipulated. Leaving the Saint Lawrence River, the family went overland to Deer River. There Mr. Pitcairn's agent sent them with a cart and driver to Edwards.

Upon reaching Edwards, the Kerrs were to begin work on the farm at the Bend (now within Edwards Village). If their house was ready, they were supposed to occupy it at once. (Evidently the house was not ready, as they stayed first in the George Allen house, as did other early settlers from Scotland.) "Should you arrive early," directed the letter, "Potatoes must be planted and if late turnips Carrotts onions &, in short you must directly sett to work to provide winter provision doing what appears proper."

Apparently not all circumstances in Edwards were what the Kerrs had hoped or expected. In what seems to be a reply to a letter of complaint, Joseph Pitcairn's chief agent in New York City wrote to Alexander Kerr:

2 May 1820

Mr Alexd Kerr Sir

Your letter of the 12 April is received. I observe your many complaints of Mr Allan, but I know in whatever he does he acts as he thinks is his duty. I am sorry that the house is uncomfortable, but you will recollect that there are many men who own lands that dont have even windows to their houses, and in your County you will see proof enough of this—My advice is, that you will endeavour to please Mr Allan, which you and family can easily do if you are only willing—and to consider that you are placed in a situation that many



Helen "Nellie" (Kerr) Watson, shown warming her feet in the home of her daughter Laura Earle, was the oldest daughter of Alexander and Elizabeth Kerr. She was born in 1800 in Scotland and died in Edwards in 1897. Her husband was Robert Watson, Jr., a stone mason.

covet, and that by prudence, economy & Industry you are certain to acquire a happy independence for your old age, but if you dont endeavour to exert yourself by a few deprivations for some years, you may remain in a dependent situation for ever, in place of leaving a handsome property to your Children—allow me therefor as a friend to recommend your careful attention and that of your family to those things, and to take an example from Industrious frugal American Settlers or from European Settlers who have the laudable ambition of being independent proprietors & that in a few years, and whose labours are not confined to fixed hours—I am aware that you miss the society of many neighbours, and that people are not pleased with a new Country for years, but men of good sense, will easily surmount those things, and those trifles they have been accustomed to, and will act in the way they ought to do, which I am convinced will be your Case, in the faithful discharge of your duties you have to fulfill. I therefor refer you entirely to Mr Allan, hoping that the above will meet your Careful perusal, as well as that of your family, being dictated by the most friendly motive—and you will always reflect that this is a new Country, and not Scotland—and how many persons who a few years ago had only an axe, now have fine farms.

The crudeness and loneliness of a new land did not permanently discourage the Kerrs, especially the younger generation. The children of Alexander and Elizabeth all married, most of them to other Scottish immigrants. Helen (Nellie) married Robert Watson, a fellow Scot. Walter married Charlotte Hutchins. Jane married William Cleland, who had come from Scotland one year before the Kerrs. John married Jane Hill and Elizabeth married James Campbell; both Jane and James were born in Scotland. Christine married William Lowrie, also a Scottish immigrant, and they moved with their family to Wisconsin in 1856. The elder Kerrs, Alexander and Elizabeth (Hislop) Kerr, became landowners and lived the remainder of their lives in Edwards. According to tradition, Elizabeth, "Grannie" Kerr, never completely adjusted to life in Edwards. She suffered severely from homesickness which worsened as she became older, but there was no turning back. Meanwhile, these valuable documents attest to the details of one family's odyssey to Saint Lawrence County.

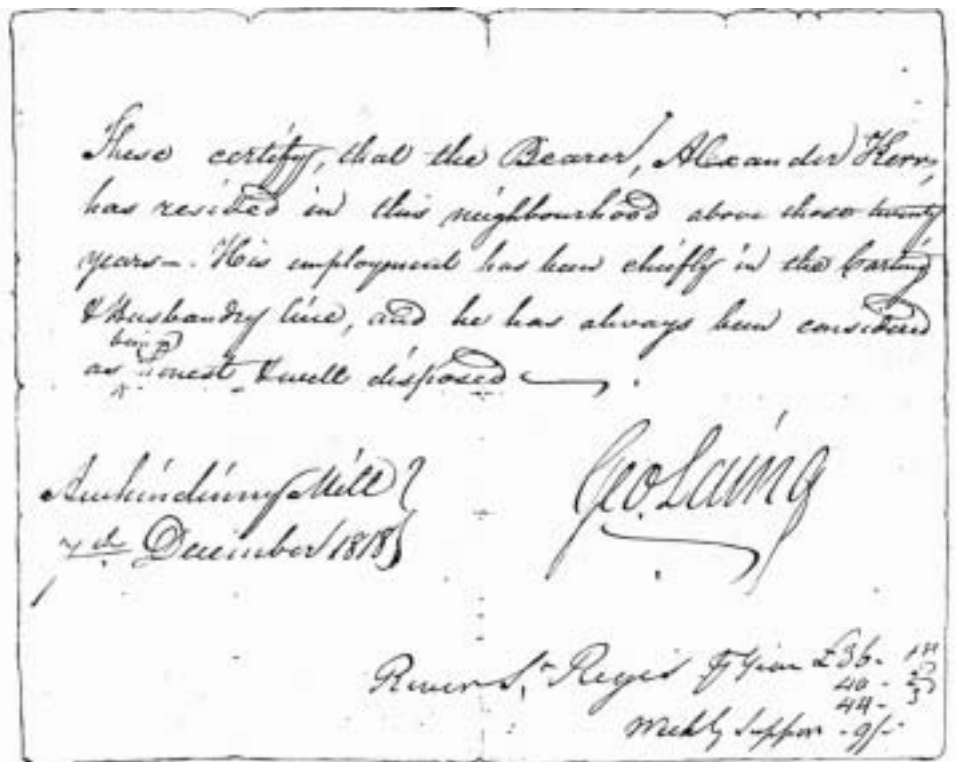


About the Author

Edith Cleland Duffy is the historian for the Town of Edwards.



William Cleland (1794-1887) came from Scotland in 1818. He married Jane Kerr (1802-1886), a daughter of Alexander and Elizabeth Kerr.



This testimony to the character of Alexander Kerr which preceded his hiring by Joseph Pitcairn is a sample of the family papers used by Edith Cleland Duffy.



Hazel Bancroft Freeman is the second from the left at the top. Wearing shoes did seem to put her in a minority! Can any reader identify any of the other people in this photograph?

Pleasant Valley School Days

by Hazel Bancroft Freeman

Hazel Bancroft Freeman (1890-1981) began her formal schooling in Pleasant Valley, but her education started earlier: "I have been told that as soon as I could talk plainly my parents taught me a list of facts which I recited to all who cared to listen. I learned that I lived in the town of Edwards, county of St. Lawrence, state of New York, the name of the river near us was Oswegatchie, Roswell P. Flower was governor of the state and Grover Cleveland was the president." After leaving Pleasant Valley School, she attended high school in Edwards and in Gouverneur, travelling by the Gouverneur and Oswegatchie Railroad to the latter.

I started school for the spring term (the last twelve weeks of the school year) before my sixth birthday and I'm sure there was never a day in my growing-up years as strange as that one. I went with Jessie Babcock, who lived on the next farm, carried my lunch in a tin paint pail which Mother had thoroughly cleaned and also carried a Barnes first reader, a huge slate (with a crack the full length of it) and a new slate pencil. To me, the school room was a big building, completely filled with boys and girls of all ages, all talking at once. With the exception of Jessie, to whom I clung in desperation, I remember only two, Olive Brayton who had come with Minnie to start her education, and Roy Freeman. Before school started, he was sitting on a desk and holding a Barnes Reader. That

looked familiar and I ventured to tell him that I had a book like his. He said that it wasn't the same and when he opened it, I saw that the picture on the front page was of a man and a boy with a horse and carriage. Mine had a dog and underneath were the words "Dog. It is a dog." That peculiar circumstance puzzled me for some time. In my mind's eye, I can see Roy now as plainly as I did then.

As nearly as I can remember, these were the pupils who were racing around the school grounds on my first day of school. A goodly number came from the pasture road. They were Jerome, Jesse, Melissa, Sarah, Pansy and Euseba Heath, who lived in a shack on the edge of the beaver meadows nearly three miles from school; Horace Alfred, Joseph Harold

Warner and James Howard Augustus Brotherton, Elizabeth and Joseph Eager, Grace and Ben Brayton. Henry, Fred and Jessie Babcock went from Grandpa's farm and Bertha, Warren and Carrie McGill, from the log house at the top of the hill. Eva Brayton lived across the road from the school house and Mabel Freeman was the nearest pupil. Max and Sarah Sprague came from the Sprague farm, Minnie and Olive Brayton and Roy Freeman from the farms across the main road. Minnie Donohue lived in the small rented house and George and May Sayre lived on the Geer farm at that time. Kate Sullivan, Arthur and Lola Knight from the Talcville area completed the list.

The school was noisy and crowded and the young teacher, Carrie Cleland, who was teaching her first and only

year, must have been exhausted and discouraged at the end of each day. The building consisted of one room, with walls and ceiling painted a dull drab, a splintery pine floor with wide boards and dirt-filled cracks between. The building had six high windows, three on each side, equipped with tattered shades on rollers that didn't function properly. It was heated by a worn box stove which had one leg replaced by a square of flat stone. A long pipe led to the chimney in the back of the room. The seats and desks were pine and had once been painted like the walls. Various initials were cut into the desks and they were liberally stained with ink. A few were equipped with shelves for books and one had a cigar box nailed inside.

The school equipment was very scarce. There was one map—a large, battered one of New York state, which hung on the back wall, rolled and tied when not in use. The blackboard was a section of the wall boards painted black and there were two short chalk trays. The trustee wasn't in favor of frequent purchases of chalk and never bought more than one box at a time, so we used each piece to its very last. The erasers were wood with strips of colored felt glued on each side. Cleaning the erasers was a dusty task, usually delegated to the pupils. [The] most interesting [equipment] was the "Chart", a large book which hung on a three pronged metal frame and was easily (and often) upset. A few of the pages contained simple language lessons and had no pictures but the really interesting ones had bright-colored pictures, a short story in large letters and a few questions. One of them was a picture of a boy and a kite. Underneath was the sentence, "Yonder, flies the kite". I have heard Jerry Sullivan say that he always thought that "Yonder" was the boy's name. The chart furnished English lessons for the first few years. We had no library nor reference books except a Webster's dictionary, covered with stout canvas and resting on a special shelf.

The course of study was limited but we learned reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic and grammar quite thoroughly. There were five Barnes readers, with yellow covers, and beyond that we read from a Barnes history book, later, changed to a Montgomery. Our Swinton's Speller contained lists of words adapted to all grades. On occasional Friday afternoons we were allowed to "spell down". The teacher selected two captains who chose alternately until there were two lines of pupils on opposite sides of the building. The teacher pronounced the words, choosing easy ones for the younger children. When a word was misspelled on one line and spelled correctly on the other,

the leader on the victorious line could choose a speller from the other side. When there was only one line, each failure meant one less, until only the best speller was left.

The first few grades had no arithmetic books. The teacher put the lessons on the board and we did them on our slates. Later we had Milne's Arithmetic books, which dealt with everything from simple addition to cube root. During the first years we learned about the town of Edwards and St. Lawrence county without the aid of books. Then our parents invested in Barnes' geography books—a thin square book (really about 10 × 12) for earlier grades and a much larger one for the 7th, 8th and 9th grades. In the older grades, we studied physiology (Blaisdell's) my most unfavorable subject. Our Maxwell grammars taught us the mysteries of analyzing sentences by diagram, [but they contained] no literature. We did study "Evangeline" in the eighth grade.

At least once and usually twice during the year, the teacher prepared a program. We started with singing "America" and ended with "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean", there were two or three dialogs and each pupil had at least one recitation. The very first program in which I participated was on Arbor Day when I was only five and very much bewildered by the entire performance. I was the last one in an exercise in which each pupil carried a letter which helped to spell "Arbor Day". The teacher and older girls had made the letters from cardboard covered with cedar and I made the mistake of carrying my Y wrong side up. I said "I'm just a yellow cow slip, the humblest flower of spring". When I told my father about it, he said that he hadn't known before that cow was spelled with a Y. That puzzled me greatly until Mother explained to me that the Y was for "yellow" and not for "cow". We practiced diligently during recesses (and not in school hours) for every program until most of us knew parts of every recitation. Helena [her sister] and I used to say them while we were doing the supper dishes.

Pleasant Valley had the nicest playground of any school that I knew. A row of tall elms across the front shaded it and the one in the center was always the goal tree (we called it "gool") when we played "Cubs and Bears", our favorite out-of-doors game. In different parts of the playground, we played "hunt the Old Gray Wolf", Palm Still-No Moving and Steal Wedges. In my early school days, a rail fence enclosed the school ground and teetering was our favorite sport. The teeter boards were flying during noon hours and recesses but the district voted to build a sturdy board

fence to replace the rail one and teeter boards were strictly forbidden. The new fence was painted white and topped with a flat board which served as a walk for all of the boys and a few of the girls. Many of the pupils went barefooted during the warm weather but Helena and I always wore shoes and stockings. We weren't the only ones but we were in the minority. I always thought that the shoes were the reason that I couldn't walk on the top of the fence.

By the time that I reached sixth grade, the Heaths and Brothertons had left Pleasant Valley, the older pupils were no longer in elementary school and district number ten had an average of sixteen girls and eight boys, with a few changes each November when the farm tenants changed. That was when Eva [Brayton] came into her own. She and Carrie McGill were in my grade for most of our years in district school. Eva was a born organizer and I still wonder how she managed to get everyone to help carry out her plans. She and the McGill girls always went home for dinner while the rest of us brought our lunches. Before we had finished eating, the door opened and Eva sailed in, flinging the brown shawl from her shoulders as she came. She encouraged us to finish our lunches quickly or better still, save the rest for afternoon recess, reminding us that she had been home, eaten her dinner, and returned so we had been given ample time. With very little grumbling, we put away our dinner pails and took our places for Blind Man's Bluff or whatever game she had selected as a starter. The teacher always boarded at one of the two nearest houses and was gone during most of the noon hour and we had time for several games. There were surprisingly few quarrels or serious accidents and those noons and recesses seemed much longer than an hour and a half now. Sometimes when we were tired of London Bridge, The Needle's Eye, Chase the Squirrel or the wide variety of "circle games", we formed two lines and marched around the building singing "Marching Through Georgia" at the top of our voices. During the winter months we made snow men, snow forts or played "fox and Geese" on pleasant days and on cold, stormy ones we knew twenty or more games.

My Pleasant Valley teachers, after Carrie Cleland, were Mary Winslow (2nd), Allie Corey (3rd and 4th), Anna and Mabel Knight (5th), and Edna Boynton and Henrietta Snow (6th), Viola Harmon (7th and 8th), Rhoda Fox (9th).

I was thirteen when Carrie, Eva and I left Pleasant Valley school.

The Pyrites Expedition

by Stuart A. Winning

In the days before antibiotics, when even aspirin was a relatively new medicine, the great flu epidemic which accompanied the end of World War I was devastating. Here a participant in the battle against the Spanish flu in one small North Country community tells his story.

A distinct upsurge of influenza on the campus at St. Lawrence University in February of this year brought to mind by contrast the great "flu epidemic" of so-called Spanish Influenza which occurred in the fall of 1918 and which was of devastating magnitude, sweeping the whole of the United States. It was particularly virulent in the dense population centers and in the Army camps during the wind-down of World War I, but by no means did it fail to leave death and destruction in rural areas which were sparsely populated and where medical facilities were limited.

The North Country was not exempt. In Watertown there were 279 deaths in the month of October 1918. St. Lawrence County experienced the deaths of over three hundred. While the immediate Canton area, St. Lawrence University and the Agricultural School survived fairly well, there was one locality which, because of its particular structure and composition, was especially susceptible to the devastating nature of the epidemic—the hamlet of Pyrites.

Visitors to that community can still see vestiges of what it was during its bustling, thriving days as a papermill town. The mill was a huge stone structure utilizing the water power provided by the Grass River and serviced by a railroad spur that extended from the mill to a connection with the main line New York Central somewhere in the neighborhood of Jingleville. "Log trains" transported pulpwood logs from many parts of the North Country to the mill and carried out the finished product, which was eventually utilized by the owners of the mill—The New York "World".

The mill employed about 450 men who maintained a round-the-clock operation. While many of the employees had their families with them living in the surrounding areas, there were many others, mainly middle Europeans, who were without families and were housed in barracks-like buildings. The key to their susceptibility lay in the



"Doc" Winning practicing medicine without a license next to the woodpile.

crowded living conditions and in the fact that there were only half as many beds as there were occupants. The day shift would sleep at night, and the night shift workers would use those same beds in the daytime. The acute epidemic, however, did not observe working hours and when large numbers of employees became ill, there were not enough beds to accommodate their needs, and the use of cold floors was their only recourse. The nature of the disease and the lack of any effective treatment for it had much to do with the disastrous proportions of the epidemic.

The "Spanish flu" was no respecter of age or previous condition of health. Although it was especially deadly to the elderly, it also afflicted many of the able-bodied middle aged workers. Its onset was rapid, with high fever and the development, in 36-48 hours, of a type of hemorrhagic pneumonia which filled the lungs with blood, immediately limiting their capacity to provide oxygen to the blood stream, resulting in the death of the patient. There was no known specific treatment for the disease. Viruses which caused the disease had not yet been discovered, and antibiotics were twenty years away, leaving only supportive care available, but difficult to apply on the floor of the paper mill barracks.

It was in early October that the community and the mill people called for help. Their first appeal was to the local Red Cross, spelling out the extent of their problems—patients with high fever, coughing blood, and dying with no food or care of any kind. The appeal came to Mrs. Fred Hammond, chairperson of the local Red Cross, who, because the services of the Red Cross were already stretched to the limit,

appealed to Dean Hulett, acting president of St. Lawrence University, for any help that he might be able to provide to alleviate the situation. Everyone was fearful of having any contact with influenza patients.

The situation on campus at that time was somewhat different from a normal routine. World War I was in its last month and an Army unit known as the Student Army Training Corps had been established at the college, which included practically all male members of the student body. In an effort to meet the Red Cross appeal Dean Hulett, which the cooperation of Lt. Cutler, the commanding officer of the army unit, asked for volunteers who would be willing to go as a group to provide whatever help possible to the victims of the epidemic.

At first a half dozen students responded, obtained permission to leave the campus, and headed for Pyrites not knowing in any way what we were to encounter. Transportation to the area was quite impressive for us. Catherine Spears loaded us and our bundles into her big old topless Packard, and we headed for the hills.

The first few days were hectic to say the least, trying to find housing and food, and, most difficult of all, trying to provide some way to care for the sick. Local people were most cooperative and helped us set up a "hospital" in the local dance hall. Having worked in a drug store prior to coming to college, dealing with medications, soda fountains and Lydia Pinkham's Remedies, I was considered the one best equipped to head up the organization. We appealed for more help, and, in addition to more students, there arrived an experienced and dedicated nurse, Mary J. Allen from Canton, who had been a



A staff photo of the day shift at the Dance Hall/Hospital: Front row: Mr. Dafeo, caretaker, standing in front of Bill Tyler, Portia Forbes, Mary Kane, Mrs. Mary J. Allen, R.N., in white uniform, Lottie Southworth seated. Standing in doorway: Ellsworth Reamon.

Spanish-American War nurse. Others who responded were: Miss Kane, who I think was a teacher, Professor and Mrs. Morrell from the Theological School at St. Lawrence, and, most significantly, Dr. Frank F. Williams, medical advisor to the army unit at St. Lawrence, who assumed over-all medical supervision of the project.

Patients responded quickly to our help. In answer to our call for assistance, the New York "World" sent a box car load of cots which provided 36 beds in the so-called hospital. Local volunteers prepared food for the staff and the patients. The beds were full; we were going strong. Dr. Williams, who had graduated from Flower Hospital Homeopathic Medical School, came once or twice a week and patiently laid out the schedule of homeopathic medication, consisting of a designated number of drops of tincture of arnica in a specified quantity of water, a teaspoonful of which was to be given every hour. Aspirin was just beginning to be used, and he ventured into the virtually unknown and began administering it.

Adequate food, bed care and personal attention did a great deal for the patients, and a great deal for those who administered the care. There were two somewhat unsettling experiences that most of us who were involved will remember. There was one death among all of the patients for whom we cared. The other event had a more exhilarating aspect.

One night a young woman began to complain of abdominal pains, which at first came only at 20 to 30 minute intervals, but as the night wore on they became more frequent and much more severe. It had never come within the scope of my drug store experience to know the cause of such pain until she confided that she was about to have a

baby. Fortunately Mrs. Allen, the nurse, was available and came to our rescue. We created a make-shift delivery room by hanging sheets in the area to give the patient as much privacy as possible. It was at about this stage of our experience that I had firmly decided to embrace a medical career, and this instance enabled me to eliminate obstetrics as a future specialty.

At the end of four weeks practically everyone in the area had survived the epidemic and we began to assess the value and the cost of the experience. To some of us it was invaluable in determining the direction of our careers, but the cost of being absent from our academic life at the college was shattering. Some of those who volunteered suffered less because they served less time by rotating with others, but those of us who remained in Pyrites for the duration wondered how to survive academically. The faculty was most helpful. Because they were willing to make special assignments and provide individual

tutoring we squeaked through.

Of the full-timers two pursued lifetime medical careers. The other one was William Tyler, a native of Canton whose father was a local dentist. Among other full-timers was Ellsworth Reamon from Watertown who became an eminent Universalist minister, serving a church in Syracuse for nearly 40 years.

Since 1918 there has not been a serious nationwide epidemic of any kind, which is largely a reflection of the improvement in the socio-economic level throughout the United States. The other major factor, of course, is the progress that has been made in medical care during the last sixty-five years. It is difficult to fully comprehend and appreciate what life was like when one had to contend with such diseases as were prevalent in 1918. Tuberculosis, typhoid fever, measles, diphtheria, peritonitis from several sources, small pox, polio infections, tetanus and diabetes were but some of those for which there was no known cure and, with the exception of small pox, no known prevention. Today these are at least under control and, in some cases, have been virtually eliminated.

The paper mill has gone, sold to the International Paper Company and moved to Newfoundland. The railroad has disappeared as have most of the people who were involved in the "Pyrites Expedition". For those of us who remain, it is a vivid memory and one for which we are sincerely grateful.

About the Author

Dr. Stuart A. Winning is a 1922 graduate of the St. Lawrence University and earned his medical degree in 1926 from Columbia University. He returned to the North Country in 1950 to become Chief of Surgery at Hepburn Hospital; he continues to practice medicine.



Paul in bed #36, being visited by his mother.

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