

THE
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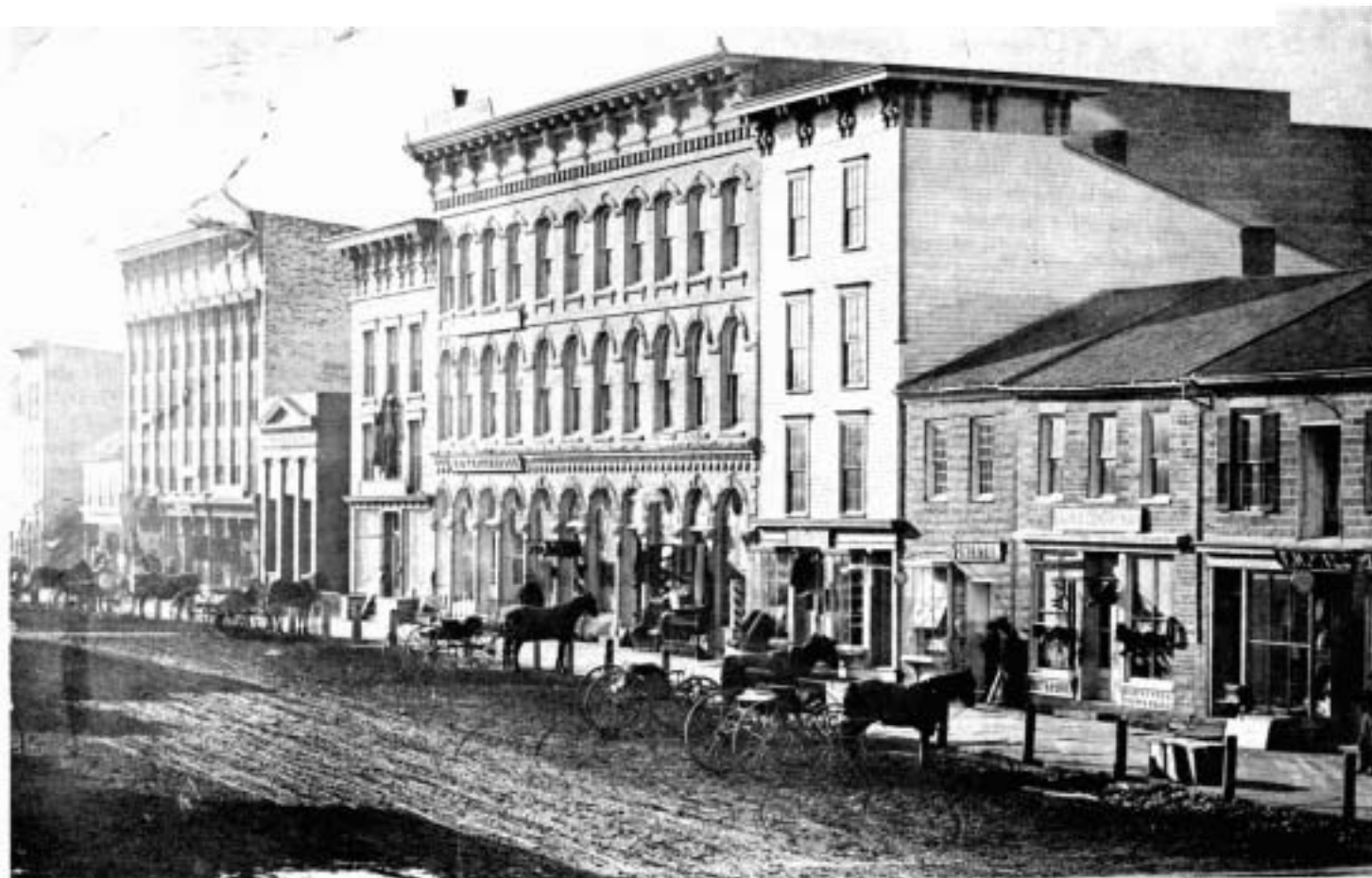
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Cover: A treasure from the St. Lawrence County Historical Association archives, identified only as a Methodist Church.



The west side of Market Street in Potsdam about 1875, with H.D. Thatcher & Co. in the center in the building today occupied by Kinney Drugs. (Photograph courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)

The Thatcher Story

by Robert Wyant and Victoria Levitt

In this initial segment of a two-part article, the authors trace the early life and business career of a fascinating figure in St. Lawrence County history.

Just over one hundred years ago, a Potsdam druggist invented something that contributed to the revolution of the dairy industry in the United States. The druggist was Dr. Hervey Thatcher; his invention was the glass milk bottle. It was said, somewhat inaccurately, to be the first glass milk bottle ever invented, and while there is room for discussion of that point, it clearly was one of the earliest, and certainly the first of its kind to be widely manufactured for use in this part of the country. While Thatcher is most known for his milk bottle, he was a versatile man whose contributions were many and varied. He was an important public figure with an inventive mind and a public conscience but he was also a man who had little talent for

financial matters. The story of his life, from the founding of his drugstore to his death in poverty, is an interesting one.

Early Years and Education 1835-1859

Hervey D. Thatcher was born at Newport, New Hampshire, on December 28 in either 1835 or 1837. Sources of information at Newport and at Potsdam differ as to the year. Probably he was born on the family farm located near Newport on what is still identified as "Thatcher Hill." His parents were Calvin and Hannah Meserve Thatcher. His ancestry can be traced to colonial times: one of his great uncles, the Rev. Caleb Thatcher, officiated as pastor of King's Chapel at the burial of Crispus

Attucks, leader of the mob in the Boston Massacre.

One might surmise that Thatcher's elementary education took place in a one-room country school near Newport. Legend suggests that he received his secondary education at academies in Newport, New London, and Washington, New Hampshire. Probably he did attend the academy at Newport, but the records are missing. His name cannot be found in the records of Colby Academy at New London. Records of the Tubbs Union Academy at Washington, New Hampshire, confirm that he was a student there in 1853.

Local stories claim that Thatcher arrived in New York at the age of seventeen. If this is true, he could have been born in 1837, attended school at

Washington in 1853 and come to northern New York in 1854. It has also been said that he attended academies at Potsdam and Ogdensburg, but the records of the St. Lawrence Academy at Potsdam and the Ogdensburg Free Academy are missing for the critical years. In view of the fact that census records indicate Thatcher's parents had moved to a farm in the Town of Stockholm, east of Potsdam, between 1850 and 1860, it seems likely that Thatcher came to Northern New York with his parents. Nevertheless, previous accounts of his arrival in New York do not mention it. Census records suggest that Thatcher's uncle, Warren Thatcher, had settled on a farm in the Stockholm area earlier in the nineteenth century.

In order to earn money for further education, the future Dr. Thatcher taught school briefly in Canton. Next, he went to New York City where he worked for a year at a drug store on Broadway. The Thatcher legend suggests that Ewen McIntyre, who had graduated from the College of Pharmacy of the City of New York in 1847 and later served as that college's president from 1877 to 1890, was instrumental in providing Thatcher with that employment. It has also been said that Thatcher worked briefly in the pharmaceutical business in Kentucky and that he had had some association with E. R. Squibb, founder of the Squibb pharmaceutical firm. During the years 1855-1858, Dr. Squibb started a small laboratory in Kentucky which produced pharmaceutical supplies for the U.S. Navy. Possibly Thatcher met Dr. Squibb in Kentucky at that time. It must have been during this period that Thatcher began his studies at the Eclectic Medical College in Cincinnati, from which he received his MD degree in 1859.

It would seem that Thatcher's choice of the Eclectic Medical College, whether by accident or deliberate intention, prepared him well for a long career as Potsdam's leading druggist. The college was associated with the eclectic movement in medicine which was led by some prominent and competent doctors who were "thoroughly dissatisfied with the current medical methods practiced at that time so vigorously and viciously." The movement was something of a revolt against excessive use of blood letting and "massive doses of calomel" in treating many ailments. According to John B. Griggs, Librarian of the Lloyd Library and Museum in Cincinnati,

The Eclectics were a reform movement in medicine in the early 1800s that sought to change/improve patient care and treatment;

the Allopaths or doctors from established medical schools believed in the heroic or massive dosage of synthetic medicines; the Eclectics or reform doctors believed in the moderate dosage of natural (botanical) medicines; the Homeopaths, a spinoff from the Eclectics, believed in the minimum dosage of mineral medicines.

Mr. Griggs describes the Eclectic Medical College as an "average-to-good medical school." There was no regulation of medical schools or of the medical profession before the Civil War, and there were several medical colleges in Cincinnati at the time, ranging, in Mr. Griggs's words, from "quack diploma mills to sincere legitimate schools." Unlike today's medical students, those in Dr. Thatcher's time were largely self-taught. Attendance requirements varied from a period of weeks to a period of years. According to Mr. Griggs, as late as 1901 Harvard Medical School required only two years of undergraduate study and one year of graduate study for a degree in medicine.

At the Eclectic Medical College Hervey Thatcher was exposed to courses, professors and textbooks dealing with chemistry, pharmacy, toxicology, materia medica, and, possibly of greatest significance, "medical botany." The history and records of the college have been well preserved by the Lloyd Library which serves as a reference center for the study and history of pharmacology. Thatcher probably spent no more than two years at the college. During his vacations he may have worked for Squibb's pharmaceutical firm, gaining experience he would later put to good use.

The Drug Store Years 1860-1895

After his graduation Dr. Thatcher returned to Canton in 1859 to establish his first drug store. It was there that he first had to practice what he had learned in medical school. It seems there was an explosion in a quarry at Morley, and a boy with a badly injured leg was brought to Canton on a cart. The best village doctors examined the injury and recommended amputation, but Dr. Thatcher, optimistic if not tactful, refused. He admonished his colleagues: "When you see something you can't handle, you saw the leg off and make a cripple." He administered anaesthetic and applied some of his own powders to the leg. Within six weeks the boy was back on the job at the quarry.

Dr. Thatcher had been in business scarcely a year when his drug store was destroyed by a fire which swept the business district in Canton. Pro-

bably it was in 1860 that he came to Potsdam where he entered a partnership with Luke Usher, a banker, and purchased Apothecary Hall, a Market Street drug store which had been owned by Hunt and Laws. Under the Usher and Thatcher name, Apothecary Hall functioned as a wholesale and retail establishment dealing in physicians' supplies, patent medicines, groceries and hardware.

By the 1860s some drug stores had become "variety" shops, and Thatcher's business was not the least behind the times. An advertisement in *The Courier and Freeman*, March 18, 1864, lists, in addition to the expected medical supplies and patent medicines, paints, meerschaums, window and picture glass, combs "in almost every variety" and "Brushes. Tooth and nail from the cheapest American to the finest imported." A more personal ad ran on May 8, 1879: "H.D. Thatcher would say that he has just received a new stock of the celebrated Universal Pile Pills and would advise all those troubled with the piles to give these pills a faithful trial. Don't forget the name." Apparently Dr. Thatcher learned early to do things right. An item from the May 14, 1862 edition of the *Courier* declared, "Usher and Thatcher have recently received a very large assortment of drugs and medicines and everything else in their line. Dr. Thatcher devotes his entire time and attention to the business, is a capital druggist, and people can purchase from him with the confidence of getting what they call for." Having thus gilded the lily, the reporter added, "Read their advertisement in another column."

Not surprisingly, Thatcher's drug store was also noted for its ice cream soda fountain. *The St. Lawrence Herald* for August 15, 1890, reported "The large crowds that gather around Thatcher's soda fountain is good evidence that Thatcher draws the best soda water in town." An advertisement on June 19, 1891, declared, "Thatcher's ice cream is not surpassed in this or any other company. . . . Have you tried it? . . . Ten cents a glass: without ice cream, five cents."

In 1865 Dr. Thatcher took over Usher's interest in the business. An advertisement in the 1868 *Potsdam Directory* bears the heading "Apothecary Hall" and beneath it "H.D. Thatcher, Druggist." The location was given as 19 Market Street. At this time the druggist was experiencing what was possibly the most prosperous period of his life. An entry in Josiah Brown's diary for April 4, 1870, reveals that "Dr. T. has moved his drug store into the cellar of the Stone building. They commenced tearing

down the buildings up the street preparatory for building the block of Brooks, Thatcher and Dayton." The building which Dr. Thatcher erected at 19 Market Street is now occupied by Kinney Drugs.

According to an entry in Potsdam Directory, by 1873 the drug store business was being conducted under the name "H. D. Thatcher & Co." even though a certificate of incorporation would not be filed with the State of New York Department of State until 1894. Directors of the corporation were Hervey D. Thatcher, Olivia A. Thatcher and Frederick G. Paddock of Malone. Share holders and share distributions were as follows: H.D. Thatcher, 1449; Olivia Thatcher, 50; Katherine Paddock (Malone), 10; Henry Killaby (New York City), one. The object of the 1894 incorporation was to manufacture and sell baking powder, show cases, "Condition Powder," and various other articles of merchandise. Although by this time Thatcher had invented his butter color, it was not specifically listed.

The show cases listed probably are glass enclosed show cases which Thatcher improved upon. In his drug store, Thatcher employed a number of glass-enclosed display cases fitted with circular shelves revolving about a vertical standard. Dissatisfied with the existing means for adjusting the shelves vertically, in 1887 he invented an improved "adjustable shelf fastener." A patent was issued in 1888 and in 1894 it was assigned to H.D. Thatcher & Company. The 1889-90 *Potsdam Directory* carried an advertisement indicating that "Show Cases with Revolving Shelves" were available at the Thatcher Drug Store.

Thatcher's Butter Color

In the early 1860s Dr. Thatcher developed and began marketing his orange butter color. Reluctant to divulge the secrets of this product, he chose not to apply for patent protection. In later years it was revealed that his basic ingredient was annatto seed from Japan. Demand for the butter color grew rapidly over a wide area of the United States and it probably contributed greatly to Dr. Thatcher's prosperity in the period from 1860 to 1880 when he erected his building at 19 Market Street and his fine home at 100 Market Street. He published a booklet on Orange Butter Color from which the following is taken:

In the winter, spring, and late in the fall, and occasionally during dry weather in the summer, butter must have a little additional color to give it a fine appearance and to enable the maker to secure the highest price. The writer of this



Dr. Hervey D. Thatcher. (Photograph courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)

little book has devoted time more or less for over eighteen years to this want. Eighteen years ago I manufactured and sold many thousand bottles of what was then called a good color. Four years ago I sent to London for one of Beck's Fine Microscopes for the purpose of having additional facilities for examining the different vegetable orange colors. Since that time I have made more than one thousand samples of butter, and colored each sample with a different preparation. I was determined to get the exact shade of nice June butter, having not the reddish tint but a real straw color, made entirely from vegetable substances, at a price that would come within the reach of the butter maker. I have to report that I have fully accomplished my purpose. I am now offering to the people a truly vegetable combination, which can be fed to a child with impunity, and which will do the work and do it right. My twenty-five cent bottle will color about five hundred pounds of winter butter, more or less, according to the feed of the cows. Another thing, it will not color the buttermilk, nor stain your hands so but that a little soap and water will immediately remove it. Rinsing the butter will not wash away the color, as the butter globules only take up the color. It

will not make the butter red if you should get in a little too much, but it will look like a new milch Jersey cow's butter. Now, reader, if you do not want this ORANGE BUTTER COLOR, do not buy it. If you do not buy it your neighbors will, and will get [more money per pound] for butter than you do. . . .

The booklet also contained numerous testimonials from satisfied customers from many areas of the country. The butter color was marketed under the corporate name H.D. Thatcher & Co. until the incorporation of the Thatcher Manufacturing Company in 1890. It appears that following the latter incorporation the butter color business may have been divided with part of it going to Thatcher Mfg. Co., in which Thatcher held no apparent financial interest. It is not known whether Dr. Thatcher ever received any financial compensation for that part of the business which went to Thatcher Mfg. Co. It appears that the butter color continued to be produced and marketed under the H.D. Thatcher & Co. name until that company's bankruptcy in 1913. Following that event, butter color was an important item distributed by Ira Kendall and Robert Byrnes in their dairy supply company which continued to operate under the H.D. Thatcher & Co. name for some time. It has not been determined whether they manufactured the butter color or obtained it from Thatcher Mfg. Co.

Another profitable product made by Thatcher during the drug store period was Thatcher's Condition Powder. Although it is not clear exactly when the Condition Powder was put on the market, Thatcher made perfectly clear the extent to which it was indispensable to those who raised cattle and horses.

This preparation was first put upon the market to be used by dairymen especially for milch cows, as a 'NERVE TONIC AND APPETIZER' and for the prevention and cure of specific, contagious and endemic diseases. It proved so efficient and became so popular in those districts where it was known and used that farriers and horsemen were not long in finding that it possessed merit which they could utilize and which they could not do without. At their suggestion the name CONDITION POWDER AND FOOD ASSIMILANT was finally adopted.

This description is taken from a small booklet Dr. Thatcher published in 1890, the title page of which reads "HOW TO SUCCEED ON THE FARM—also when and how to use THATCHER'S CONDITION POWDER OR FOOD ASSIMILANT—to keep

young animals healthy and growing and especially to prevent contagious diseases." The booklet also leads to speculation that Thatcher was a great admirer of P.T. Barnum because much of it was devoted to an account of Barnum's life and the wreck of the Barnum & Bailey circus train near Potsdam in 1889. He concluded his Barnum story with the statement that "The grandest equestrian feat must be accomplished, all other things being equal, by the horse that has had his daily or semi-weekly ration of THATCHER'S CONDITION POWDER."

None of the secrecy under which the composition of the Orange Butter Color was kept is evident in descriptions of the Condition Powder. Thatcher declared in the pamphlet that "the formula for Thatcher's Condition Powder is no secret. It will cheerfully and promptly be made known to any Physician or Veterinary Practitioner who requests it, either by mail or in person." Ever careful to reassure his potential customers about his product, he maintained that "The fact that all of the ingredients that enter into the Condition Powders are substances well

known to physicians and pharmacists, should not lessen our confidence in the value of the product. Mystery does not cure...."

Dr. Thatcher's invention of his sanitary milking pail, glass milk bottle, and baking powder also occurred during the drug store era but those subjects will be treated at length later in this article. Dr. Thatcher sold the drug store business to his successors, Brown & Perrin, in 1895.

Thatcher and the Barnhart Family

The Thatcher story would be incomplete without an account of his wife's family, the Barnharts of Barnhart Island, east of Massena in the St. Lawrence River. The association of the Barnharts with the Island commenced when George Barnhart leased the island from the St. Regis Indians in 1795. This association continued until the island became the site for construction of the hydroelectric power project in the 1950s.

The story of "The Barnharts of Barnhart Island" has been told in great detail in a series of articles published in *The Ottawa Citizen*. The members of

the family with whom we are most concerned were the children of William George Barnhart II and Catherine March: Adelaide Olive (b. 1837, d. 1912); Samuel Lindsey (b. 1845, d. 1917); Harvey Patten (b. 1847, d. 1923); and William Norman, (b. 1831, d. 1895).

Adelaide Olive was educated at the Cornwall High School and at the Albany Female Academy, now the Albany Academy for Girls, where she received a Certificate of Proficiency. She married Hervey Thatcher in 1865 in a ceremony at the home of her parents on Barnhart Island. The Reverend Archdeacon Patten of Cornwall C. W. officiated.

Thatcher's brothers-in-law, Samuel and William, were both listed as students at the St. Lawrence Academy at Potsdam in 1861 and Harvey was listed as a student there in 1867. Harvey was listed as an employee of H. D. Thatcher & Co. as early as 1873. He apparently lived in Potsdam until he departed for Portland, Oregon, in 1907. His principal residence was the house on Market Street which he sold to Bertrand Snell in 1907. Samuel lived



The Thatcher house at 100 Market Street in Potsdam. (Photograph courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)

in Potsdam intermittently, returning to the Island as needed to manage his father's estate. William Norman left Potsdam to spend most of his life in Florida.

Samuel Barnhart's first two wives died early. Consequently, three of his children were reared by the Thatchers at their home at 100 Market Street. The children were: Katherine Louisa (b. 1869); Adelaide Alice (b. 1871); and William G. (b. 1878). After William Norman Barnhart died in Florida in 1895, three of his children were sent north to live with the Thatchers: Norman G. (b. 1881), Adelaide C. (b. 1891) and Frederick (b. 1892). Records show that all six of these children received their early education in the Primary and Intermediate Divisions of the Potsdam Normal School. Katherine and Norman went on to graduate from the Normal School. Katherine became an artist studying at a school associated with the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. She worked in charcoal, oils, water colors and pastels. She became an art teacher and she wrote articles for art magazines. Later in life she served for several years on the Normal School Council.

Katherine's marriage apparently was a most significant event in the Thatchers' lives. *The Courier and Freeman* for April 14, 1890 reported the event:

Trinity Church was comfortably filled with the elite of the town Monday afternoon to witness the marriage of Miss Kittie Barnhart, of this Village, to Mr. Frederick Paddock of Malone. Dr. H.D. Thatcher, uncle and foster father, gave the bride away and John M. Curran acted in the capacity of best man, while Mr. S. L. Barnhart, father of the bride was present and displayed a lively interest. Miss Kittie was a graduate of the Potsdam Normal School, and by her long residence here has gained many friends, all of whom will wish her joy in her new home and relations. The groom is a rising young lawyer, of the firm of McClary & Paddock, of Malone. His father, Judge Paddock of Malone, will be pleasantly remembered especially by people long in years. Congratulations.

It is interesting to note that Harvey F. Barnhart had a son named Harold THATCHER Barnhart, born in 1879. Harvey also had a daughter, Ethel, born in 1884. While she was attending the elementary division of the Normal School, Hervey D. Thatcher was inexplicably listed in the records as her "guardian." Ethel went on to graduate from the Dunham Teachers College at

Montreal in 1901.

Dr. Thatcher maintained his association with the Barnhart family to the very end. When he wrote his will a few days before his death in 1925 he named Arthur C. Barnhart of Brushton, New York, as the executor. Arthur Chamberlain Barnhart was a son of William Norman Barnhart and a brother of the second set of Barnhart nephews and nieces taken in as foster children by the Thatchers. Arthur was raised as a foster son by Katherine and her husband, Frederick Paddock, at Malone.

Dr. Thatcher and The "Milk Protector"

Dr. Thatcher's interest in dairying and livestock went beyond his butter color and condition powder. There is evidence that he kept his own cow at his home at 100 Market Street in 1883. He was greatly concerned that in the process of milking a cow using an ordinary open pail there was a high probability that the milk would become contaminated with all sorts of dirt from the cow and stable. With the assistance of his employee and brother-in-law, Harvey P. Barnhart, he invented a device whereby milk could be transferred from cow to container under more sanitary conditions. The device consisted of a metal pail with a tight fitting cover in which there were two small openings. Installed in each opening there was an assembly of a long narrow tube, a rubber seal and a soft rubber cup shaped to fit the cow. With this device a cow could be milked without the human hand coming in contact with the cow or the milk itself. Dr. Thatcher and Harvey Barnhart had devised their first "milk protector."

In 1854, at the age of nineteen, Dr. Thatcher had been teaching district school at Canton. One of his brightest pupils had been Perry Benjamin Pierce who went on to Hobart College at Geneva where he received a BA in 1865 and an MA in 1868. Later he received an LLD from the Columbia University Law School. Soon afterwards he secured a position in the patent office at Washington, D.C., and was appointed head examiner in one department. While visiting friends at Canton, Mr. Pierce came to Potsdam to see Dr. Thatcher shortly after the first milk protector was put to use. He saw so much merit in it that he advised Thatcher to secure a patent for it. The doctor was somewhat reluctant, but nevertheless allowed his former student to engage an attorney in Washington to see to the matter. An application was filed in April, 1883, and a patent, listing Hervey D. Thatcher and Samuel Barnhart as inventors, was issued in August of the same year. Dr. Thatcher had received his first patent.

In preparation for putting the Milk Protector on the market, Thatcher sent Harvey Barnhart to New York City to obtain several hundred of the drawn tubes of peculiar shape and to order a corresponding number of pails, covers, and soft rubber cups. They had decided to invest \$6000 in the venture, \$5000 by Thatcher and \$1000 by Barnhart. Barnhart found that the tubes could be obtained in small quantities for fifty cents each from Scoville & Company. However, quantities of 10,000 could be had for ten cents each. Barnhart was carried away with the idea and placed an order for 10,000 tubes. The tubes, therefore, cost \$1,000. There is a suggestion that Barnhart ordered enough pails, covers and cups to account for the remaining \$5000. Thatcher, dismayed at his partner's actions, advised Barnhart that it had been an enormous mistake to place so large an order when they had no idea how many milk protectors could be sold. There is evidence that a substantial exchange of words ended with Thatcher paying Barnhart \$1000 "in crisp bank bills." This financial exchange seems somewhat unusual because it was Barnhart, not Thatcher, who seemed to have ample financial resources. The argument settled, the milk protector would soon be on the market.

The Glass Milk Bottle

With the milk protector project completed, Dr. Thatcher took up other matters related to sanitary milk production and distribution, this time concerning himself with the way milk was distributed to customers. It was probably early in 1884 that the incident of the "rag doll in the milk can" took place. We are inclined to treat it as a legend but there is some evidence that Dr. Thatcher may have told the story himself. A fine version of the story was written by Frank W. Lovering and published in the *Florida Grower & Rancher* for August 1954. It is repeated here:

Born of Sorrow

The invention of the glass milk bottle was born of a druggist-physician's sorrow at a symbol of tragedy he saw moving slowly and too frequently through the streets of his town, Potsdam, in northern New York—a small white hearse drawn by two black horses. In the hearse a child lay in a white casket, the victim of typhoid fever.

Dr. Hervey D. Thatcher knew from sad experience at the bedsides of sick little ones, how the malady was passed by germs. He used to tell it this way:

The milkman's bell called Ann and her mother to the front door of

ABSOLUTELY PURE MILK.



THE MILK PROTECTOR,

New Milk Pail, to Protect Milk
FROM STABLE IMPURITIES.



It keeps Out—Dust, dirt, dirt, draught, dried excrement, and the variety of substances that fall into the open pail during the ordinary process of milking. This is especially true in the early spring months, while the cow is casting her old coat, and is more or less besmeared by continued stabling. No odor of the stable comes in contact with the milk.



THE ONLY DEVICE KNOWN that assures to the consumer **Absolutely Pure Milk** in such a manner that it can be kept sweet for several days, furnish a good coat of cream and be handy to use.

We may add that this milk is excellent as a beverage and a **Wholesome Food for Children.**

Samples tested by the most powerful **Microscope** were found to contain no **Foreign Substance**, and hence the **Medical Profession** give it their unqualified approval.

Closed Milk Bottles—The milk on being drawn from the cow, in a perfectly pure state, as above indicated, is at once cooled in an ice chamber to remove the animal heat, when it is bottled and rendered air-tight by the closing ball. The bottle being delivered to the patron, all contamination by road dust, or absorption of foul odors in transit is avoided.

In the open can delivery of milk, the soiled hands or gloves of the driver must as each separate patron is supplied, grasp the handle of the dipper covered with milk and supply the customer. He closes the dipper within the can and in driving to the next patron, raises the handle, ready to be again seized by the hand that drops the dirty reins. Thus it will be seen that long before the can has been emptied, the unadulterated sediment becomes exceedingly objectionable. In hot weather a full can of milk will transport without injury, but when only partly full, the agitation produced by the moving carriage often causes the aggregation of large lumps of butter, greatly to its injury. We think it fair to infer that no member of the medical profession would pronounce such milk a wholesome food for invalids or delicate children.

Every One of these Objections are obviated by our Milk Bottle System.

Keeping Qualities—In the hottest days of summer, milk drawn through the Milk Protector will keep perfectly sweet in a refrigerator for a long time, with no possibility of imbibing a bad odor.

The Cream can be instantly removed with a spoon, for Coffee or other use, and the cover replaced. If whole Milk is required and the Cream has gravitated to the surface, shake the bottle well before opening.

Milk Bottle marked "A" represents the natural position in the closed state.

Milk Bottle marked "B" shows the ball swung to the side, so that the cover can be removed. With the ball in this position, with the thumb and finger one of the pivot ends of the ball can be sprung from its socket, if it is desired to remove the ball.

Milk Bottle marked "C" shows the ball entirely detached for cleaning purposes.

Milk Bottle marked "D" shows how to take hold of the ball to open or close the same. The pressure is brought to bear upon the flat cross bar, as too much force against the wire top of the ball might bend it.

Milk Bottle marked "E" shows the easiest mode of readjusting the ball. Hold the ball in a horizontal position, as shown, insert one of the pivot ends, carrying or sliding the other around the neck of the bottle until it reaches the opposite socket, when it instantly drops into place.

To Fasten the bottle, place a new paper washer upon the cover, drop the cover up to the top, and grasp the flat cross bar with the hand forcing it over the arch of the cover until the depression in the cross bar drops into the glass cavity. The paper washers are designed to be used but once.

Breakage—Avoid immersing the bottles too suddenly in hot water when they are very cold. It is not the heat that breaks them, but the sudden change in temperature. They will bear boiling water if heated gradually, however, to use water somewhat less than the boiling temperature.



The Milk Protectors and Milk Bottles are manufactured by
H. D. THATCHER & CO., POTSDAM, N. Y.
Bottles to be Washed and Returned.

their home in Potsdam. The mother held a yellow crockery pitcher into which the milk was to be ladled from a big can.

The milkman eased his leap to the dusty village street from his seat on the wagon by putting the flat of a hand on the horse's rump. Then he lifted out a partly emptied 40-quart tin can, carried it up the front walk and set it on the porch.

Ann was hugging her rag doll. As she watched the milkman remove the cover—which measured one quart—from the can, the doll slipped out of her arms and dropped through the broad open mouth of the can. The doll bobbed up and down two or three times before the milkman fished it out and tossed it on the lawn with a grunt of disapproval. Then he filled the pitcher.

At that very moment Dr. Thatcher was passing the house. More of an inventor than a physician, he had given up medical practice and was running the village drug store.

His quick eyes saw the doll's milk bath. He muttered a disgusted "humph!" and walked thoughtfully along to his apothecary shop. In a number of ways Dr. Thatcher was a dissatisfied man. The recurring epidemics of disease in the region irked him.

Between business calls that forenoon he made a sketch of a cylinder with a neck on one end. After lunch he went into his little workshop, picked up a well-seasoned stick of white pine, sawed off a section a foot long, and fitted the chunk between the faceplate and tailstock of his lathe.

Then he selected a turning tool. His right foot worked the treadle of the lathe and chips whizzed into the air. **THE SPINNING STICK WAS TRANSFORMED AND BECAME THE CONCRETE IDEA OF THE WORLD'S FIRST MILK BOTTLE, A PATTERN FROM WHICH MILLIONS WERE LATER CAST.** The first hand-blown milk bottles were made in 1884.

In a letter written in 1919, Dr. Thatcher said that he did turn the first wooden model or pattern on a foot-powered lathe. Probably he took his model to the Batchelder Furniture Factory on Fall Island to have the figure of a man milking a cow carved by their craftsmen. Then he took his pattern to the Whitall-Tatum Glass Works at Millville, New Jersey, and requested that they start production. The superintendent of the glass works found some faults with the pattern, but

The milk protector was patented in 1883; combined with the glass milk bottle, it reflects Dr. Thatcher's abiding interest in providing pure milk to consumers. (Photograph courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)

when they were corrected some bottles were produced at once. Thatcher ordered a larger quantity at a later date.

Probably Dr. Thatcher applied for a patent covering his bottle in 1884 but nothing came of it. There was nothing new about putting milk in a glass bottle. Milk was first delivered in a glass bottle by Alexander Campbell in Brooklyn in 1878. Furthermore, a patent had been issued to L.P. Whitman in 1880 for a glass milk jar with closure. Probably Thatcher could have obtained a copyright for the use of the figure of a man milking a cow on his bottles but he did not choose to do so.

While Thatcher was getting his first bottles into production he was also seeking a market for them. Finding none in Potsdam interested in this new idea he turned his attention to the marketing possibilities in Ogdensburg. An excellent but anonymous account of what followed appeared in the *Ogdensburg Journal* for 14 August 1948:

With Ogdensburg then as now the largest community in the county, more milk deliveries were made here by dealers and fewer inhabitants still owned their own cows. A virtual monopoly of the field in this city was held at the time by three men, William C. Wilcox, David Hutchins and Major William H. Daniels, each of whom owned his own dairy farm in this vicinity and served about 300 customers.

Dr. Thatcher first tried Wilcox, and the latter, despite objections on the ground that it would make more work and no more money for the dealers, finally agreed to buy six Milk Protectors at \$3 each and \$400 worth of bottles at ten cents each. He also paid royalty of \$50 for their use.

With this heavy investment in an untried device no small weight on his mind, Wilcox loaded a few of the bottles into his democrat wagon on the morning of Aug. 6, 1884. They rested on a bed of straw without benefit of crates and as there were no caps—just wooden plugs carved as a makeshift by Henry Batchelder—the bottles jostled about in the wagon and spilled most of their contents before Wilcox covered the two and a half miles to town.

Wilcox had to return to his farm that day and start all over with the old-fashioned can and ladle. Righteously indignant upon his return, he sat down that night and wrote Dr. Thatcher as follows:

"My Dear Doctor: You must think a man a fool to be driving around the streets with

milk in glass bottles. It is a failure and will never amount to anything."

Wilcox eventually regained enough confidence in Thatcher's invention to build a compartmented wooden crate which would hold the bottles upright to prevent spilling.

The Wilcox experience suggests that Dr. Thatcher, in inventing his first glass milk bottle, may have neglected the problem of closing and sealing the bottle against leakage. The first lot of bottles might have been produced with necks smooth on the outside with no indentations for anchoring a wire bail. This poses an interesting question for milk bottle collectors: Has anyone ever seen an early Thatcher bottle without indentations on the outside of the neck?

After the Wilcox experience, it was necessary for Dr. Thatcher to find a way to close and seal his bottles. The result was his invention of a glass stopper held in place by a wire bail assembly with the gap between stopper and bottle sealed by a rubber gasket. This required that the bottle have two small indentations on the outside of the neck to anchor the wire bail. The assembly was described in his application for a patent dated 23 December 1886 and bearing the number 340,833 and listing Hervey D. Thatcher and Harvey P. Barnhart as the inventors.

As we have said, Barnhart was an employee of Thatcher at this time. There is no way of knowing exactly what part Barnhart may have played in the invention. This was the only patent pertaining to glass milk bottles bearing Hervey Thatcher's name as inventor. Harvey Barnhart's Canadian cousin, Albert Augustus Barnhart (b. 1862, d. 1901), operated a dairy at Ottawa. At some point he had bottles made that were similar to the early Thatcher bottles but in imperial quart size. They bore the same embossment in the glass: the figure of a man milking a cow and "Absolutely Pure Milk-The Milk Protector-A. A. Barnhart-Ottawa Ont." The only known surviving bottle was found in a ditch near Perth, Ontario, and is presently owned by Mrs. Shirley Shorter of Ottawa.

Once use of the "Milk Protector System" proved successful at the Wilcox Farm at Ogdensburg, Dr. Thatcher took steps to promote the system more widely. He hired Dexter Cahoon and Sylvester Wright at a salary of \$3.00 a day and expenses to go on the road to "sell territory." He continued to assess royalty charges to dairies for use of the system: \$50 for small villages, \$100 for small cities, \$200 to \$300 for larger cities. The concept of establishing a separate

corporate entity, the Thatcher Manufacturing Company, for handling the milk bottle business must have had its origin around 1886, several years before its legal incorporation.

In 1887 Dr. Thatcher, as was his custom, got out a small booklet promoting "The Thatcher System of Milk Delivery." The booklet included orders and testimonials from satisfied customers located not only throughout New York State but also in Ohio and Pennsylvania. These testimonials covered a period from May 1886 to November 1887. The booklet described some new products such as adjustable milking stools, bottle fillers and patrons' receiving boxes. Directions for building milk bottle crates were also included. It was in this booklet that the term "Thatcher Mfg. Co." may have been used for the first time in print.

Throughout this period the bottles were of the style using the glass stopper with wire bail assembly as described in the 1886 patent. It should be understood that throughout the Potsdam years all bottles were hand made at the Whitall-Tatum Glassworks in South Millville, New Jersey. Advertising, sales and distribution were managed from Potsdam. Bottles were usually shipped direct from the glassworks to the customers. Everything indicates that acceptance of the Thatcher system spread rapidly throughout the milk delivery industry.

The wire bail assembly described in the 1886 patent consisted of two parts—the wire bail itself and a metal crossbar to act as a spring to hold the glass stopper and paper washer tight against the mouth of the bottle. One early Thatcher bottle equipped with this type of bail assembly has just been located in 1986. Other Thatcher bottles that have survived from this early period are equipped with one-piece wire bails which would have been easier to manufacture and install on the bottles. At best, the handling of these separate parts—the paper washer, the glass stopper, and the wire bail—every time a bottle was closed and sealed presented a problem.

Because the number of bottles handled each day would soon reach into the millions, a simpler method was desperately needed. In June 1889, an application was filed for a patent describing a method of capping and sealing milk bottles with a simple paper disc resting snugly on a narrow ledge within the neck of the bottle. The material referred to as "paper" was in reality a cardboard disc treated with paraffin or other wax. The patent was issued in September 1889 listing Dr. Thatcher's brothers-in-law, Harvey Patten Barnhart and Samuel Lindsey Barnhart, as the inventors.

We really cannot be sure what part, if any, Dr. Thatcher had in this invention. He was always short of cash, whereas the Barnhart brothers seemed to have ample financial resources. Since we know that Thatcher had an inventive mind, it is possible that the original idea might have been his but that he was short of cash for filing the patent application. As a consequence, the Barnharts might have agreed to finance the patent provided they could be named as the inventors. On the other hand, we may be underestimating the inventive ability of one or both of the Barnharts.

Once the patent had been secured, the original design of the glass milk bottle had to be altered to accommodate the new paper cap. Possibly a new mould had to be made for the new bottles. Eventually a new generation of glass milk bottles went into production at the Whitall-Tatum plant. It is

interesting to note that bottles were still being produced by hand at this time. The new paper cap revolutionized the fledgling glass milk bottle industry and it was to become the standard of the industry for many years.

Initially the caps were made in two sizes, $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter and $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter. The next step was to produce the caps in Potsdam in large quantities. The story of what followed is a brief chapter in the history of technology. At first the caps were punched one at a time by hand using a steel punch and die set. The Potsdam Museum has a newspaper photograph of King Kellogg producing caps by this method. Of course, this method was far too slow. The next method used a foot-powered press for punching the caps from a long strip of paper. The museum has a picture of Charles Pappa producing caps by this method, which was still too slow. The third and final method of producing caps employed a power-driven press capable of producing a half-million caps a day. Probably this press was driven by steam because the Thatcher Manufacturing Company building was too far from the river to use water power. The development of this more efficient production method came just in time, for there is evidence that in 1887 orders began to arrive for quantities of 50,000 caps at a time.

The new generation of glass milk bottles to be produced by hand at the Whitall-Tatum plant came to be known as the "COMMON SENSE" style of bottle. It had the following inscription embossed on the front:

COMMON SENSE
MILK JAR
PAT. SEPT. 17, 1889
THIS BOTTLE
TO BE WASHED
AND RETURNED

"T. MFG. CO. - PAT. SEPT. 1889" was embossed on the bottom of the bottle. The back of the bottle was blank so that the name of the particular dairy owning the bottle could be embossed there. It is interesting that the instruction for washing and returning the bottle was needed to educate customers in the correct use of the new glass milk bottles. With the passage of time there were changes in the inscriptions on the bottles. For example, embossing the words "COMMON-SENSE-MILK JAR - PAT. SEPT. 17, 1889" was discontinued. There is a theory among some bottle collectors that bottles produced as salesmen's samples bore the COMMON SENSE embossment whereas it was left off bottles produced for the ordinary trade. With or without the phrase, they were known as "common sense style" bottles well into the following decade.

Dr. Thatcher sold his interest in the glass milk bottle business to his brothers-in-law, Harvey P. and Samuel L. Barnhart, about 1889. The exact date and circumstances surrounding the transaction are not known. In 1890 the Barnhart brothers filed a certificate of incorporation for the Thatcher Manufacturing Company listing the following directors: Harvey Barnhart, Samuel Barnhart, Thomas S. Clarkson, George Z. Erwin, Carlton Sanford, William Weed, Hosea Bicknell and Herbert Sanford.

Also in 1890 the Barnharts constructed a fine three-story brick building on the north side of Depot Street to accommodate the business. The new building was equipped with a steam powered elevator, the first of its kind in Potsdam. In these quarters the business flourished, and bottles continued to be hand blown at the Whitall-Tatum Glassworks in New Jersey while paper bottle caps were made in Potsdam. A number of salesmen were kept on the road, including Harvey Barnhart's son, Harold Thatcher Barnhart. In the same year the Barnharts secured a Canadian patent describing "an improvement in milk bottles" whereby paper caps would be used for closing and sealing the bottles. This was the Canadian equivalent of their 1889 patent in the United States.

Francis E. Baldwin was a lawyer at Elmira, New York, who became intensely interested in the development of the Owen glass blowing machine in the late 1890s. He believed it would prove profitable in the production of glass milk bottles. He obtained a license to manufacture glass milk bottles under the Owen patents and he formed the Baldwin-Travis Company for that purpose. Around 1900 he became interested in the Thatcher Manufacturing Company which had been successfully engaged in the glass milk bottle and dairy supply business at Potsdam for nearly sixteen years. On a business trip to Potsdam he acquired the Company which was promptly merged with the Baldwin-Travis Co. keeping the Thatcher Manufacturing Co. corporate name. The Baldwins lived in Potsdam briefly, and during that time Harvey P. Barnhart was made General Manager of the Potsdam Division of the Company to keep the business going until glass milk bottles could be successfully produced by machine at a new glass works built at Kane, Pennsylvania. Simeon L. Clark of Parishville was a substantial investor in the new enterprise. There is a local story that he disregarded the advice of his lawyer and banker in making this investment. The first list of officers and directors of the Company at Elmira included General Charles



A Thatcher milk bottle with glass stopper and wire bail. (Photograph courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)



A certificate of stock in H.D. Thatcher & Co. (Photograph courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)

Langdon as Vice-President and Director. This tends to confirm the story that Mark Twain's Langdon in-laws were significant investors in the new enterprise. Baldwin served as the first President of the Company for 27 years during which time it became a tremendous success. He was noted for his skill in hiring competent men. He was described as a "humanitarian," taking an active part in social, religious and political affairs. A substantial number of Potsdam men followed the Company to Elmira as its operations were moved to that City. Some of them achieved positions of importance but that is beyond the scope of this story.

About the Authors:

Robert A. Wyant is a member of the staff of the Potsdam Public Museum and Associate Professor Emeritus, Clarkson University, Potsdam, New York. Victoria Levitt, a writer living in Potsdam, holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Utah.

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Crossover Island: Winter Life

by Ralph E. Hill

Ralph E. Hill spent the early years of his life on Crossover Island, where his father, Daniel David Hill, was lighthouse keeper. The October, 1984, Quarterly featured an account by Alice Taylor Gorham of D.D. Hill's experiences, based in part on letters from Ralph E. Hill. Here Ralph Hill dips once again into family photographs and comments on winter life on Crossover Island and at Oak Point.



The Hill family moved to the lighthouse keeper's residence in February 1909. "... [M]y father... [made] arrangements... for a team of horses and the necessary equipment to transport our belongings to the river bank and then to the island... [I]t was bitter cold, [and] the ice was thick enough to hold the weight of the horses and sleigh. Years later I learned that the river ice froze to as much as twenty-four inches thick... The family lived the balance of 1909 and all of 1910 on the island. The winters were like being in Siberia.

"It was necessary to go across the ice in winter to get all the supplies and the mail... The only way of getting anywhere was to walk the two miles to Oak Point. Father pulled a sled he had made that had high runners, on which he carried the supplies. He had made a harness that went over his shoulders to make it easier to pull over the long hauls. In the spring of the year and in late fall when the ice was breaking up or before the ice had formed thick enough, it was necessary to make sure there were supplies on hand to last two or three weeks, as it was almost impossible to get through the floes of broken ice.

"It always seemed strange to me that the government would put a family on an island and then furnish them only with a flat-bottomed punt and a skiff. The punt was equipped with double oar locks. The skiff was furnished with a latine (a three-cornered sail), a retractable center board, and a rudder that could be removed... My father installed a pair of runners on the bottom of the punt about four inches high, finished off with iron. He then put a mast step in the bow so he could use the sail that came with the skiff. The punt could then be used with safety in the wind, similar to an ice boat, in case you broke through the ice. He also installed a pair of handles on

Winter scenes on Crossover Island in 1929. (Photographs courtesy of Ralph E. Hill)

the stern similar to the handles on a farm walking plow." With the handles, he could push the punt ahead of him.

"When the ice was thick enough, the ice harvest began. A section of ice was scraped clear of snow. With a team of horses an ice plow or cutter was pulled back and forth across the ice in a checker board pattern. This made blocks about two feet square cut to a depth of eight inches. These sections were cut off in long bars with big hand saws and the blocks or cakes were broken off with spud bars. The cakes of ice were elevated out of the water onto a loading platform and onto the sleighs. The elevating machinery, which was made from parts taken from a farmer's grain harvesting machine, was operated with a gasoline engine. The farmers all came to haul ice away for their ice houses. It was cold hard work, but the farmers used to enjoy the horse races across the ice to see who could get to the loading ramp first. Leslie Marsaw had a large commercial ice house, and it was always my father's job to pack the ice in this house. The ice was packed in straw and sawdust, to keep it for use in the summer when it was sold to the cottage people. Most of the tools that were used for the ice harvest were hand made by the local blacksmith in Hammond."

When the Steamer *Compton* ran aground late in the fall, its owners decided to leave it where it was for the winter. "... [F]ather took all the crew to Brockville, Ontario. The steamship company told my father... he could have all the supplies that were on the ship, as they would only freeze and spoil during the winter. I remember we boys helped dad remove bags of flour and sugar along with dozens of cans of canned goods, a good supply of meat and other miscellaneous items. He was also asked to take the ship's compass and lock it in the lighthouse tower for safekeeping through the winter."

Oak Point was sparsely populated during the winter months, "twenty people more or less plus our family. One winter Walter Plantz and a buddy lived in a tent all winter. This tent had a frame of poles over the top of which were juniper boughs. They had two bunks and a couple of camp stools and a little cast iron pot-bellied stove with a flat top for heating and cooking. They always seemed to have a big cast iron frying pan on the stove with a big thick pancake in it.

"As soon as the ice was thick enough, we children were out skating, and when the snow came, we would be sliding down hill. We made skis from barrel staves, and father made each of us a sled. Sometimes after a new fall of snow, my brothers and I would take a



Getting supplies across the ice to Crossover Island: a small sled used about 1910 and a punt equipped by D. D. Hill with runners, sail, and handle. (Photographs courtesy of Ralph E. Hill)

long walk into the woods. The woods were real thick, and the trees were laden with snow. The evergreens were always heavy and beautiful. A person could stop and lean against a tree and listen to the creaking and groaning of the tree limbs rubbing against each other in the tree tops, to the chatter of the birds, to the thump of a rabbit's hind leg as he warned of a stranger nearby, to the shrill cry of the blue jay, also warning of danger. We watched the nuthatches and the chickadees as they searched out seeds they had hidden behind tree bark during the summer, and the flash of red as a cardinal flew from evergreen to evergreen, checking on the cones for the few seeds that might remain. When we resumed our walk, the quiet might be broken when, with a sudden burst of sound and beating of wings, a partridge would fly out just a few feet in front of us. This would start a flurry of rabbits running from one juniper bush to another and from one brush pile to the next. Then all would be quiet and serene again. We never worried about getting lost, as we could always, regardless of how far we went into the woods, backtrack our path to get home again."

About the Author:

In his long career, Ralph E. Hill worked many places in St. Lawrence County, including the Huff DeLand Company and George Hall Coal and Transportation, before operating his own home improvement firm for over twenty-six years in the Buffalo area. He is now retired and lives with his wife in Kenmore, New York.



The ice harvest at Oak Point, 1916-1917. (Photographs courtesy of Ralph E. Hill)



D. D. Hill climbs Jacob's ladder on the Compton to make a winter inspection in 1918. (Photograph courtesy of Ralph E. Hill)



The tent occupied by Walter Plantz and a friend for an entire winter in 1913 or 1914. (Photograph courtesy of Ralph E. Hill)

The SLCHA Archives

by John A. Baule

This third article in what is intended to be an occasional series on practical aspects of carrying on historical research in St. Lawrence County explores the resources of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association archives. Previous articles in the series dealt with finding St. Lawrence County newspapers (October 1985) and carrying on genealogical research (July 1986). All illustrations are from the archives.

In 1843, a slim volume entitled *Hints on Etiquette and the Usages of Society* admonished that "a bachelor is seldom very particular in the choice of his companions. So long as he is amused, he will associate freely enough with those whose morals and habits would point them out as highly dangerous persons to introduce into the sanctity of domestic life." A pamphlet published

by the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary in 1860 stated that a basic tuition of \$4.25 per term would be charged, and a proficiency in no fewer than 30 subjects—including intellectual philosophy and orthography—was required for graduation. The 1845 New York State census compilation reported that 305,555 acres of land were cultivated in St. Lawrence County that year and

there were substantial crops of barley, peas, beans, buckwheat, turnips, potatoes, flax, wheat, corn, rye, and oats.

This short litany of unrelated facts may seem to be pointless, yet they are illustrative of the information that can be derived from the wealth of primary and secondary source material in the archives of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. In recent years,

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Hiram Atwater
Benjamin Glines



This daguerreotype of an unidentified family group is one of a rich collection of family photographs housed in the archives.

local historical societies across the country have become such a favorite resource for genealogists that often few people realize that such archival collections contain a vast amount of other useful information. Since its founding in 1947, the SLCHA has continued to collect books, papers, photographs, and documents related to the history of St. Lawrence County. In early 1982, all of this valuable archival collection was consolidated with that of the County Historian under the care of the Association and integrated with the Association holdings in other areas.

Considerable effort and expense have been expended over the past four years to reorganize materials, store them under the guidelines of the most up-to-date professional standards for proper conservation, and generally improve public accessibility. This has been a project long desired by all the preceding county historians and the Association—not only for the optimum management of the collection but also for a simple inventory of what exactly is available for research.

As of July 1, 1986, while the work of organization and filing continues, a summary of the Association's holdings can now be made with some degree of accuracy.



Fortunately, many family photographs in the archives are identified, including this one of the Horace Harrington family in front of their house in the late 1880s.

First, published state histories, county histories, and town histories provide the basic outline of the events and forces that helped create St. Lawrence County. The 1860 *New York State Gazetteer*, the 1878 *Everts History of St. Lawrence County*, the 1894 county history by Gates Curtis, and the 1976 *Waddington: A Look At Our Past*, for example, contain detailed factual accounts of significant people, businesses, events, and organizations. These volumes, along with others on New York State in the Civil War, New York State natural resources, New York State folklore, nineteenth century New York State Codes of Public Instruction, and miscellaneous general histories of the North Country are the resources one would expect our archive to own. They do form the backbone of the collection, yet in the same manner that the human backbone is rather unexciting without some appendages, these secondary sources are supported by a wealth of other less well-known material.

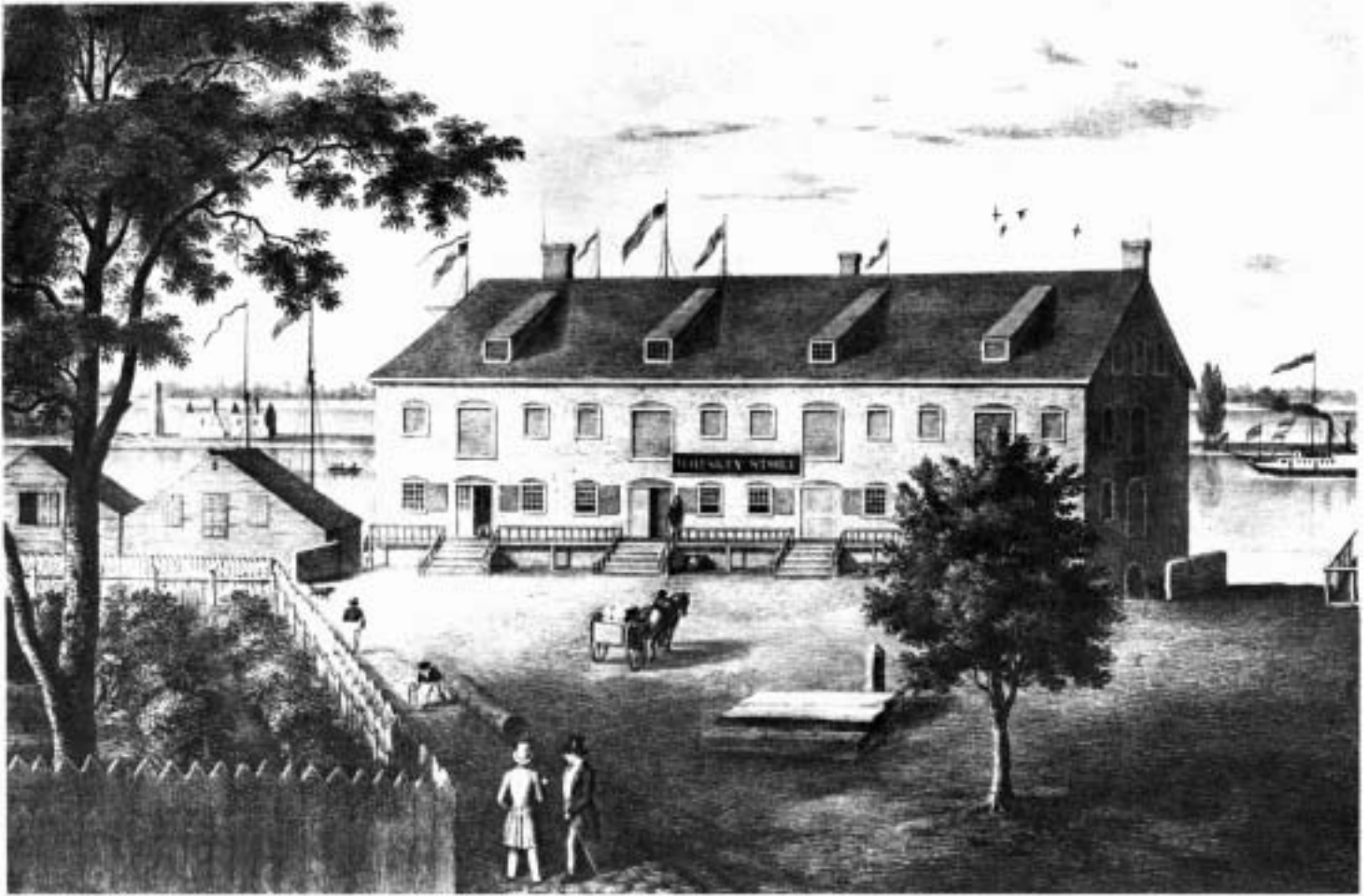
There are city and county directories for 1862, 1873-74, 1889-90, and more that list not only town residents and businesses, but also contain advertisements that tell a great deal about what products and services were available to our ancestors. How else would we know that there was only one bowling alley in the entire county in 1873? There are printed proceedings of the St. Law-



More recent eras are also represented in the family photograph collection of the archives, as in this portrait of the Binion family of Canton.



Another fully identified family group is that of the Hon. Leslie W. Russell family of Canton, taken about 1900.



Delving into the files at the SLCHA will also reveal numerous pictures of residences and public buildings, such as this one of the Whiskey Store at Ogdensburg, New York, in 1836.



The County Home in Ogdensburg.



A David F. Lane photograph of the 1856 "Royal Arch" House in Canton.



Photographs of organizations may also be found in the collection. This sample is of a 1918 meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution at Gouverneur.

<p>CHRISTMAS</p> <p>Ball!</p> <p>AT</p> <p>EAGLE HALL,</p> <p>CHASE'S MILLS,</p> <p>Thursday Ev'g, Dec. 24, '74.</p> <p>Your company with Ladies is Respectfully Solicited.</p>	<p>ROOM MANAGERS.</p> <p>J. MORAIN, R. PARKERSON.</p> <p>MUSIC.</p> <p>Easton & Lockwood's Full Quadrille Band.</p> <p>TICKETS, - \$2.00.</p> <p>W. W. TUTTLE, M. SMALL, Treas'r. Prop'r.</p> <p>ADVANCE PR., OGDENSBURG.</p>
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This 1874 dance program also finds a home in the archives. The \$2 price for a ticket was no small sum for the time!

BUNDLES FOR BRITAIN

≧ BENEFIT ≦

"Square Crooks"

By James P. Judge



MRS. HUGH WILLIAMS, Director

CANTON TOWN HALL

Tuesday, May 27th, 1941

The theatre program collection includes this one, said to be of the last event held at the old Town Hall Opera House in Canton.

rence County Board of Supervisors and Board of Legislators from 1856 to the present day. As dry as this may seem, the volumes contain lists of operating taverns and stores, production on the county farm, support of local schools, and special projects of county-wide significance.

There is a large section of "how-to" books from the nineteenth century. This includes manuals for the home, instruction in proper etiquette, symptoms and remedies for all sorts of medical disorders, all sorts of agricultural guides, and almanacs. Although much of the information may seem amusing to our more "sophisticated" taste, such recommendations were serious attempts to solve real problems that confronted our ancestors.

Other special collections of secondary materials include Adirondack books, schoolbooks, nineteenth century fiction either by St. Lawrence County authors or typical of novels found on local bookshelves, music anthologies, and children's books. All can provide insights into the daily lives of earlier generations of St. Lawrence County residents.

Primary resources are equally abundant. The largest portion is contained in a bank of seven file cabinets. The opening of a drawer can reveal hundreds of family photographs, views of the county fair, as well as countless pictures of residences and public buildings, organizational groups, farmsteads, churches, picnics, and community celebrations. Delving into another group of cabinets unearths thousands of file folders bulging with business and school records, dance and theater programs, personal reminiscences of life in the "good old days," scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, school and church minute books, and organizational histories. There are boxes of glass plate negatives that have yet to be printed, daguerreotypes and tintypes of people and places, broadsides advertising everything from schoolhouse auctions to land sales in Massena to the Fourth of July celebration in Madrid in 1865, and maps of every description. Special collections of diaries; WCTU records; the papers of Silas Wright (Canton), Jehiel Stevens (Brasher), Harriet Shoen (Stockholm), and Charles Anthony (Gouverneur); autograph albums; Dairyman's Cooperative League records; the St. Lawrence County Holstein Club scrapbooks; GAR records, and the extensive J. Henry Rushton (the Canton canoe builder) archives are waiting to be explored. In short, these are pieces of historical knowledge that, taken together, provide the documentation for events in this county since the eighteenth century.

Unfortunately, access to this ma-

terial requires time and energy on the part of the researcher. Finding aids and complete indexes remain a dream for the, hopefully, near future. Also, St. Lawrence County has a very diverse history, and the Association is *not* the proud owner of every printed record ever produced in St. Lawrence County. Some are still to be acquired, for they reside in the hands of local families, organizations, and businesses. The quest for the donation of such county-related material should be intensified; papers and/or pictures languishing in attics could be important additions to the collection and thereby preserved and made available to future researchers.

There is some information, however, that the Association has no plans to collect because it is better managed or maintained elsewhere. Local newspapers fall into this category. The Ogdensburg Public Library, St. Lawrence University Library, and the Potsdam State Library have all the extant newspapers on microfilm. At this time there is no need to duplicate these holdings here. Also, by New York State law, town, village, and county governments are required to maintain all sorts of public records—assessment rolls, surrogate-court records, general court records, land records, original state census materials, existing vital records, immigration papers, social service records, and a wide variety of legal papers.

In summary, then, the archival holdings of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association are varied, rich and becoming more available all the time. The exhibitions, publications, and programs of the Association rely on the quality of the archive. Without accurate research materials, it would be impossible to fulfill adequately the mandate to preserve, promote and interpret St. Lawrence County history. Thus, the next time you want to know the proper code of conduct for a visiting dignitary in the nineteenth century or the history of a bridge, or to see a photograph of the old Opera House in your town, come to the St. Lawrence County Historical Association Archives.



About the Author:

John A. Baule, director of the SLCHA from 1976 to 1986, now directs the Hennepin County Historical Society in Minnesota.

<h1>OLD HOME WEEK</h1> TOWN OF LISBON, N.Y. August 17-23, 1930	
SUN. AUGUST 17	BACK-HOME RE-UNION SERVICES IN ALL LOCAL CHURCHES Union Evening Service Town Hall
MONDAY EVE 18	PUBLIC MEETING TOWN HALL HISTORICAL REMINISCENT FLAG RAISING - TOWN HALL
TUESDAY 19	COMMUNITY BASKET PICNIC ALL INVITED - MCGAW'S POINT ON THE ST. LAWRENCE
WED. EVE 20	ANNUAL FLACKVILLE FAIR SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS FOR ALL VILLAGE OF FLACKVILLE, N. Y.
THURS. EVE 21	OLD HOME WEEK BANQUET AFTER DINNER SPEAKING Community Room, Hepburn Library
FRIDAY 22	FIELD DAY - PARADE - SPORTS BROWN'S GROVE NEAR LISBON VILLAGE Old Home Week Ball Evening Town Hall
SAT. EVE 23	VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT MOVIES SPEAKING MUSIC FAREWELL MEETING TOWN HALL

The archives also house numerous flyers and broadsides, such as this one for Old Home Week at Lisbon in 1930. Note the "Movies Speaking Music"!



The records of the Canton boat builder, J. Henry Rushton, whose shop built in 1881 is pictured here, are also located in the SLCHA archives.

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—*STILL AVAILABLE*—



“Landmarks and Lemon Crackers”

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association still has copies of its cookbook, *Landmarks and Lemon Crackers*, which features family tested recipes submitted by members and friends of the Association and covering every category a cook could wish. Also, artist Sandra Lowe has sketched over 30 county landmarks for which historical and architectural notes have been prepared. Photographs of another 60 sites and accompanying notes complete the landmarks portion. Every county town is represented.

When the two aspects—recipes and landmarks—are combined the Cookbook Committee is sure you will find a book both worthwhile to own and enjoyable to use. Proceeds will help support the activities of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association.

“Landmarks and Lemon Crackers”

Has a coated cover for easy upkeep

Has a plastic spiral binding

Has complete indexes of recipes and landmarks

Has large, easily read type

Costs \$7.00 for SLCHA members and \$7.95 for non-members

Can be gift wrapped and mailed for you at an additional charge

Think of it as a gift for yourself, for friends and relatives with St. Lawrence County ties, as a bridge or door prize, as Christmas or birthday gifts for office staff or customers. Wouldn't your friends, relatives, and acquaintances enjoy something special this year?