

THE  
**QUARTERLY**

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# THE QUARTERLY

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**Cover:** Lovinda and Edwin Atwater in front of their home on East Maple Street, Norfolk, NY. (*Courtesy of the Norfolk Historical Museum*)

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# The Attwater-Atwater Connection

## Founding Fathers Reflect County's History

by Jean A. Young

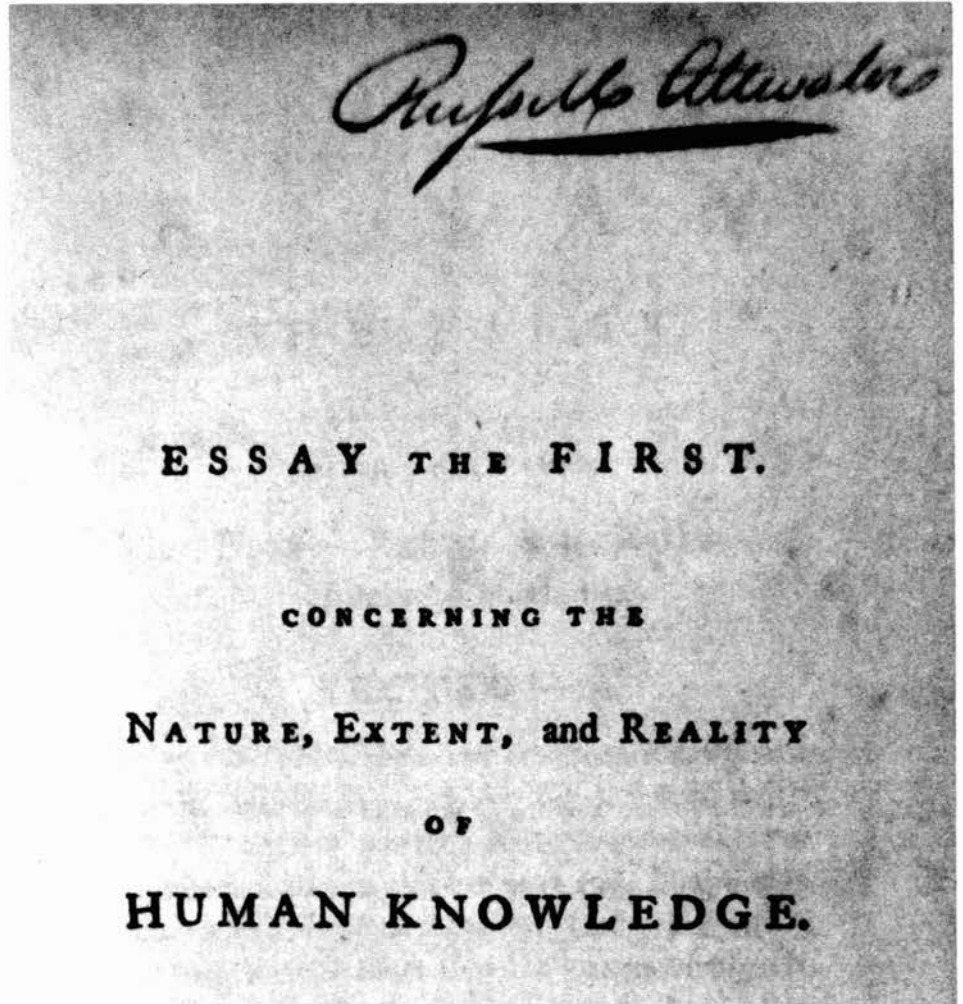
### I. Russell Attwater, Founding Father

He may not have been the first to come, but Russell Attwater undeniably played a leading role in the formation and development of St. Lawrence County, particularly in the towns of Russell, Norfolk and Brasher. As land agent, entrepreneur, organizer and public servant, his influence and that of his family can be traced down through the years. In following their stories we find insight into the lives and concerns, the dreams and disappointments of the people who over the centuries turned a forest into the St. Lawrence County we know today. Well educated, apparently a man of extraordinary energy and great ability, Russell Attwater seems to have been involved in almost every activity that accompanied the settlement of this area in its early days.

Of English descent, Russell was born in Cheshire, Connecticut, on June 20, 1762, to Reuben Attwater and his second wife, Mary Russell. He was in his teens when the American Revolution broke out, and he joined the Committee of Safety in New Haven County. His war service was cut short, however, as in his first battle he was shot through the lungs and left to lie on the battlefield, for three days, according to accounts. His pension record says he was wounded when General Tryon attacked New Haven on July 5, 1779. It states, "he received a serious wound from a musket ball in his fight, carrying away part of the collar and breast bones, he was carried from the field supposedly mortally wounded, he was under the care of a surgeon 18 months before the wound healed, at his father's expense".

According to the writings of his grandson, Henry Russell Attwater, it was during the Revolution that the division in the spelling of the family name occurred. Russell's father Reuben was staunchly for independence, while his brothers were Tories, "through policy or sentiment". By this time the name may have already been shortened by eliminating a "t", but by this account, Reuben stated that his name should not ever be spelled the same as the Tories' was, and the divergence in the family name has continued on down through the generations.

As a young man Russell lived in Blandford, Massachusetts, where he carried on a "mercantile business". On October 24, 1790, he married Clarissa Chapman. They had six children. The



*Russell Attwater's signature in a book in the Norfolk Historical Museum.  
(Photo by Romi LaBarge)*

last were twins, Henry and Thomas, and Clarissa died soon after their birth on September 21, 1798. Russell never remarried.

Meanwhile, in 1798, Russell had purchased a tract of land in St. Lawrence County from Daniel McCormick, part of the original Maccomb purchase. This consisted of about 13,600 acres, bought at a price of about forty cents per acre. It is also said that after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, he was employed by friends of Napoleon to buy land in northern New York, which they intended as a retreat for the emperor should he succeed in making his escape, but on hearing that Napoleon had given himself up to the English, they abandoned the project.

Russell made an exploratory trip to his new lands in 1806, and the following

year he moved there with a band of settlers, naming the small community Russell after himself. Between 1810 and 1816 the town was rapidly settled and everyone believed it would soon become a thriving and wealthy village.

Russell Attwater was soon involved in nearly every aspect of the town's life. He was the first supervisor, from 1808 to 1810; he erected the first gristmill and later a sawmill, and the first store. The first religious meetings were held in his house, and when an Episcopal society was formed, under the name of Sion or Zion Church, he was one of the first wardens and his son Phineas and his cousin William were vestrymen. Confusion has been caused because history books disagree on some of the important dates in Russell Attwater's life. It seems probable that the Episco-



pal society in Russell was formed in 1809, not 1819 as is sometimes given, when Russell and his relatives were officers, and that Russell moved to Norfolk in 1816 with the first group of settlers. His name appears on the 1820 Federal Census for Norfolk.

In 1808, he and Roswell Hopkins, founder of Hopkinton, were appointed to expend \$600 to make improvements for navigation along the American shore of the St. Lawrence River "from St. Regis to the Indian village in Lisbon". This money was probably used to make a towing path along the shore. Also in 1808, \$4,473 in school monies was received to be loaned in the county, and Russell Attwater was named one of the first loan commissioners.

At various times he was appointed to open roads from the town of Russell to other points. Most eventually were abandoned as patterns of settlement changed. The first turnpike was built by the St. Lawrence Turnpike Company in 1810, designed to run from Carthage to Malone. It was opened by Russell Attwater as agent for the company.

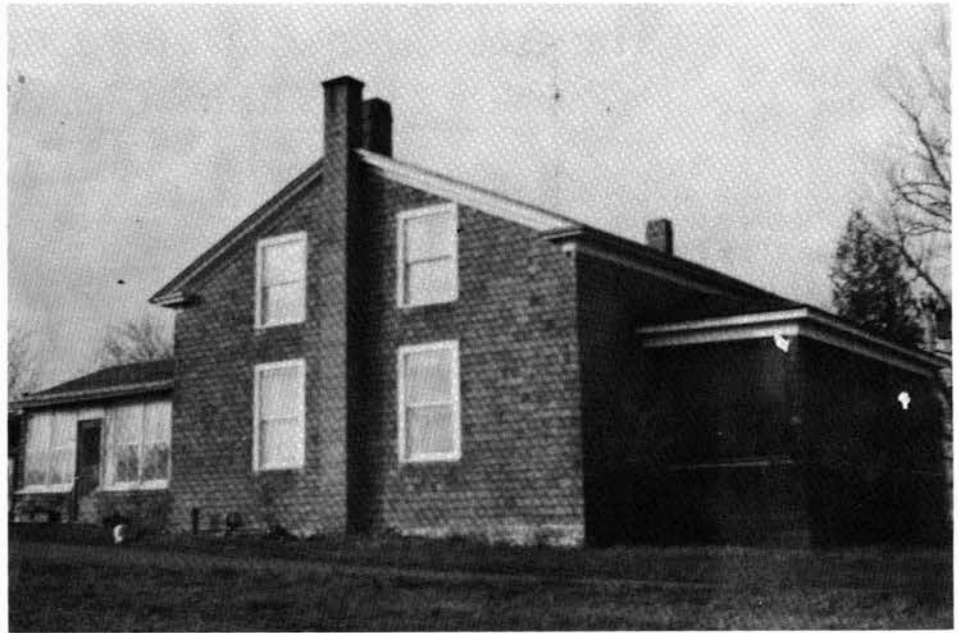
In 1808 he was appointed an associate judge, an office he held for many years.

In 1809 an act was passed by the legislators directing the governor to deposit arms, ammunition and other military stores in a suitable place in St. Lawrence County, as there was fear of an invasion by the British. The town of Russell was chosen as it was in the interior and on the turnpike, and Russell Attwater donated the land for the arsenal. A massive stone building, three stories high and thirty by fifty feet in area was built, surrounded by a high stone wall topped with iron spikes. During the War of 1812 it was guarded but apparently not attacked.

Russell Attwater served as a presidential elector and voted for DeWitt Clinton, then Lieutenant Governor of New York. Here again there is a confusion as to the date. If he voted for Clinton, as is usually stated, Russell must have been a presidential elector in 1812, the year Clinton ran for that office, and not in 1816 as some books say.

The leading men of these times generally showed great interest in advancing education in the new communities, and in 1816 Russell was appointed to the first board of trustees of the St. Lawrence Academy in Potsdam, the forerunner of Potsdam State College.

The great hopes held for the prosperity of the town of Russell were eventually dashed. Russell Attwater had in the course of his business mortgaged his land to the Mohawk Valley Bank, but having spent most of his money on improving the property, and perhaps on the purchase of more land, he became unable to meet his payments



*The Phineas Attwater house, where Russell Attwater also lived, on Wheeler Drive, Norfolk, NY. (Courtesy of Norfolk Historical Museum)*

and a foreclosure followed. This affected the titles of the settlers and caused great consternation. Many moved away, and only urgent appeals persuaded others to stay. However, the next landowner, Gerrit Smith, was patient and considerate of the people's problems, and the town eventually recovered.

Perhaps this difficulty prompted Russell's move to the new settlement in Norfolk. In 1815 he had purchased a large tract of land, including parts of the present towns of Norfolk and Louisville, from Gouverneur Morris Jr., who had inherited it from his father, the old statesman. Henry Russell Attwater writes, "At the time my grandfather purchased this tract of land from Morris it was a dense forest and the only entrance was a road cut down from Canada. Over this road my grandfather brought the first wagon ever in St. Lawrence County and it was so much a curiosity that people came over 50 miles to see it."

Russell Attwater soon built a large gristmill, with two and later three runs of stones. It was a three story building and the third floor was used for the first religious services in the town. Russell served as lay reader for the Episcopal service, later followed by his son Henry, until a regular minister could be obtained.

Materials for the mill, as well as provisions for the settlers, were brought by the first Durham boat on the St. Lawrence River, which made regular trips upriver from Schenectady. A Durham boat was a large flat-bottomed scow with broad square ends which was used for transporting freight on the rivers in the early days.

While a resident of Norfolk, Judge Attwater, as he was referred to, served as land agent for McCormick in the town of Brasher and brought the first settlers there on March 17, 1817. They settled in a place near Helena, and to serve them Russell erected a sawmill, which later contained a gristmill.

The new mill brought other settlers to Norfolk, and the town grew and prospered. However, conditions in these pioneer villages were somewhat precarious, and unexpected problems often arose which could change their prospects. Apparently for a time there was a much ague (chills and fever) in the vicinity and the area was thought to be unhealthful, which slowed the pace of settlement. Because of this, Russell again failed financially and when his son Henry was in the middle of his college studies, Russell was obliged to teach school to earn enough money to see him through college and theological seminary.

Originally Norfolk was a section of the town of Louisville, and it was not until 1823 that it was set aside as a separate town. The division was caused in part by the large swamp which made it difficult to travel directly between the two sections.

While Norfolk was still a part of Louisville, Russell served as a judge in the first murder conviction in St. Lawrence County. A lumberman named Michael Scarborough had left his home on business, leaving his wife and two children, along with a teen-age French boy, Jean Baptiste Macue, to look after things during his absence. The lumberman had unwisely displayed a large



sum of money and the young lad's brother-in-law, a man named Louis Gerteau, was aware of it. This man, believing the money to be in the house, plotted to steal it. He slept in the barn, and near dawn he sneaked into the house, passed by his sleeping brother-in-law and into Maria Scarborough's bedroom, where he found the money in a drawer. Fearful of being observed, he took an axe and killed the sleeping woman and a baby, killed Macue and wounded the other child. He escaped by taking a roundabout way past Massena and headed for St. Regis. Meanwhile neighbors had discovered the murders and pursued him, capturing him before he could reach his objective.

He was tried in the Circuit Court at Ogdensburg, with Russell Attwater acting as assistant judge, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged. He was executed in front of a large crowd on July 12, 1816.

Russell Attwater was 54 when he came to Norfolk, and he lived there the rest of his life. He was active in many phases of the town's development and contributed a great deal to the town's progress.

Russell died at the home of his son Phineas on June 16, 1851, at the age of 89 years, 11 months and 27 days. He is buried in the High Street Cemetery in Norfolk.

## II. The Sons

Russell Attwater had six children: Phineas, born on November 10, 1791; Merab, Russell C.; Frederick M.; and the twins, Henry S. and Thomas. All were born in Blandford, Massachusetts. Merab, the only girl, died as an infant. Russell C. and Frederick M. both became lawyers. Frederick was admitted to the bar in St. Lawrence County in 1817. Russell C. died at the age of 28, and Frederick, aged 31, both unmarried. Thomas died in 1803 at age 5.

The survivors, Phineas, Henry, Russell C., and Frederick apparently all came to St. Lawrence County with their father.

Phineas, the oldest, also had a distinguished career. He was active in the early affairs of the town of Russell. He was one of the first vestrymen when the Episcopal Church was formed. He taught in the first school in Russell, a log house in the Knox settlement. He remained in Russell for a time after his father left, and served as town supervisor from 1819-21, and was postmaster for a time. He was an early land agent for Joseph Pitcairn, who founded the town of that name.

Between 1813 and 1828 there was an ongoing controversy over the location of the county seat, which had originally been in Ogdensburg. When it came



*Attwater burial plot, High Street Cemetery, Norfolk, NY, August 1986. (from left to right) Unidentified grave, Russell Attwater grave, Hannah Attwater grave (she was the wife of Phineas Attwater.) (Photo by Jean A. Young)*

time to erect new public buildings there was strong sentiment to place them in what was considered by some to be a more convenient location, more accessible from the towns in the southern part of the county and more protected from possible hostile invasion. Also there was at that time a move to split the county into two parts, along a line between Lisbon and Canton on the west, and Madrid and Potsdam on the east, extending down to the southern boundary. The new county was to be named Fayette. In 1828 the location of the county seat became a leading issue, and candidates for the legislature were elected largely on the basis of their stand for or against a move. Phineas Attwater, representing those opposed to the move, was a candidate, but was defeated by a significant margin. As a result of the vote the new buildings were placed in Canton, and opened in 1830.

Phineas followed his father to Norfolk, where he continued to be active in civic affairs. He served as town supervisor from 1824 to 1828 and again in 1832-33, and was appointed the first post-

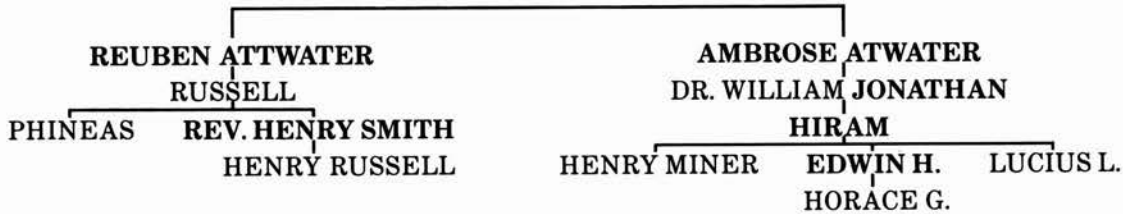
master in 1823.

Some time after 1832 Phineas served as an agent to disburse the annuities, or rents, paid to the St. Regis Indians for land purchased from them. In 1846 money was appropriated to build a schoolhouse on the reservation and hire a teacher. Phineas supervised the expenditures for this project.

In Norfolk Phineas built a house on a tract of land behind what is now the town hall at the end of Wheeler Drive. In this house his father Russell lived out his last days. The house standing there now is believed to be the original house, though no doubt considerably altered over the years.

On January 9, 1814, Phineas married Hannah K. Boyd. After her death, he took on April 14, 1857, for his second wife, Sarah B. Horton, who died in 1917. He had no children.

According to the writings of Henry Russell Attwater, Phineas was killed by a train on November 14, 1865, while walking along railroad tracks "near his place". It is unclear where this accident actually happened. It would have oc-



### The Atwater Branches

curred on the tracks of the Northern Railroad, which opened in 1850, and was the only railroad in this area at that early date. However, these tracks did not run through Norfolk, but in this area went from Norwood to Ogdensburg via Madrid Springs. Phineas must have been some distance away from his home when he was hit.

This railroad was an ill-fated venture designed to encourage trade between Boston and the western cities to pass through the north country, but was plagued from the start by controversy, mainly by complaints from the towns it did not pass through. Its construction was preceded by a long squabble among the towns with apparently much political maneuvering and although the route finally chosen may have been the best one geographically, this did not appease the hurt feelings among those who had been left out. The railroad was successful for a while, but track problems and financial problems multiplied, and it was foreclosed in 1858, being succeeded by other companies. By 1858, the year Phineas died, it had become the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Company.

Phineas's burial place is unknown. There are three stones on the Attwater plot in the High Street Cemetery. The central one is Russell's; to his left is one for Hannah, Phineas's first wife, and to his right is another son, smaller and older-looking, with the inscription so eroded that it is unreadable. Possibly it belongs to one of Russell's sons who died young. Perhaps Phineas is buried there without a headstone.

Henry Smith Attwater was one of the twins born to Clarissa Attwater just before her death in 1798. He graduated from Hobart College and from the General Theological Seminary in New York City and became an Episcopal minister. When Russell Attwater provided the third story of his stone mill in Norfolk for religious services and fitted it out with desks and furnishings, he and Henry served as lay readers for several years. In 1829 Henry served as "missionary" to the recently-formed

Grace Episcopal Church in Norfolk, and also served in Waddington. He later became rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Malone. He served as a minister for more than 50 years, at various churches in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Reverend Henry Attwater married on April 13, 1831, Sarah Lane Leary. They had seven children, several of whom died young of scarlet fever. A daughter, Sarah Lane Attwater and a son, Henry Russell Attwater, survived. His first wife died in 1851 and on October 5, 1857, he married Delia V. Tyler.

In his old age he lived with his son who had homesteaded to Cedar Vale, Kansas. Soon after the move their house was destroyed by fire. Henry S. Attwater was ill in bed with double pneumonia at the time. He was carried to a neighbor's house, but died in a few hours. It is said that all of the family's records were lost in that fire.

Henry Russell Attwater, son of Henry S. Attwater and grandson of Russell, homesteaded in Kansas in 1871, so his story went far afield from St. Lawrence County, but he made an important contribution to the annals of the family. At the age of seven, and perhaps also later, he visited his uncle Phineas when his grandfather was living there, and wrote his recollections of him. He often asked to see the scar made by the bullets that had felled Russell during the Revolutionary War. His grandfather would proudly tell him the story of how he got it, and also other information about the family history. From him came the explanation of the different spellings of the family name, and also the fact that Phineas was killed on the railroad tracks.

Henry Russell Attwater was an educator and superintendent of schools in Kansas. He married Mary A. Coon and had one son. He died on March 15, 1875.

### III. The Atwater Branches

Reuben Attwater, father of Russell, had several brothers, presumably the

Tories who so angered Reuben that he changed the spelling of his name to make it different from theirs. One of them was Ambrose, who was the ancestor of a line which was also prominent in the history of Norfolk.

Ambrose, born in December, 1843, married Sarah Tryon. He lived to be 91 years old and fathered eleven children. Two of his sons, William and Jonathan, first cousins to Russell Attwater, also were part of the Atwater history.

William was born on May 9, 1789, in Cheshire, Connecticut. His father Ambrose moved with his family to Burlington, Vermont, about 1797. William graduated from the University of Vermont in 1809, a member of the sixth class to pass through that institution. After that he studied medicine in the office of Dr. John Pomeroy and completed the required three years. He was drafted for service in the War of 1812. He reported for duty with his gun and his knapsack, but was taken ill after a few miles' march and was forced to return home. That was the extent of his war service.

After receiving his diploma he remained with Dr. Pomeroy for a time, gaining experience in the practice of medicine. In 1816 he was commissioned as a surgeon in a squadron of cavalry in the Vermont militia.

In 1818 Dr. Atwater moved to St. Lawrence County. His name appears as one of the first vestrymen of the Zion Church in the town of Russell, along with Phineas. On June 20, 1820, he married in Norfolk, Delia Wetmore, in the first marriage performed in that town. He practiced there and was listed as a member of the St. Lawrence County Medical Society in 1821. He stayed there until 1829, when he returned to Burlington, where he remained for the rest of his life and became a prominent physician. In 1843 an epidemic of erysipelas, a serious contagious disease marked by a high fever and hard reddened spots on the skin, occurred in the area, and Dr. Atwater contracted it from a post-mortem examination. He nearly lost his





*The Hiram and Lucius Atwater house on East Main Street, Norfolk, NY, now torn down and replaced by a new house. (Photo courtesy of the Norfolk Historical Museum)*

life, but recovered. He attributed his recovery to the fact that he had rejected the practice of bleeding patients, the prevailing treatment for the disease, and his more modern approach was successful. He died on June 27, 1853, aged 64 years.

Jonathan Atwater, brother of William, went from Connecticut to Vermont in the early days with his wife Clara Badger. He farmed in Vermont all of his life and died there in 1842.

Hiram Atwater, son of Jonathan, was born on January 1, 1802, in Williston, Vermont. He moved to Norfolk in 1828 at the age of 26. He taught school there for a while and then went back to Vermont and married Hannah Miner on February 8, 1830. He soon returned with her to Norfolk where he lived out his life.

He was involved in the lumber business as well as farming and "mercantile business", and in 1856 he built a tannery. In 1840 and 1841 he served as town supervisor. He also served at various times as town clerk, justice of the peace and assessor. He was one of the first directors of the Norfolk, Ray-

mondville and Massena Plank Road Company, which was organized on February 14, 1851, to be completed in 1852, but was only partly finished in that year. This road continued the road from Potsdam northward to link the towns leading to Massena.

Hiram and Hannah Miner Atwater had three sons: Henry Miner, Edwin and Lucius. All of them together carried on their father's business for a time. In 1863 Hiram retired, and he died on June 23, 1871. A eulogy of him states: "He has witnessed all and borne a part in nearly every position of honor and trust in his town. In business matters he was honest, reliable and straightforward and was a man of strictly temperate habits and liberal Christian sentiment".

Henry Miner Atwater was born in Norfolk on April 18, 1832. He worked in his father's business until 1855, when along with many others he succumbed to "gold fever" and went to California to take part in the gold rush. In 1859 he returned to Norfolk to marry Helen Marr Walker. He went back to California in 1881 and took up farming.

He died on April 18, 1883, at Tomales, California.

Edwin H. Atwater, son of Hiram and Clara Badger Atwater, was born in Norfolk on April 30, 1834. He was educated in the public schools, and at the age of 16 he worked for his father and continued until 1856, when he went into business in partnership with his brothers. In 1863 this partnership was dissolved and a new one formed with G.E. Holbrook. In 1865 this was also dissolved and the business was sold. In 1867 Edwin went into business with A.E. Sayles and this continued for many years. He was also involved in the real estate business and shared in a number of enterprises with his brothers.

Edwin Atwater served the town in a number of capacities. He was justice of the peace, town clerk, and was town supervisor from 1866 to 1868, again from 1881 to 1883, and once more in 1885. For a short time, from 1886 to 1889, he lived in Ogdensburg, and served as supervisor in that town for one year. In 1878 he was a vestryman at Norfolk's Grace Episcopal Church.



A newspaper article dated in 1900 refers to the purchase of "E.H. Atwater's 10-acre lot", and of "Atwater's island in the Raquette River", and also of "15 acres of land belonging to E.H. Atwater at the foot of the rapids", for the purpose of developing water power to operate the paper mill about to be built. It is probable that some of this land was the site of Russell Attwater's original stone mill, which was located across the river from the present paper mill.

On October 22, 1860, Edwin married Lovina Yale, daughter of Lloyd C. Yale of Norwood. They had three children: Horace G., Grace Y., and Lucia H. Edwin died on January 30, 1903.

Lucius Lyon Atwater was the third son of Hiram. Known in the family as "Lute", he was perhaps less of a politician than Edwin may have been, though he served as town auditor in 1878, but he was very active as a businessman. With his brothers he owned a general store and a shingle and lath mill in the 1860's. In the town directory of 1873-74, he and Edwin were listed as dealers in lumber and sawed pine and cedar shingles, and "owned 1500 acres". Lucius alone was listed in the 1889-90 directory as a furniture dealer, while Atwater and Sayles sold "general stock".

Lucius Atwater was born on September 4, 1836. On September 4, 1874, he married Emma Briley, daughter of William Briley of Norfolk. He died on September 11, 1892.

Hiram and his three sons are buried in the family plot in the Bixby Cemetery in Norfolk.

The Atwater family left their mark on the physical aspect of Norfolk. During the Civil War, in the early 1860's, Lucius built the brick hotel which still stands on the present Route 56, almost opposite the bridge over to the main business section of town. This was called the Atwater House and was owned by the Atwaters until around 1895, when it was sold. It has had several different names since then, and in recent times was known as Lavigne's Hotel. It now houses a Mexican restaurant.

Lucius and Edwin, along with several others, built the present brick town hall at their own expense in 1871, and then sold it to the town for what was considered a very reasonable price of \$3000.

Both of these buildings were constructed of brick produced by the William Coats brickyard in Raymondville. This business operated from the 1830's until the 1890's, and furnished brick for most of the public buildings and brick homes in this area.

The Atwaters built a complex of houses in the center of Norfolk village. At least five homes were erected by them in a small area extending from East Main Street (Route 56) on the west



*Horace G. Atwater.* (Photo courtesy of the Norfolk Historical Museum)

over to Maple Street on the east, joined by a short lane now known as Atwater Street. Perhaps the most notable is the large brick house on the west side of East Main Street, two doors to the south of Smith's grocery store. This was built in 1870. In modern times it has been known as the Dr. Wheeler house. Next door to this was a frame house where Hiram first lived, and later Lucius. In recent years this was torn down and replaced by a new one. Another house below this was owned by Edwin and Lucius and may have been used as an office. To the east on Maple Street is another large brick house, once called the Grandma Atwater house, which Hiram built and lived in with Hannah for the rest of his life. There is another Atwater house at the corner where Maple Street turns to run beside the hotel. In the back yard is a large rock where it is said that Horace played as a boy. There may have been other houses.

There was once a family cemetery

behind the brick house on Maple Street. When the railroad was built through Norfolk in 1886, it was necessary to move the bodies to the family plot in the Bixby Cemetery.

When Hiram and Hannah moved into the brick house on Maple Street, Edwin and Lovina moved into the large brick house on East Main Street. Lucius preferred to remain in the old family home next door, and he and Emma stayed on there until Lucius died, in the same room where he was born.

The Civil War affected St. Lawrence County as well as the rest of the nation. At the beginning each side believed the war would end quickly and each thought it would win. As the war dragged on and casualties mounted, disillusion set in. By 1863 many of the original enlistees' terms had expired and they had gone home. Casualties and desertions had further depleted the fighting forces. In July, 1863, the first national draft act was passed over bitter opposition. This draft was inefficient and very incomplete. Men found numerous ways to evade it. Out of 207,000 men who were called, only 46,000 went personally into the army. A unique provision of the act allowed men who were called and did not wish to go, to hire substitutes to take their places. This was considered a right and perfectly legitimate, though it seems incredible today. The pool of substitutes was made up of 18- and 19- year olds, and by immigrants who had not yet applied for citizenship.

The three Atwater brothers, Henry, Edwin and Lucius, were all drafted and all hired substitutes. Three French-Canadian brothers, Joseph, John and Antwine (Antoine) Chattell, were paid \$250 each to serve in their places. That was considered a large sum of money in those days. Fortunately, they all returned alive.

Horace G. Atwater, son of Edwin, was the last Atwater to live in Norfolk and take part in its affairs. He was born on June 14, 1873. He attended Leland Stanford University in California, went on to study law, and opened a practice in Norfolk. For many years he was in partnership with Attorney Fred J. Flanagan. He followed in the family tradition of public service, being president of the Board of Education when the union school district was formed in 1906. He was also the first president of the Norfolk bank when it opened in 1916. He apparently was a sociable gentleman and his silhouette appears in a collection made of many guests at a "social" held to raise money for the town band in 1898. Such silhouettes were an art form, popular in the Victorian era, that carried over into the



*The Hiram Atwater house on Maple Street, Norfolk, NY. (Photo courtesy of the Norfolk Historical Museum)*

20th century. Though made by hand in the early years, a machine was later invented to produce them.

That he had a romantic and a humorous side is shown by a letter written by him on December 16, 1895, to a young English woman he met on a train coming east from California. Some excerpts follow:

"My dear Miss Goodison,

"You have probably forgotten all about me long before this and consigned me to the never-to-be-recalled past; but thanks to an address once given me, I have not so readily banished all remembrance of you. You don't even know who I am? What? Has all memory of that trip across the American continent with the dust and discomfort, the cards and the candy so soon entirely escaped you? You must recall a certain young fellow with crushed hat and soiled face who bade you such an affectionate farewell at Ottawa. I that speak to you am he . . . . .

"What a trip that was across the continent—wasn't it? I have hardly any remembrance of it left save the above mentioned hat which you so cruelly maltreated, and which, infirm with not so much age as ill-usage, now rests in the quiet of the attic only to be pulled forth at the judgement day, or sooner perhaps by some of my progeny who will point to it with pride as the hat that Grandfather wore from the western coast—such changes as time is able to effect!

"You can hardly imagine the relief I experienced at finding myself once more in the 'land of the free and the home of the brave' . . . . . I say 'relief' for it was a relief to feel that I had passed from the oppressive dominion of the British lion and could again breathe the air of God's own country.

"It grieves me greatly to see so many of our American young women so eager to attach a title to their names, and give their wealth to the foreigner when there are so many fellows here that would be perfectly willing to take charge of it. But such is the anomaly of life, distance seems to lend en-

chantment. It matters little to me, however, whether they go or stay as I fear I shall be obliged to remedy my fortunes in some other way than by the acquisition of an opulent wife.

"I am at present on the high road to success, towards which we all are aiming. I am now deeply engaged in the study of law, which in this country, however it may be with you, is the sure way to political preferment, in other words the Presidential chair. So you see I have now only to wait for my talents to develop—and who can doubt that they will—and I am in a position to command the respect of the haughty English. Then won't you be proud at having had the distinguished honor of receiving a note from me? . . . . .

"I trust that you will not feel offended at my thus addressing you, and I trust you may conclude to take pity on you humble servant and relieve his inquiring mind by telling him if you are still the same jolly girl I once knew.

"Trusting sometime to be favored with answer to this note, I close,

Yours truly,

Horace G. Atwater,  
Norwood, N.Y., U.S.A."

This letter was written on the stationery of Norman M. Claffin, Norwood, N.Y., the firm where Horace apparently studied law after his return from the west. It was found in England by a descendent of "Miss Goodison", who was going through some papers she had left, and was sent to the mayor of Norwood some years ago. It is not known if Horace ever received a reply.

On March 31, 1915, a disastrous fire raged through the center of Norfolk. Arson was suspected, but later investigation pointed to a possibly defective flue. The buildings were wooden and the March night probably windy, and Norfolk did not yet have a fire department. Firemen from Norwood and

Potsdam were called and arrived on a special train in time to stop the fire before it reached the Congregational (now Wesleyan) Church on Hepburn Street. The fire had begun in a grocery store and the owner's wife, her twin babies and her sister, who lived upstairs, perished in the blaze. One of the buildings that burned housed the law offices of Atwater and Flanagan, Horace's firm.

Romantic nature or not, Horace remained a bachelor into middle age. In the 1920's he moved to California, where on April 27, 1925, he married Lucia C. Bradley, at the age of 52. He lived the rest of his life in that state, and left no children.

There are no Atwaters left in Norfolk now, though a descendent of Henry Miner, Mrs. Mildred Scott Jenkins, lives in adjacent Stockholm. Several descendants of the families who moved to California still live out there. But though the Atwaters are gone, their stamp on the history of St. Lawrence County, especially the town of Norfolk, remains evident. Their long tradition of business enterprise and their record of public service can be matched by few families in the history of the region. In most of the important events and many of the ground-breaking decisions, especially in the early years, the Atwater-Atwater families played a part. In learning their stories on obtains an overview of events, large and small, that shaped the county's history. St. Lawrence County would be poorer without their legacy.

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# Cynthia Abram and Cyrus Stafford

by Virginia McLoughlin

## I. From Parishville to the Pacific in the 1860's

Cynthia Abram and Cyrus Stafford, both born in Parishville, St. Lawrence County, were among the thousands of New York Staters who struggled over the trails to the American West in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, carrying to the new land the customs and values of their native homeland. Some went to settle and farm in the wondrous valleys of California and Oregon. Some went to set up the business enterprises linked to every burgeoning American community. Many, like Cyrus Stafford, went to mine for gold and silver.

Some women shared these specific goals, but recent studies have shown, predictably, that the majority of the women who went West between 1840 and 1870, years of heaviest migration, did so because the male head-of-household had made that decision. The women's main purpose was to keep the family together, and they performed their daily tasks on the trail and in the West with this goal in mind, often exerting efforts beyond and outside of their traditional roles. Cynthia Abram Stafford was no exception to this. Although before her marriage she herself had chosen independently to seek a teaching position on the American frontier in Iowa, it was Cyrus's decision to go on farther to the West Coast. In order to get there, Cynthia had to walk hundreds of miles; and when she arrived, she lived in a hastily built log cabin in an Oregon mining town crowded with speculators.

For Cyrus G. Stafford the Oregon Trail and the gold-mining town at the end of it were but a preface to his career. For Cynthia Abram Stafford the Trail and the town were a final chapter. Cyrus would have given up the gold to have had it otherwise.

The couple were married in 1862 in distant Iowa. As far as her St. Lawrence County parents were concerned, Cynthia had "eloped" when she married Cyrus against their wishes. Of course, this parental disapproval prompted younger generations of the family to tingle with forbidden thoughts of romantic love. And Cyrus himself conjectured that Cynthia's love for him had been strengthened by her parents' objections to a proven long-time relationship which might just naturally blossom into romance.

Cynthia Abram, born June 3, 1835, was the youngest of eight children of William and Margaret Haslem Abram,



*The house and barn on the farm near Parishville which Cynthia Abram left to become a teacher and go west. William Abram, her father, worked the farm for David Parish who had the house built as a summer retreat from his many business operations. The house was destroyed by fire many years later. (Photo courtesy of Mary C. Burroughs and Virginia D. McLoughlin, now in SLCHA Archives)*

Episcopalians who had come from Northern Ireland to Parishville by way of Canada in 1825. William Abram had been hired by David Parish to manage his elaborate farm, and the family lived in the house designed for Mr. Parish by the French architect Joseph Ramee.<sup>1</sup> As there was no Episcopal church in Parishville, the family attended the nearby Congregational church.

Why these parents disapproved of Cyrus Stafford is unknown. Perhaps they feared that Cyrus did not hold strong religious belief, but his early life would seem today to be everything a parent-in-law could want. Cyrus was born on May 1, 1836, at Staffords Corners, Parishville (at the town line where Route 72 turns sharply towards Potsdam). When Cyrus was 7 years old, his parents, Erastus and Prudence Perkins Stafford, moved the family to the adjacent town of West Stockholm, and Cyrus later considered himself a native of that town. His parents were members of the Methodist Episcopal church. Because Cyrus was among the youngest of twelve children, he knew that he would not inherit the family homestead, and he had probably foreseen a future quite bleak for himself, working in the West Stockholm wool-carding mill, like his father and brothers. After attending the district school and then the St. Lawrence Academy in Potsdam, he started to study law, read-

ing in his spare moments while he taught school for two terms. After an additional two and a half years of legal study under the supervision of the Dart & Tappan law firm in Potsdam, he was admitted to the bar before the Supreme Court of New York State in 1860. Cyrus went to Freeport, Illinois, intending to establish a law practice there, but then the Civil War broke out. Five days after the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, Cyrus enlisted as a private in Company A, Eleventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry. He was stationed at Bird's Point, Missouri, on the Mississippi River (opposite Cairo, Illinois) and served with his regiment from April 19 to July 30, 1861. After being honorably discharged, he went to Iowa, the attraction to that place being Cynthia Abram, who was teaching in a public school in Cedar Falls.

Cynthia's first teaching position had been at the St. Lawrence Academy in Potsdam, where she had been a student. She was bright and articulate and conscientious about her role as a teacher. She thought of the profession primarily as a service to God and country, but she also saw it as a means to her own independence. In 1859 Cynthia persuaded her parents to let her attend the famed Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Mary Lyon had founded the school of higher learning in 1837 particularly for middle-



class farmers' daughters such as Cynthia, who had the ability and the desire to be actively engaged in furthering education and disseminating Christian principles throughout the world.

Although Mount Holyoke kept the students' costs as low as possible through a plan of student housekeeping, plus a staff of teachers so devoted that they practically donated their services, the outlay of cash meant financial sacrifice for the Abram family. Cynthia carefully enumerated her expenses in her letter from Mount Holyoke, December 31, 1859:

"My expenses here if I am well[,] as I thus far have been[,] will not exceed \$110, & I dont intend they shall go over \$105. I am going to board at Chickopee [during the winter recess between terms]. Shall go there the 13th of Jan. to a farmers. Wont it seem good to sit down at a private family table, more like home, I opine . . . I find good clear blood bounding through the veins a fuel-saver, for we have not burned *one cord* of wood yet, which will be \$3.55 for each of us [Cynthia and her dormitory roommate] when we do, & the wood is mostly *hemlock*, one third at least . . . Isnt it *cheap*[,] father, *ha ha*. We burn considerable oil [in whale-oil lamps] for 4-45 is my hour of rising, havent been in bed at 5 but two mornings since I came here[,] sundays not excepted. Most of the young ladies rise at 6 A.M. . . . Mother, I have been obliged to get some incidentals as paper, stamps, envelopes &c. &c. You know how[,] *dont you* but dont blame me for I should die off if I didnt write to my friends. I write my own family mostly. However, I shall be obliged to purchase one pr. of shoes & some kind of a spring dress & get my bonnet dressed, which, with a Hood & some yarn for undersleeves &c., besides my books for study, is the *most* I shall pay out."<sup>2</sup>

At Mount Holyoke Cynthia's religious concern was heightened. Each morning, devotions were required of the entire Mount Holyoke community (students and faculty), and each day two half-hour periods were set aside for solitary prayer in one's room. Sunday sabbath was strictly observed; besides attending the South Hadley Congregational church two or three times, the students were expected to spend that day in thought and prayer, not even deviating to an occupation so worldly as writing letters home. As in every nineteenth-century New England institution of higher learning, revivals and conversions were encouraged by the entire community. There is no doubt that, if it had been more commonly accepted as a profession for women, many Mount Holyoke students would have become ministers instead of schoolteachers.

In these early years the experience of being a member of the Mount Holyoke community was valued in itself, regardless of whether a diploma was attained. Only about a third of Cynthia's class of 154 students remained

the full three years required to graduate. Cynthia intended to graduate, but after her first academic year, 1859-60, she did not want to ask her parents for more financial support, "nor do I want to stay in so close confinement from society, more than one year at a time[.] I dont think it is well for the mind, beside I want to see you all a good long spell." She decided to return for a year to St. Lawrence County, teach in a select-school, and receive tutored lessons from Dr. Elijah W. Plumbe, principal of the St. Lawrence Academy. She intended then to return for a final year at Mount Holyoke, hoping the school would graduate her. But she never went back.

However, the missionary spirit of Mount Holyoke remained with its students throughout their lifetimes. As Mary Lyon pointed out, the aim of the seminary was "not only to increase the number of educated ladies, but to enforce on them the obligation to use their talents for the good of others, especially in teaching."<sup>3</sup> Students went out from Mount Holyoke to teach in the rural areas of the South, in the Indian Territory among the civilized tribes, in the Midwest among the farming pioneers, and in the Far West among the early settlers of the Pacific Coast. Cynthia Abram had originally wanted to join the few who taught in foreign lands across the ocean, in Persia or India or the Sandwich Islands, but as a concession to the worries of her aging parents, Cynthia chose instead to go to the American frontier, which was then the states along the eastern bank of the Missouri River.

Cynthia Abram taught in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in 1861-62. A letter from her in Iowa, written in late fall, 1861, was commenced on a Saturday because she wanted to discuss her desperate financial situation; this would not have been an appropriate subject for Sunday letter-writing. Despite her love and devotion to her family, an undercurrent of antagonism unmistakably crops up in Cynthia's letters. Perhaps this stems from the controversy over her intentions regarding Cyrus Stafford; but in any case, finances would have been a trying subject for Cynthia, who was struggling to be independent, no easy task for a woman in the 1860's. With great reluctance, she had recently asked her parents to send her some money. Her mother and brother Edward had then decided the cash should be raised by selling a cow and some sheep which Cynthia owned on the home farm in Parishville. Cynthia strongly objected:

"I must say, dear mother & Edward, that your idea of selling the cow & sheep *now* in the fall, after having had the use of them for

two years, wasnt what I expected. If I were at *Home* & had been any expense to you[,] I shouldnt wonder, but I havent had even yarn to make me a pair of stockings, & have been obliged to buy me a supply since I came west. Now all I have to say with reference to selling those creatures this fall is, Edward must do just as his hay dictates. I shall leave the matter with father to send me as much money as *he* feels in conscience bound to for them, at a '*spring price*'. I have *some* little common sense left & know two or three things myself, about selling off stock late in the fall. My cow is worth at least 40 dollars, & as for the sheep, I suppose I own 100 by this time. Sarah [sister] gave me one—a wether—which must have begotten me a large flock—worth about 3.00 per head. [Since a wether is a castrated male sheep, Cynthia was mistaken here.] But we will talk about those 'in future', if we life.

"Mother[,] I dont understand what you mean by owing 2.50 for me. I am sure there are 30. of my 100. left, at least [in my bank account in Potsdam]. They may have over-run that amount a little but if so, at no place except Mrs. Wilsons charge for the making of that dress, which she *completely spoiled*. I cant wear it in company at all and havent got my merino one made, either, for lack of means for trimming & making. I *wont* go in debt if I *starve*. I had but 12 shillings four weeks ago, & have been obliged to borrow some of Can [Candace, Cyrus's sister?]. I owe Cy the money & he *needs* it. It ought to be paid, & I am ashamed to say any thing to him in my letters, because it is not. I will write the *friendly* part of my letter, or rather[,] write something besides business tomorrow. I wanted to take saturday to mention those items, & if you will express your views, if I am wrong in any way, do it freely & oblige me."

The next afternoon Cynthia continued her letter in calmer tone:

"My Dear Parents, Bro. & Sister[,] I suppose you are all seated round the family table just now at 4. of the clock, sabbath afternoon, as I have *pictured* you in my mind, the children with you, prattling & talking away as cheerful as birds sing their morning lays. O how happy we used to be, but *didnt* know it, & *you* dont know it now. This is a delightful day. The sun shines and has for the past week without even a *cloud* to mar its surface. I *wish* I knew whom you had heard preach? You dont tell me whether Mr. Grant [Henry M. Grant, Minister of the Congregational Church] is with you, nor *any thing* of Town & its inhabitants. My imagination is amazingly stretched on all occasions, whenever I sit down & think of Home, & its good folks . . . Do you go to Church & have the bible-class. My heart is *full*, when I reflect the loss I am at for your instruction & mothers too. I have scarcely heard a blessing or prayer since I left you. You have no idea of the *wickedness* practiced in the fast West."

1862 was the marriage date of Cynthia, who was then 26, and Cyrus, 25. That year exhilarating reports were coming in from the West of new discoveries of gold in Idaho and Oregon. Thousands of placer miners were con-



*Cynthia Abram Stafford. This picture was taken in 1861 by N.W. Williams of Potsdam. (Photo courtesy of the author)*

verging to the gulches and creek-beds where an individual could dream of staking out a claim, picking up nuggets, panning out gold dust, and possessing the prize of his own labors without any middleman to reduce his profits. And if the gold did not pan out, there was plenty of money to be made from rendering services to those who crowded into the gold-mining country. It all looked good to Cyrus G. Stafford.

Cynthia's parents, however, could think of nothing but the dangers inherent in such a venture. The Oregon Trail was well known for its physical hardships, and by the 1860's the number of Indian attacks on emigrant wagon trains had increased. Her parents realized, too, that this would mean they would not see their daughter for many years, perhaps never. They immediately sent their son Edward to Iowa to dissuade Cynthia from undertaking such a journey. Edward Abram arrived from Parishville carrying bribes such as a new dress, a silk shawl, and promises that happiness lay in going no further away from home. But Cyrus would not be deterred, and Cynthia would not be separated from him. She went to the Far West because she loved Cyrus. Yet, she had already proven her own courage to face the unfamiliar in the quest for opportunity when she sought the teach-

position in Iowa. Her idea of "opportunity" differed from Cyrus's in that she saw opportunity as any circumstance in which education and Christian principles could be promoted. This mission to teach, this station in the community, and the satisfaction of knowing that her financial remuneration was essential to the couple's survival were considerations which sustained Cynthia in the months to come in the Oregon gold-mining town where, as it turned out, she frequently had to be without her beloved Cyrus.

The migration of 1862 to the West was one of the largest up to that date, estimated to be over 50,000.<sup>4</sup> The war had disrupted the Missouri River towns, and many settlers who had gone to that western frontier from the East and the South now wanted to push on further. The West provided, too, a good place to escape the possibility of a military draft. The greatest number of emigrants, however, were gold-seekers. The depression of 1857 gave impetus to this search for gold.

Western settlement was encouraged by the Government. Earlier, the nation's leaders had realized that a flood of U.S. citizens would help legitimize possession of the lands, California to be wrested from Mexico, and the Oregon country to be secured from British claims. California joined the Union as a state in 1850 with a population swollen by the 1849 Gold Rush to 92,597. Oregon joined the Union in 1859. Its population had increased in the decade between 1850 and 1860 from 13,294 to 52,465.<sup>5</sup> After the Civil War began, the Government was eager for new sources of gold to finance the war.

The number of whites travelling westward grew to such great proportions that some of the Indian tribes began to give thought to moving eastward in order to escape, reasoning that surely the lands to the east must be emptied by now. They did not realize that the white emigration would be endless. To the tribes with whom they came in contact along the Oregon Trail the whites had brought diseases new to Indians, such as cholera, measles, and smallpox. By the 1860's hostility intensified as many tribes became fully aware that their lands and their food supplies were fast diminishing and that the whites did not intend to honor mutual treaties. Resentments broke out in attacks on wagon trains along the Oregon Trail. In 1862, the year that Cyrus and Cynthia Stafford went West, the U.S. Government began sponsoring an armed escort of men who volunteered specifically for this duty to protect the travelers of the Oregon Trail.

Since the trip required four to five months, there was but one migration per year to the West, the majority

starting from a "jumping off place" along the Missouri River in April or May. The journey had to be completed before frigid cold and snow settled into the mountains of the West. The Staffords left Cedar Falls, Iowa, on May 9, 1862, and undoubtedly chose Omaha as their jumping-off place. On account of unusually high water that year, most of the emigrants travelled along the north bank of the Platte River instead of the south bank, which had been the original route of the Oregon Trail.<sup>6</sup> From every rise in the Nebraska land the view to the west included the canvas-covered wagon trains. Small groups joined together to make a company large enough to offer mutual defense against Indian attack. There was safety in numbers. Each train elected a captain, and the members pledged deference to his decisions concerning camping sites, delegated duties, routes of travel, etc. Even so, dissension among the travelers was almost inevitable in the face of long, slow-moving days, accompanied by tenseness regarding Indian hostility and by anxiety over finding water to drink and cook with, wood for fuel, and grass for the animals. The average mileage covered per day ranged from 15 (with oxen) to 20 or 25 miles a day (with mules).

The 1862 travelers suffered in the Platte valley in Nebraska from severe thunderstorms, intense heat, mosquitoes, and rattlesnakes. Where the Platte River forked, the Oregon Trail followed the north branch. Formerly huge buffalo herds crossed here to go north in summer and south in winter, but now in 1862 there were only thousands of skeletons and skulls scattered everywhere. The buffalo had been ruthlessly slaughtered by white men for the sport of it, and the buffalo habitation had moved westward. Most wild game had withdrawn from the vicinity of the Oregon Trail, denying both Indians and whites a ready food supply along the Trail.

Although the great Sioux uprising was about to begin with an attack on the white settlers of New Ulm and other settlements in Minnesota in August of this year 1862, many Sioux Indians visited, in apparent friendliness, the travelers' camps near the western border of Nebraska. All along the Trail whenever Indians visited, the emigrants were confused as to whether their intent was "to beg," "to steal," "to trade," or just "out of curiosity." *Bona fide* trading went on, but the U.S. official Emigrant Escort carried a supply of gifts to placate Indians all along the way. Among items carried by the emigrants for this purpose were tobacco, colored beads, red calico, red string, and brass rings. These trinkets were hardly enough to pacify the rage that



was brewing in the 1860's, however. What most Indians really wanted was gunpowder. They saw their freedom of movement curtailed, their buffalo destroyed, their hunting grounds disrupted, and their agreements and treaties broken and discarded at will by white settlers, miners, and the U.S. Army.

At Fort Laramie in Wyoming the officers warned the travelers that some of the tribes of Indians of the plains were on the warpath against each other and were causing trouble by stampeding the stock of the emigrant wagon trains and marauding and robbing. The Sioux had become the most populous tribe of the plains and were vying for predominance of the hunting grounds; so their feuding was with both whites and other Indian tribes.

Presumably the Staffords began their journey with a canvas-covered wagon, but probably somewhere in the Black Hills of Wyoming, where the roads were hilly and rough, their wagon, like many others, broke down. They were now obliged to join with any strangers who would take them in. From this point on, Cynthia and Cyrus walked most of the way. During a major portion of the journey Cynthia had to pay for the privilege of being included in a wagon train by doing the cooking for twenty-one people.

The hardships of the journey were beginning to wear on everyone. Carcasses of oxen, cows, and mules were along the trail, dead of alkali poisoning. Coyotes became a nuisance, and the grey wolf, a dangerous animal, threatened near the campsites.

In central Wyoming where the North Platte bent southward, the travelers finally departed from that river and continued westward toward the Sweetwater River. Following the course of the Sweetwater, the emigrants came to one of the great landmarks along the Trail, Independence Rock. Hundreds of travelers had etched their initials, along with the dates, on the top and sides of this huge granite oval rising out of the plain. Cyrus Stafford was probably too late in arriving at this point to join the special Fourth of July Masonic meeting which was held by the emigrants that year atop Independence Rock. About 5 miles further on was Devil's Gate, a narrow, deep gorge through which the Sweetwater flows. The high ridges were another favorite spot for initials and dates. These pioneers knew they were on an historic venture.

Near South Pass, Wyoming, a route split off for California through Utah, and the travelers who were to take that trail could carry letters to be mailed at Salt Lake City. Cynthia Stafford eagerly took advantage of this oppor-

tunity to send four or five letters she had written along the Trail to her family in Parishville.<sup>7</sup> Postage was ten cents per half ounce or fraction thereof, and one New York Stater said that "the hunt for postage stamps resembled market day at a country fair."<sup>8</sup>

The travelers had been on a steady grade upwards to the Continental Divide and were now crossing at South Pass, an elevated plain about 20 miles in width. There was great excitement about reaching that point from which the rivers flowed westward to the Pacific. Unknown to many of the travelers was the fact that the hardest part of their journey was yet to come.

Most of those who were bound for Oregon and Washington Territory took the new Lander Cut-off, the most direct route from South Pass to Fort Hall, on the Snake River in Idaho. This route was in bad condition, however, because of the previous severe winter, the melting snow causing floods which washed out the road and destroyed bridges. Landslides had filled the gorges with boulders. In places teams of mules or oxen had to be doubled and the descents made with great caution, all locks set. Sometimes a tree was cut and lashed to the rear of the wagon to prevent its plunging over the animals. At other times the teams were detached and the wagons lowered by hand with ropes tied to the rear axle.

Great contrasts of weariness and conviviality were experienced by these travelers. In the campsite at night, even after such trying days, the scene might resemble the most ideal that Hollywood would later re-create, with campfires glowing, roars of laughter bursting from every group, and young people dancing to the music of the violin and accordion.

However, night watches were now doubled for fear of Indian attack. Capt. Crawford of the Emigrant Escort reported at the end of his journey that he had counted evidence of a total of fourteen recent emigrant deaths at the hands of Indians. Although the first sighting was along the Lander Cut-off, the majority of the number was in southern Idaho where the Oregon Trail followed the course of the Snake River. Over half of the members of the Snake Indian tribe had refused to go to the reservation which had earlier been assigned to it by the U.S. Government,<sup>9</sup> and mining expansion in their habitual lands was causing resentment and continual provocation. Capt. Crawford and some of the emigrants suspected that in a few instances of lootings and killings, white men (including Mormon traders up from Salt Lake City) might have been involved. The emigrants had to be wary of white outlaws as well as Indian hostiles. Three companies of the First

Oregon Volunteer Cavalry were deployed to protect emigrants along the Snake River, which the commanders considered the most hazardous part of the entire Oregon Trail. Many of the travelers, upon hearing of the dangers ahead, changed their minds about going to Oregon, turned off the Trail near Fort Hall, and went southwest to California. Those continuing to Oregon, like the Staffords, gathered into even larger wagon trains sometimes stretching a mile in length. Only about two weeks before the Staffords travelled this route, thirteen whites had been killed by Indians, probably of the Snake tribe. (These August 8, 9, and 10, 1862, attacks were today commemorated at "Massacre Rocks," now a tourist attraction and Idaho State Park campsite.)

Illness increased among the travelers along the Snake River route. In one wagon train within one week three children died of diarrhea. The emigrants had to discard even more of their belongings to lighten their loads. After four months on the road more wagons were breaking down, and animals were dying of a combination of exhaustion and the stifling alkaline dust. During these last few weeks of the trip Capt. Crawford of the Emigrant Escort yoked his six remaining cattle and distributed them from one emigrant wagon to another as circumstances required, to keep the last of the wagon trains moving. His extra food provisions which he carried for emergencies among the emigrants were now necessary for the survival of as many as twelve families.

Finally the emigrants left the Snake River, at Farewell Bend in Oregon, and ascended the Burnt River. The Staffords were nearing their destination. The early fall weather in 1862 was cold and rainy. The ground was frozen. Snow was on the mountain peaks around them. They came to a fork in the road, the Oregon Trail continuing to the right. The Staffords took the left, the road which led to Auburn, Oregon, a new gold-mining town which had suddenly burgeoned into existence. They crossed the Powder River and joined thousands of others who had rushed from east and west, north and south, to this latest popular gold-mining spot. For many of the Oregon Trail emigrants the town was a welcome end to the long, harsh journey of four or five months' duration across the plains and mountains more than 1500 miles from Omaha. Cynthia Stafford was, in fact, so exhausted that it took almost two weeks for her to regain energy enough to write the long letter for which her family in St. Lawrence County was so anxiously waiting.

Auburn City, Oct. 19, 1862  
My Ever Loved & Darling Relatives & Friends



Time in Her onward course has borne us a long, long way from dear old "Fatherland," and mayhap you have—mid hopes & fears—classed us with those who have gone to their final Home, either by the hand of the savage or disease, of which *many*, I can assure you[,] this year have been the unfortunate subjects, but through trials, afflictions, perils and grievances a kind & Benificent Providence has safely conducted & upheld us, until landed in the northern portion of Oregon.

We arrived on a small stream known as "Powder river" the 6th of October after a fatiguing journey of 21 weeks & 3 days on the Plains.

Words, dear ones, are too futile to express *any thing* like the endurances & the perplexities we daily, yes hourly[,] had to combat with for the last three months of the way. Suffice it to say, after walking day after day & week after week, from early morn 'till night, I would have nearly *all* the cooking to do for 21 in family, and no kindness shown by any, except my husband, in the mess. It was our misfortune to get in with selfish, unprincipled strangers each time we were obliged to make a change. They were one thing in pretences and quite another in principle. I used to put the best side out when I wrote you, so that you might feel as easy as possible on our account, but *truth*, like *murder*, will out *sometime*, if it dont before. Our horse was worked down to a skeleton, our cow pilled in the yoke with a load[,] our provisions eaten by ungrateful, designing folks, and our means thouroughly exhausted, which at the *biggest* was but small, as you know, and coming into a new mining country, where flour is \$16. per hundred, bacon '35[¢] to '40 per pound, sugar '40, coffee '50[,] potatoes '15 by the *pound*, onions '20, and beans '25 to '30, all by the *pound*, instead of bushel, as is the custom of your market. [Comparable prices in Potsdam, N.Y., in 1862: flour, \$8 per barrel (196 pounds); potatoes, \$.25 per bushel; onions, \$1 per bushel; beans, \$1 per bushel.]<sup>10</sup>

You will easily compute the cost of a *plain common* diet at those figures, and tell me then if *you* would not have been a *very little* discouraged, were the circumstances above related yours, instead of mine. Well, to rise above them requires a *resolution* & a *will*, and we had been inured to so *much*, and so many hardships, coming that we could never have been better fitted to enter into stern responsibilities than at the time mentioned. Accordingly Cy made his first moves count, in the line of procuring provisions for the fast approaching winter. He made arrangements with an englishman by the name of Smith to go to the Dallas [an important trading center on the Columbia River] with his oxen & wagon, for flour, bacon &c. for him & us, where it may be had cheaper, as *all* the produce has to be hauled from farming regions in here, as this is a new place, never having an *inhabitant* previous to last May, and *now* she can boast of from 6. to 7. *thousand*.

If you refer to an atlas, you will notice Walla-Walla, which is the nearest point put down, I believe, to where we are. Auburn had no existence a few months since & will not be marked. It is situated 150 miles south by east from Walla Walla, in the heart of the blue mountains, wild & uncultivated. The location this place occupies is like, very like,

to that where the hills & big pipes—minus the maples & beeches—grow on the St. Regis, about our Falls [Allens Falls in Parishville, N.Y.]. The land is dry, except in the vallies & ravines, which I think would grow grain & vegetables. Hay has been and *is* being, now the last of october, cut & drawn into town, and held at \$60. per ton.

Business must be dull, & times hard with you, but feel *contented* with your prospect, for I can safely say it is pleasing one compared with what it *might* b[e] in a new country. I presume flour will be one dollar per *pound* here before next April[,] for when the snow fills the trail across the mountains[s], as it *will effectually* for several mont[hs,] then we are cut off from supplies, as much as if we were in the middle of the Arctic ocean. This is the reason for our trying to secure some means for provisions *now*. I know there will be a deal of suffer[ing] here before next spring, but those who are fortunate enough to be supplied will be at a good starting point if they can outlive the winter. Be easy on our account. I shall try to be earning something soon, but I had such a *fatiguing* journey that w[hen] I *did* get through, I was completely prostrated and my system needs invigorating, throughout. Why! do you [thin]k. I *could* walk 28 & 30 miles a day and bake out of doors for 21 and *practice* walking [2]0 & 25 miles as nothing *extra*, without getting [i]nto a wagon even. This I *did* & *did*, and much more, just to save a fuss, & get through our journey. Cyrus endured the trip pretty well though I dont think he is more rugged nor as much so, as when we started. He roughed it a good deal, but was more independent than I, and *would* do as he pleased—whether it suited the old *Lady Boss* or not. I never had any trouble with Mrs. Campbell or her two disgusting daughters, who were—pardon me—mere Drabs. The eldest had a girl 3 years old, & the youngest[,] a *son*, one year[,] and neither married, & the former will have the honor of owning another in a few [w]eeks. I mention those circumstances to acquaint you of our surroundings, of which *neither* of us knew any thing, until we were enlisted & moved, and as the *good* woman *cabbaged* our provisions, & they took advantages otherwise, we were bound [t]o live it through, & *did* just do it. We dont *know what* we can suffer, until tried. About 2500 miles from where dear [brother] Edward parted us [in Iowa],<sup>11</sup> and an experience I should be glad to forget, yet it may have been necessary to my correction and benefit.

## II. Early Teacher, Auburn, Oregon, 1862-63

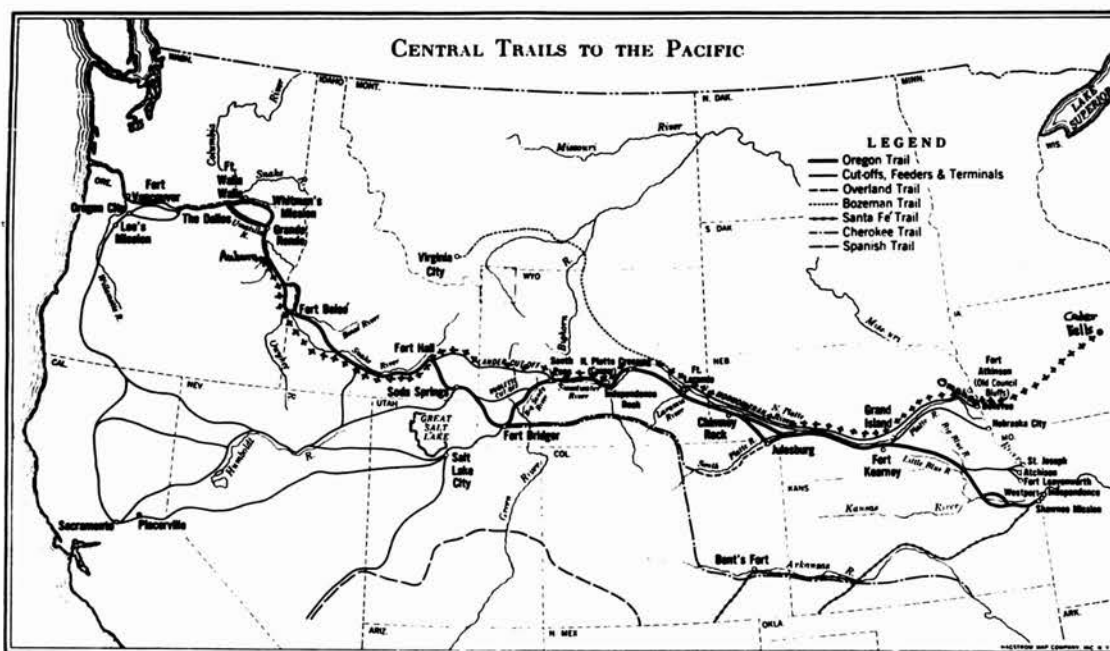
The gold-mining town in the Blue Mountains of Oregon where the Staffords ended their journey was probably named after Auburn, California, which in turn had been named after Auburn, New York.<sup>1</sup> Although the number of its population once vied for first place in the State of Oregon, today hardly a remnant of the place can be found. The spot where it was is now marked by a group of weeping willows. They could be weeping for the frantic seekers of fortune who raced from one gold-field discovery to another, always arriving a bit too late or never finding quite the

right spot to dig. Or do they weep for the Auburn miners who were poisoned by their jealous partner, or for the two cardplayers who were stabbed to death by an angry newcomer who had been refused entry to their poker game? Or do they weep for "French Joe" and "Spanish Tom," who were hung for these crimes?

The willows may simply be weeping for the vanished town and the lost graves of people who died there, like Cynthia Stafford. But they cannot be weeping for the human effort to establish a community in a turbulent gold-mining region, because even though the town is gone, Auburn still holds the honor of being the first settlement of eastern Oregon, the first county seat of Baker County, and the place where for all of eastern Oregon the inhabitants first drew up their own mining laws and set up their civic and judicial systems. The accomplishments of that community were not lost but continued later in a near-by location, 7½ miles the northeast at Baker City, which is today the county seat. That city has recently been chosen by the Federal Government to be the site of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, which will officially open on May 25, 1992. The Center's star attraction will be the worn ruts of the Oregon Trail, still visible where the thousands of wagon trains rolled over the hills.

The discovery of gold in eastern Oregon in October, 1861, brought sudden birth to the gold-mining town of Auburn the following spring when the snows had melted and mining could begin in earnest. News of the lucky strike spread like wildfire, by word of mouth and by frequent accounts in the nearest newspapers, of Walla Walla and of Portland. Eastern newspapers quickly re-printed the information. By the time Cyrus and Cynthia Stafford arrived in Auburn in early October, 1862, the population had swollen to an estimated 5 or 6,000. Log cabins and tents dotted the entire area. A main street had been laid out parallel to Blue Canyon Creek. The sounds of the axe rang through the air as the newly arrived emigrants set quickly to work chopping pines (which were free for the taking) and hauling the logs to their chosen lots.

Auburn's was a classless society with a single resource. Everyone was involved with the gold mining, whether owning a claim, working for wages, or servicing the miners. The population was predominantly young and male; and a speculative, unsettled energy pervaded the place. Successes and failures were part of every day, and an undercurrent of mixed emotions accompanied the daily routine of digging and looking for color. While some might be ecstatic, others would be dejected; and if the miners wanted either to bolster or to



Western trails began at the Missouri River. In 1862 Cynthia and Cyrus Stafford left Cedar Falls, Iowa, where she had taught school for one year, and went to Omaha, Nebraska, their jumping-off place to start west on the Oregon Trail. \*\*\*\* indicates the Staffords' route to the West, here superimposed on the map from W.J. Ghent, *The Road to Oregon*, (NY, Longmans, Green & Co., 1929). (Courtesy of the Brown University Library)

obliterate those emotions, whiskey was readily available and freely used.

Yet, there was order in the chaos. Auburn miners had drawn up a set of mining laws, citizens had passed a code of civic laws against crimes of violence and against drunkenness and riotous conduct in the streets, and in September, 1862, the Oregon legislators had designated the whole of the state east of the Blue Mountains as "Baker County," and had incorporated Auburn as a city, making it the county seat.<sup>2</sup>

In her letter to her family in St. Lawrence County, Cynthia Stafford described her new surroundings:

The gold mines are quite abundant in the mountains, but water is scarce for working the claims, and not every much can be done in most parts until spring, except by way of prospecting, ditching &c. preparatory to the spring thaws & rains. You would be *amused* if you could take a peep into this *city*—for it is incorporated—The houses, or cabins, are *all* constructed of large pine logs, some of them hewed, but generally put up rough[,] with stone & stick chimneys on the outside, and a fire-place to cook by. No windows with glass excepting occasionally, no chairs, no stoves, and no bed-steads[;] & yet with stools, benches, and a few rough boards nailed up to eat and sleep on, people are living happily in this rude manner notwithstanding they are many of them worth tens & hundreds of thousands. In a mining country the main object is *making* money, & the inhabitants *will* do it, at whatever cost of honor[,] virtue, and I had almost said *immortality*. The inducements to sacrifice everything manly and womanly on the altar of lust & shame are numerous, and here[,]

as all other places, I consider there is but one thing & that the Grace of God which is able to keep us in the path of rectitude. He works in a mysterious way, His wonders to fulfill.

I trust my christian friends do not neglect to commit us to the care & keeping of that Father whose eye is ever upon us & whose ear is always open to our petitions. I have been *very recreant* in my [religious] duty, since I left Iowa, partly from want of opportunities & time, but mainly for lack of good active christians around me. Scarcely *one* could be found in our [wagon] train that cared for any thing but the follies, pleasures & *gain* of the present. Even professors of religious [those who had publicly professed their faith] in most cases of my acquaintances, on the road, and here, just fall in with desecrating the sabbath and lightly treating the cause they should defend. Pray for us *all*, and do feel *thankful* that you are where you can worship on the sabbath unmolested, and daily meet around the family altars, for those are privileges which I havent enjoyed and dont expect to while we are in this country. It is beyond expectation to think of those things being out west, and I find the further we come toward the Pacific coast[,] the further we get from those principles so firmly and fondly cherished on the Atlantic coast. I hope, I *wish*, and I really *expect* to go back to you in a few years, if we live. I shall not consent to any other arrangement as soon as we can secure a competence sufficient to admit of a return. I am lonely without my *own* flesh & blood. I am *ever* homesick, and *determined* to get along with every trial, so as it promises us a return to the friends I left behind me. I have been *so* lonely since Cy left for the Dalles that I have thought more of Home than before. He started ten days ago, & will not be back for a month. The distance is 250 miles, & he had cattle which crossed the plains this season

& consequently can not go so briskly. I shall not hear from him, as he will be the same as on the plains for the most part of his journey [and will not be able to post letters].

I might tell you many more things of importance pertaining to this vicinity, but I want to say something concerning yourselves. How *do you do*, my darling father & mother, if yet you live to bless me. O *what* burning thoughts crowd my memory as I see you in my minds eye in every place I was accustomed to meet you in days gone by. I see you at table, in parlor & kitchen[,] in Church & in *every* place you go . . . Cy often remarks that if he had known my regard was so strong for my friends before we left, that he never would have taken me from them, but lived among you, at the risk of no[t] making a big "Pile" of money. I think it is for the best as it is[,] though, & I believe we will meet a[nd] live together, or near by, for if I *can* go, I shall keep up *such* a tease that there will be no peace until we go. When C. S. returns, I presume he will be highly prepossessed in favor of the vallies in Orego[n] where he went, as they are lauded by every one who goes there as being the richest, most fertile & beautiful known, surpassing any thing to be found in t[he] East. Such vegetables you *cant* grow[,] nor such wheat[,] but I dont care for *that*. I know I could not get all of you, nor indeed any of you[,] out to u[s;] so as a consequence, I must & will go back.

I have fears some of my dear sisters were broken up by the war. Edward [brother] isnt able to go even if drafting *has* taken effect, which I dont believe[,] although I have heard it was issued in New York. Nelson [Crouch] & Luther [Everett] & George Faulkner [brothers-in-law] wouldnt be compelled to go, but the other boys I have feared for. Still[,] I think it a *farce* that any one is drafted in the empire state. I should be sorry to see her slow in so good a cause,



& yet I am not willing for my brothers to leave their Homes to enter her service. This is selfish, but natural. The news we get here is *old* ere it comes, & not authentic at that, so I am in a great quandary as to the war-items &c. &c.

This City is divided between union & sesesh, about equally[.] I think, though Oregon is doing better in regard to union sentiment than she has for for[m]erly. There has been an *immense* emigration in here this year, & more unionists have come over than disunionists, which serves to confine matters in their proper place.

Cynthia concluded her letter:

All the girls I want to hear from separately. I dont mean for each of them to write me a separate letter, but get some tissue paper, as you can—I cant get it here—or transparent letter paper & write the particular items pertaining to each family, and of *all* the children. You mustnt delay long, for the snow may block the Trail and then I shouldnt hear, and it [is] so long since I heard I am not crazy . . . . If any of you love me a *bit*[.] I know you will write me without delay . . . . 10000000 kisses to all.

Cynthia crowded many postscripts into her letter, cramming the margins with writing and sometimes turning the paper upside down and interspersing sentences:

I want you should send this miserable scroll to dear Eliza [in Amenia, New York, the only sibling who did not live within a few miles of the parental home in St. Lawrence County] after you circulate the news among yourselves, for I cant write to each. Every letter we send will cost about '40[¢] and each one we *receive* '25 at least, so that I want our mail matter to be of some account . . . . I *cant* afford to write individual letters while this express company extort so much.

Will you not go & see our widowed mother Stafford [in West Stockholm, St. Lawrence County] and tell her all about her son [Cyrus]. Give her our since Love & regards . . . . Cy wont be here to write & she hasnt heard from us in four months.

The Indians murdered a great many in [wagon] trains before us, but none of us were even threatened.

I will send you a little gold dust in our next.

In mining towns there was profit not only in finding gold but also in providing services for the miners in the isolated locations. In Auburn many entrepreneurs immediately set up stores, arranging for groceries, miners' clothing, boots, picks, and shovels to be brought in by pack train from Walla Walla and from The Dalles. Other citizens provided blacksmith shops, butcher shops, a livery stable, boarding houses, saloons, and a two-story log hotel. By November, 1862, a portable sawmill was operating, considerably reducing the formerly high cost of lumber. Several companies competed for the business of mail delivery, a very important service which brought news of the Civil War as well as letters

from distant loved ones.

Various religious services were held in Auburn, some by ordained ministers and some by religious laymen. A travelling Catholic priest visited occasionally. In November, 1862, missionary Baptists built Auburn's first church, and Cynthia Stafford, who regularly attended Sunday services, probably went to this log church. But in any gold-mining town the sabbath was much desecrated. Drinking and gambling continued unabated on Sundays, and raucous shouts emanating from Auburn saloons punctuated the prayers of the pious.

Building a church was an indication of early expectation that this mining town would become a permanent settlement. This trust in its future was also evidenced when a group of men who belonged to the Masonic order started their own "Blue Mountain Lodge" in Auburn in 1862.<sup>3</sup>

Women in Auburn could readily earn money by taking on extra work in their traditional realms of laundering, mending, and cooking. Baked bread and pies were popular, but because of the scarcity of eggs, very few cakes were made. Miners' clothing often needed patching; and if no suitable fabric was available, flour sacks of strong drilling proved very serviceable. Everything being high-priced in Auburn, one woman who took in washing explained that in order to pay the high cost of food for her family, she had to charge a dollar to wash and iron a boiled shirt, and 50 cents for a woolen shirt. But the price seems right: "I had to melt snow in a pan over an open fireplace to do the washing. We had no stove. I boiled the clothes in a brass kettle and strung lines from the rafters all over the house, so the clothes could dry. I had to walk through the deep snow to deliver the washing, except for the miners, who brought their dirty clothes and called for them."<sup>4</sup>

Other women in Auburn obtained their livelihood in less respectable ways. Verne Bright in his article on the history of Auburn wrote, "For every hopeful miner there was at least one hopeful hanger-on."<sup>5</sup> Among these were the gamblers and the gunmen, but also, as in every mining town, the hangers-on included women who practiced that oldest of women's professions, prostitution.

The moral opposite in the limited spectrum of women's professions in nineteenth-century America was that most legitimate of professions, teaching. For those women who chose to teach on America's frontiers, the position was like a calling. Cynthia Abram Stafford filled that vital role for the mining town of Auburn as soon as she had gained her strength after the long trek to Oregon.

All official records of the early Baker County public schools have been lost, but in contemporary newspapers and in a history of early Baker County "Mrs. Stafford" is noted, though without documentation of her first name, her husband's name, or where she came from. The Auburn school had been strted in September, 1862, by Johanna O'Brien, who had raised the money to build a log-cabin schoolhouse on a donated lot south of the main street and next to Blue Canyon Creek. Miss O'Brien commenced teaching with forty to fifty pupils in attendance.<sup>6</sup> The only schoolbooks were those which had been tucked into the emigrant wagons by forethoughted parents or brought by those families from the Western states or Washington Territory, where numerous bookstores advertised "school books" among their inventories. With such a variety of books the teaching required more individual attention than was normal, even for a one-room schoolhouse.

Not many weeks passed before Johanna O'Brien married William H. Packwood, a prominent Auburn citizen (and progenitor of Oregon's Senator Robert Packwood). Six weeks after she began the school, Mrs. Packwood decided to stop teaching; and undoubtedly she and her husband, who had just been appointed the first Baker County School Superintendent, chose Cynthia Stafford to continue the school. Evidently Johanna O'Brien Packwood, who was Catholic, had no reluctance in offering the position to a Protestant. Had the situation been reversed, the transfer would not have rested easy on the Protestant conscience. Protestants felt a duty and a mission to spread their way of thinking throughout the land and cultivate a homogeneous society which would have no loyalties outside the borders of the United States. They openly competed for the larger number of schools on America's frontiers.<sup>7</sup>

Cynthia Stafford started teaching in late October. She was the first publicly-appointed teacher in eastern Oregon. Cynthia was well qualified for the position, and she was eager to have it, as she and Cyrus would have little money left after Cyrus returned from buying provisions at The Dalles. Cynthia had been instructed at Mount Holyoke to be ready to serve "*in any school and in any place*" where needed.<sup>8</sup> She probably never thought she would find herself in a gold-mining town in far-off Oregon, but she naturally assumed she would teach wherever she was.

The *Washington Statesman*, a weekly of Walla Walla and the nearest newspaper to Auburn at that time, reported October 20, 1862, "Auburn is still improving. There are about three hundred buildings now completed in



the city . . . There is a school here, and it is well attended. The school 'marm' is a lady and understands her calling."

A school census, published in December, 1862, reveals that any child in Auburn between the ages of 4 and 18 was eligible for schooling. If one assumes a schoolroom of about fifty children, it is evident that less than a third of the 178 children in that age bracket attended school in this fluctuating society. However, establishing the schoolhouse was an important step towards stability. For the mining town, the schoolhouse stood like a bulwark against "the tinsel of gambling, drinking, debauchery and adventure" by which Raymond J. Welty described a typical mining town.<sup>9</sup> The moral and religious values of New England Protestantism were inherent in the nineteenth-century daily school lessons. Separation of church and state has always been slow to enter our educational system, but in the mid-nineteenth century the concept was almost totally ignored. As seen from Cynthia Stafford's letters, religion was part of her everyday speech, thought, and action; and she knew that part of her duty was to transmit these values to her schoolchildren, most of them the offspring of Protestant emigrants from the East. In the Auburn school Cynthia Stafford began each day with reading the Bible and prayer.<sup>10</sup>

At times, however, the excitements of the mining town itself would attract the attention of the children; and even Cynthia Stafford, with her well-disciplined school, would have difficulty in keeping their thoughts on parsing sentences and figuring long division. About a month after she had started teaching, there was a stabbing in the town. On a Tuesday night, November 18, 1862, "Spanish Tom" entered a saloon and tried to join the cardgame of two Oregonians whom he had met in the Boise mining district. The Oregonians refused to admit him to their game, and the exact words exchanged at that moment became a subject for much conjecture and rumor among the townspeople. The *Washington Statesman* had to choose among several accounts the version it deemed the most accurate:

[Spanish Tom] bantered [the two cardplayers] to play, "poker," to which [the Oregonians] replied by presenting a dime and asking him if that would do for an "ante." This apparently [*sic.*] enraged the Spaniard and hard words ensued, until the Spaniard drew his knife and stabbed one of them to the heart. The other making an effort to assist his friend received a similar stroke and both lay dead on the floor.<sup>11</sup>

Among the people of Auburn there was talk that a racial slur, "We do not

play with Spaniards," had provoked the violent reaction. Most white miners were prejudiced against Spanish-speaking or Chinese miners.

Spanish Tom escaped on horseback, but a group of men from Auburn went after him, arrested him at Mormon Basin, and brought him back to Auburn on Friday, November 21. The next day the miners gathered to watch the trial, which they insisted be held outdoors so that everyone could hear the proceedings. Since it was Saturday, many of the town's children watched this event from the sidelines, and it proved to be a memorable lesson in crowd hysteria *vs.* civic order. One of Cynthia Stafford's pupils, 11 years old at the time, vividly recalled the "trial" years later in an interview by Fred Lockley, of the *Oregon Journal*:

A man named Johnson, with a lot of miners, demanded that Spanish Tom be turned over to them. Johnson stood on one stump and urged the people to lynch Spanish Tom, while Kirkpatrick stood on another stump and urged the people to let him be hanged in an orderly manner, according to law. Spanish Tom had a chain fastened around his ankle. Some of the members of the crowd grabbed the chain and began trying to pull him away from the sheriff and the deputies. The crowd dragged Spanish Tom from the hillside to the main street of Auburn. Someone produced a rope, which they fastened around his neck. The men holding the rope began running down the street, dragging Tom after them. They dragged him across Freeze-out gulch, threw the rope over the limb of a tree, drew him up, and left him hanging there. My brother John and I saw the men hang him. He wore a blue flannel shirt, overalls and fine riding boots. He had a large gold ring. Later the men cut him down and were going to bury him on the hill, but one of the men that was helping to take him up the hill said, "Oh, hell! What's the use carrying him clear up there? Dump him in here." And they threw him in a prospect hole.<sup>12</sup>

Another child, 7 years old, saw the crowd dragging Spanish Tom past her home: "Father tried to make us go in, but we saw the whole thing."<sup>13</sup> During the fracas a friend of Spanish Tom's had shot into the crowd and slightly wounded three people; the crowd followed him and shot him.

Spanish Tom's was the second hanging in Auburn, the first having been a much more orderly proceeding, administered by a citizens' committee ap-

pointed specifically for the case. Lucien Garnier (known as "French Joe") had poisoned his two mining partners, one of them fatally, by lacing their supply of flour with strychnine. Garnier was hanged in September, a few weeks before the Staffords arrived in Auburn. Here, also, children were observers, much to the consternation of a correspondent to the *Oregonian* of Portland, who was "grieved to notice at least fifty women, some with babes in their arms, and others mere girls" witnessing the execution.<sup>14</sup>

A prisoner's escape from his captors was not an uncommon occurrence at this time throughout the region, but after the Spanish Tom spectacle the citizens of Auburn built a substantial jail not only to hold a prisoner from escaping but also to prevent any further vigilante lynchings.

In nineteenth-century education memorization and recitation were often stressed, and at the end of a term the pupils traditionally put on an exhibition of their accomplishments for the benefit not only of the parents but of the entire community. In December, 1862, the Auburn schoolchildren favorably impressed the townspeople, including a correspondent to the *Washington Statesman*: ". . . one thing new which I can really boast of is our school, taught by Mrs. Stafford, a very excellent teacher, from the States. The public exhibition of the school on Monday evening after Christmas was an affair seldom equaled in Oregon. This school is largely attended . . ."<sup>15</sup>

When the snows came to the Powder River valley, mining activity came to a standstill. The January 24, 1863, *Washington Statesman* reported 15 to 24 inches of snow in Auburn. But neither cold nor snow could stop the thousands of miners who had heard of rich new diggings in the area around Placerville and Bannock City (later re-named Idaho City), an area known as the Boise Mines. So many miners made the 125-mile journey from Auburn to Idaho that a correspondent wrote, "The Boise excitement is fast depopulating this place for the time being,"<sup>16</sup> and a new phrase was coined for the wives and sweethearts left behind; they were known as "Boise widows." Cyrus Stafford, never slow to grasp a new opportunity, was anxious to make a claim. The trail was still open, and he bid a hasty goodbye to his wife Cynthia without realizing it was a final farewell. He, who was in danger from cold and starvation and from Indian attack, remained safe. But Cynthia's health, whether weakened by the journey West or by the winter weather, fell prey to a combination of afflictions which proved fatal. She had had for several weeks a cold and headache but continued her

teaching. When her headache grew worse, she was forced to close the school. Her most intimate friend, Mrs. W.D. Quigley, came to see her frequently, but Cynthia was still self-sufficient. A friend, Andy Stuart, tried to persuade her to let him call a doctor, but Cynthia thought the doctors would only give her drugs which would keep her from teaching for a long time. The following Sunday, with all good intentions, as many as forty people called on Cynthia. That evening she experienced a severe pain under her left shoulder blade. Andy Stuart went for Dr. Welch, but it was too late. Many friends helped care for Cynthia, but within forty-eight hours Cynthia died of the heart disorder on March 24, 1863.

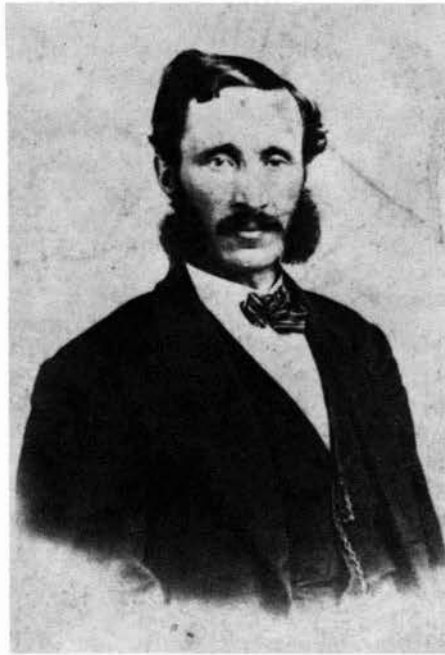
Word was sent to her husband Cyrus in Bannock City, probably by way of one of the several express companies whose routes included Auburn and the Boise mines. Cyrus was so stunned that he did not have the strength for another week to make the trip back to Auburn through the difficult travelling condition. When he arrived in Auburn, he frantically went from one person to another asking for details, and then finally sat down to write the difficult letter to Cynthia's parents telling them of the death of their youngest daughter.

Auburn, Apr. 19, 1863

My Dear Parents [in-law] and Relatives

I am utterly at a loss how to commence this missive to you, how to prepare your minds for the dreadful intelligence I am about to communicate in such a manner that the shock may not be greater than you can bear. Your apprehensions will be aroused by the marks of mourning on the envelope. Suffice it to say that your *worst* fears are now realized. She who enshrined herself in the hearts of all who knew her is *dead*. O! God, how Awful! I see your home but recently so happy now draped in mourning, your household circle, so long complete, now rudely broken. I can imagine and I think appreciate the sorrow which fills *your* hearts but who can *conceive the agony of mine*. You have lost a Dear Daughter or Sister, but you have others upon whom your Affections may still rest. I have lost *all everything* which makes life desirable or even endurable. It seems to me I am like a ship cast adrift in the midst of the ocean without anchor or rudder, an *aimless objectless* man, but this I know is wrong for I believe the great object of my life should henceforth be to meet her, or if nothing more[,] to live in such a manner as not to become a burden to my friends. Time[,] I hope[,] will furnish some balm for this wound but not the waters of Death itself could make me forget. Yet I must allow this extreme poignancy of feeling to abate or my life will be a dreary waste of sorrow. . . .

I am firm in the belief that she was prepared to die [believed in God, had publicly professed her religion, and thus was in a state of grace] She had been very regular in her attendance at church, always commenced her school with reading the bible



Cyrus Stafford in about 1880. Photo probably taken in California. (Courtesy of the author)

and prayer & took every occasion to give her pupils moral and religious instruction. It was her custom *always* to pray before going to sleep on retiring and many a time have I repeated with her and at her instance the little poetical prayer "Now I lay me down to sleep &c." Her school was considered the best in the state considering everything[,] All who knew her loved her, & thought her the most remarkable woman they ever saw. She had very many and *warm* personal friends here and every attention and kindness was paid her that could be paid. Her *funeral* was attended by *nearly every person* in town[,] and most of them & especially the Ladies & children were deeply affected.

I shall send her clothing & personal effects of any considerable value home to you as soon as I can get them hauled to the Dalles.

What will become of me now God only knows. Our only object in coming to this country was to acquire a modest competence[,] say[,] 8 or 10 thousand dollars with which we intended to return & live among our friends in tolerable independance[.] That was the highest ambition of the *Dear Departed One*, and the way appeared plain to its attainment. She had written me a short time before that it seemed as if Providence had directed our steps to this place and that we were circumstanced just the best we possibly could be. At the very least[,] providing we had our health[,] I could get five dollars per day for any kind of labor, and my board would not cost more than one, while she could get a salary of \$100 per month for teaching as long as she had a mind to teach[,] but I had a claim at Boice River mines which would pay from \$10 to \$20 per day[,] in addition to which I had just made arrangements to start a restaurant at Bannock City in the same mines[,] from which I am sure we should have realized several thousand the coming summer, for board there is \$20 per week & meals \$2.00 per meal & the expense is not more than one half at

the most. I always considered her peculiarly adapted to please in a business of that kind & so does every one who knows her, and we should have had a good run of custom[ers], I am certain, but all this is past now. What great object have I in getting money since the only person on Earth with whom I cared to enjoy it is gone. O! I have lost a treasure inestimable & lost never to be regained in this world. I could have parted with any other object or interest capable of possession by man, *joyfully* if *she* could have been spared to me. Her love to me amounted almost to Idolatry as her devotion to me, as known to you, will amply prove, and mine[,] although it could not equal hers[,] was little less. We had the most implicit confidence in each other. Nothing less than the positive evidence of our own eyes *could* have convinced either of us that the other had done anything wrong or proved in the slightest degree unfaithful. How it happened that we loved each other is more than I can tell[,] for neither of us ever did any thing with that end in view & we were both almost surprised when we found it to be the case. I have ever been as true to her as the needle to the pole & she has been the same to me. Still I was not worthy of her & I often told her so but she would not believe it[.] But all this is past now and past forever.

When I may come back to that country I have no idea for I should carry the same great sorrow with me there that overshadows me here. You may never see me again for I am a *homeless, aimless, wanderer*, and it matters little where I am. Please inform my mother & friends of the substance of this letter but I wish you would not show it out of your own family. I shall stay here some time, but think I shall go back in a few days after I have settled our affairs here[.] Give my regards to all enquiring friends. My Love to my Dear old Mother[,] Brothers & Sister. Please answer this soon as convenient and direct to Auburn as before[.] I *may* not leave here & if I do[,] it can be forwarded.

Your Affectionately  
Cyrus G. Stafford

Cynthia Stafford's brief career in Oregon was gracefully summarized in Isaac Hiatt's *Thirty-one Years in Baker County*: "Mrs. Stafford taught an excellent and successful school. She was an estimable lady and an accomplished teacher and her loss was deeply mourned by the people of Auburn."<sup>17</sup>

Many miners found gold in the streambeds and gulches of the Auburn mining district, but overcrowdedness and scarcity of water diminished the prospects of success. Whenever news circulated of richer new goldfields, the miners, like beads in a tilted hand-puzzle, rushed to the new finds. Auburn was virtually deserted within two years of its founding. Some miners moved to near-by Baker City, but the majority went on to Idaho and the Boise Basin mining district. By the late 1870's only the Chinese, who had formerly been excluded by the miners' laws of 1862, remained to search through the tailings in the gulches of Auburn.



### III. From "Aimless Wanderer" to Man of Wealth

Shortly after his wife Cynthia's death Cyrus Stafford returned to the mines of Bannock City, Idaho Territory, and then soon moved to Ruby City, Owyhee County, in southwest Idaho, where gold had been discovered in late spring, 1863. Silver also was found in this area, and mining became industrialized, with heavy machinery required to break up the rocks.

Again Cyrus lived in a town which is no longer on the maps and which soon lost its status as a county seat to a nearby town. Silver City gained in preference because it was not so cold and windy and it was nearer the diggings. The residents of Ruby City gradually moved their buildings to Silver City, which is described today as "one of the finest ghost towns in all of the West" with its "graceful setting and extensive assortment of carpenter-gothic."<sup>1</sup> Cyrus moved to Silver City probably in 1865, during which time he continued prospecting. He was elected to a four-year term as probate judge of Owyhee County.

One more letter was received in Parishville from the mining area; Cyrus answered Cynthia's sister Mary, who had written several times to ask for even more details about the circumstances of Cynthia's death; perhaps to get in touch with Mrs. Quigley, who had attended Cynthia; and to inform Cyrus that the family in Parishville had still not received the boxes of Cynthia's clothing and articles which he had sent. Mary made an effort to keep in touch with Cyrus and maintain relationships, but some family members harbored resentments after Cynthia's death not only against Cyrus but against the entire "terrible West." The following letter, which Cyrus did not want shown to anyone, reveals that Cyrus, also, was not entirely free of resentment.

Ruby City Jany 6th 1865

My Dear Sister Mary

I have just received your letter bearing date Nov. 27th 1864, and hasten to answer it. This last, is, I think the third letter I have had from you since I have been in this Country[.] I answered the others promptly, and it is *very* strange indeed that you have never recieved my answers. There are many ways, however, of accounting for this interruption, among which are the interference by the Indians, or, if the letter went the other way [by ship from the Pacific Coast] the impassability of the Blue Mountains, or what is more probable, the negligence of the officials, &c. &c. but whatever the cause may have been one thing is certain. I have written you the letters, and have directed them, as I think properly, and you have not recieved them, and I will now endeavor, to some extent, to make amends for this apparent neglect.

You seem to take it for granted that I am

not on friendly terms with your people. This, I take pleasure in informing you is a mistake, at least so far as I am concerned. I have had no correspondence with any of them for a long time, perhaps they have written letters which never reached me, and that those I have written never went to them. I dont know how this may be. I assure you that it was not stopped on my part on account of any unfriendly feelings toward them, but rather because I had no answers to me letters.

You write me that your Mother had a letter from me, to the effect that Rob. had been writing me things reported to have been said by your people. You must be mistaken in supposing she had any such information from me, as I am *quite certain* I never wrote a word either to her or any other person on the subject. I will admit that things were written to me, which, if I had believed your people had actually said, would have, at once and forever, terminated all correspondence between us, I mean, since I have been on this Coast, but I gave these reports no credence, neither have I said or written any thing to any one about it that I remember of. I can hardly avoid thinking, however, when the mournful retrospect is forced upon my mind as your letter, to some extent, forced it, how it *could* have happened that people who have as good sense as yours undoubtedly have, should have interposed such unreasonable opposition to the wishes and love of so noble a daughter as sweet Cynthia was, when they must have known that, (if they had much knowledge of human nature) that such opposition would but add tenfold to its vigor, and then the dreadful though somewhat remote, consequences, a premature death and a blighted life! It is unfair to conclude that these were the *necessary* consequences of this opposition, but God only knows what might have happened if a different course had been pursued, but these speculations are not only very painful, but wrong and worse than useless, and I will turn from them by remarking that I harbor no unfriendly feeling or ill will toward any of your relatives, except one, Lyman Covey [of Parishville; brother-in-law to Cynthia], who, for his most uncalled for and premeditated and insulting remarks about me, (made long since) merits and recieves as he ever will, my most cordial contempt and hatred. This fact, however, need not do either of us any harm as he does not even know it, I presume, and we are unacquainted, and always shall be.—

I am well and have been ever since I came to this Coast, in fact, I havent known a sick day, am heavier and much healthier in appearance than I used to be. I still look quite youthful[;] most people guess my age at about twenty five, which is, probably owing to my ruddy and somewhat girlish complexion[.] I have no fear of Indians here or indeed at any other place, except a degree of apprehension felt while in their country prospecting with a small body of men. We made a Raid upon them last Summer and killed [a]bout thirty. They killed four white men. I never [paper is torn here and about an inch-and-a-half-square piece is missing from the letter] [killed] any though myself. Since that time no [Indians] have been seen in this vicinity. [They are of the] Snake Tribe, a kind of digger, and the [lowest] grade of humanity, or rather a species of [animal in] human guise. This raid was rendered necessary by their depredations as

they had killed several men and stolen some horses.

If you wish to get a good idea of Auburn you had better read "Goldsmith, Deserted Village".]

I havent been there since at the time of Dear Cinnies death[.] It is about 200 miles from here. I dont know who are living there now, nor where Mrs. Q. [Quigley] is. Her husband is in Prison at Portland, for obtaining money of a man who had stolen it from his partners (abt. \$6000. in Gold) by personating a sherriff.<sup>2</sup>

The things you speak of sent from Cedar Falls, were put into boxes properly marked and directed and sent away on the cars. What has become of them I have not the remotest idea[.] The other things were sent from Auburn to Mrs. Stuarts Ranch near the Umatella Landing [on the Columbia River] about 330 miles from here.— Candace is living at Boici City about 75 miles from here. She is married to a Mr. J. M. Porter.—

I am at present County Judge of this County and shall remain so four years longer if I see fit to, that being my term of office. And now dear Mary, (I can only remember you as the kindly and genial companion, the jolly sisterly mary of y[ore] instead of the staid and matronly h[ousewife I] suppose you have now become,) I m[ust say] adieu, with a request that you w[ill not think] too hardly of me for such a letter [as this.]

Affectionately yours

C. G. Stafford—

[Written along side border and top of first page:] Dont write me in too melancholly a vein if you please Dear Mary for such letters make me very low spirited. I sometimes almost dread to recieve a letter from the East, for some of them treat my unhealed wounds so indelicately and with such rough freedom that it makes them bleed afresh.

... My Love to your children. It seems your little boys name is Cyrus, after me I suppose. I could have wished him a better named name.

Please dont show this letter to any one nor communicate some part of its contents.

In 1868 Cyrus Stafford moved to California. After two years he settled in Eureka, on the northern California coast. He practiced law for six years in partnership with Silas M. Buck, and then he was elected to the office of county judge of Humboldt County, his term of office commencing in 1876. He was elected mayor of Eureka in 1894 for a term of two years, and then, under a newly adopted charter, he was re-elected for a second term of one year. He was a Mason and a member of the Odd Fellows.

Cyrus Stafford undoubtedly prospered from gold and silver mining in Idaho, and when he got to California he invested his finds in the virgin redwood forests of northern California. He became the proverbial developer of Western natural resources, an occupation which was so highly praised and encouraged in the nineteenth century but which today causes us some regret. With his law partner he invested in

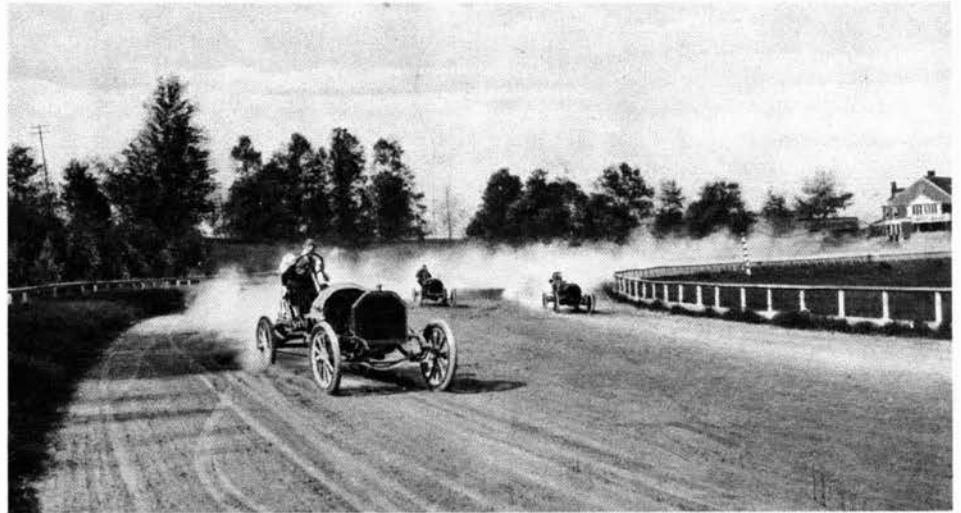
2,000 acres of forest land on Elk River, for which they paid \$3 per acre. It was with great pride to the owners that from this tract came the immense redwood plank, sixteen feet in thickness, which was on exhibition at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The Elk River Mill and Lumber Company was formed in 1882, and Cyrus Stafford became its president. By 1904 it was estimated that more than one hundred million feet of lumber had been cut from this land, and there still remained 600 acres of virgin redwood forest to go. In addition to this property, Cyrus Stafford individually owned 170 acres of valuable redwood timberland on the Eel River, which he had purchased for \$1,800 in 1880. This was considered one of the finest pieces of timberland in the state, the trees being of immense size and the land level.<sup>3</sup>

Cyrus Stafford re-married on August 1, 1871. Mary Etta Barber was a native of New York State, having been born near Syracuse in Fayetteville on November 9, 1841. Cyrus and Mary Etta had four children, but only the last one lived to adulthood. In the year 1876 their first-born, Florence, died in February at the age of 3 years, 3 months. The following month twins, Herbert and Mabel, were born, but Herbert died in August and Mabel in September of that same year.<sup>4</sup> Their last-born child, Grace, however, survived childhood, attended Stanford University, married twice, and outlived her parents.

In 1887 Judge Stafford, as he was known in California, contracted with architect Fred Butterfield to build a 12-room Victorian house, complete with glassed conservatory and central heating, at the corner of Sixth and E Streets. The ample front steps led to a central porticoed entryway, and large generous bay windows were set diagonally at the front corners of the house in both the first and second floors. It was among the finest mansions of Eureka. According to several newspaper accounts, the Staffords entertained here often in the early social life of Eureka.

A rather amusing insight into Cyrus Stafford's personality in the 1890's was written years later by a younger acquaintance. The article, entitled "He Ripped Things Up," is undated and unsigned, but was evidently written by a *Humboldt Standard* editor:

Recently we ran across a picture of Cyrus G. Stafford, a pioneer long since gone to his final reward . . . He was very prominent in Eureka when I first arrived here and some years later he was elected mayor. . . In the main room of the club rooms [of the Humboldt Wheelmen] was a bil-



*A postcard photograph of an early auto race similar to the one at which Cyrus Stafford was killed when trying to cross to the center for a better view. (Courtesy of the author)*

liard table which was very popular with the members of the club.

Mayor Stafford was one who played many games on that table. He had a violent temper. When things were going his way he was one of the gentlest of men, but when he made a bad shot he showed his disapproval. Around the table was a rubber runway about three feet wide. One evening while he was playing[,] a number of us were watching. He was having bad luck and was on the losing end. His temperature was getting higher and higher and finally he made a shot that went wild and he was so incensed that he reached down, picked up one corner of the rubber mat, tore it from its moorings and yanked it bodily from the floor and then he threw it into a corner, picked up his hat and stalked out of the place. So far as we know that was his last game . . . In spite of his exhibition of temper at the Humboldt Club, Judge Stafford was a very likeable soul and only those of us who saw him in a fit of anger knew that he was possessed of a desire to do things to furniture and equipment in order to ease his mental anguish.<sup>5</sup>

It was undoubtedly as the "likeable soul" and "gentlest of men" that Cyrus Stafford at the age of 67 returned for a visit to his native St. Lawrence County. He was the hometown boy who had made good. Both the *Potsdam Courier-Freeman* and the *Potsdam Recorder* carried news of the July, 1903, visit of Cyrus, his wife, and his daughter Grace, who at the time was a student at Stanford University. The papers reported

that Cyrus was visiting friends in West Stockholm and was a guest in Potsdam of George and Mary Abram Everett on Maple Street and of his old friend H.S. Banister on Elm Street. A West Stockholm correspondent noted the great success of "Judge Stafford, . . . better remembered here in his boyhood home as 'Cy.' Stafford."<sup>6</sup>

The upward spiral to wealth and honor had not been perfectly smooth for Cyrus Stafford. His life was marked by heights of success and depths of tragedy. The anguish of the early death of his first wife, Cynthia Abram Stafford, is revealed in his letters. The trauma of the deaths of his three children within one year can only be imagined. But Cyrus never shrank from daring to guide his own destiny. He chanced the perils of the Oregon Trail in 1862, gambled on success in striking gold, and ventured his capital on the potentials of the California redwoods. He entered the challenge of running for elective office as county judge and as city mayor. In all of these endeavors he was successful. But in one final act he dared too much. His own death was more sudden and traumatic than all the tragedies that had gone before. In 1909 Cyrus and his wife Mary Etta had motored down to the Piedmont section of Oakland, California, to visit their daughter Grace and her husband, Herbert B. Bemis, over the Fourth of July holiday. Ever since the invention of the automobile, racing had been popular, and the 5th of July was the day of the Emeryville automobile races in Oakland. Cyrus and his wife, with Grace and her husband, watched the races from their large touring car parked about a hundred yards from the track. But when a mile-event started, with



three cars racing, Cyrus decided he wanted to get a better view. He left the family car. At the side of the track he asked the gatekeeper whether he had time to cross to the other side. The officer told him not to attempt it. Cyrus looked up and down the track. Nothing was in sight. He decided he could make it across. He was more than halfway when the racing automobiles shot out around a curve of the track. Cyrus froze. As the cars bore down on him, he suddenly ran immediately in front of the lead car. His body was caught between the left front wheel and the side of the chassis and revolved with the wheel. The racing 30-horsepower Cadillac swerved. The front of the chassis pitched into the ground, the car turned a partial somersault and landed on its side. The front left wheel was mashed inward, clinching Cyrus's body. He was killed instantly, every bone in his body broken. The driver was thrown to the ground over the front of the car and was caught underneath the automobile when it fell on its side. He sustained four fractured ribs, a broken nose, and severe bruises to the face. The tragedy was witnessed by 10,000 people, including Cyrus's wife and daughter, who had seen a man attempt to cross the track, but had no idea it was Cyrus. Grace's husband got out of their car to find out who the man was and learned that it was his father-in-law. He quickly got back into the car and drove his wife and mother-in-law home. Then he told them the man they had seen struck was Cyrus.

The news was telegraphed to Eureka newspapers. The *Humboldt Standard* of July 9, 1909, read, "Cyrus G. Stafford was probably one of the best known men in the county, as for nearly a half century he has been prominent in the business and political affairs of the county, and particularly of Eureka." The *Eureka Herald* of July 6 wrote, "Judge C. G. Stafford was one of the best known citizens of Humboldt county and was among the wealthy men of the city and county." The survivors included two sisters who had been born in St. Lawrence County and now lived in Eureka, California: Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Samantha B. Stafford Taylor. Another surviving sister was Mrs. Lavinia Stafford Best, of Chicago, for whom Cyrus left an annuity of \$600 per year for a period of ten years. The major part of his estate was willed to his wife Mary Etta.

"Native of West Stockholm, N. Y." is engraved on the large brown gravestone of Cyrus G. Stafford in the Myrtle Grove Cemetery of Eureka, California. A continent away in the Hillcrest Cemetery of Parishville, New York, is a headstone for Cynthia Abram Stafford. Perhaps Cyrus eventually was able to

send back the remains to her family in Parishville. This stone is now the only marker of a life once lived. The gravestones of Auburn, Oregon, have washed away. Neither in Cyrus Stafford's obituaries nor in his brief biography in *A History of the State of California* is there any mention of his first wife Cynthia who shared with him the trials of the Oregon Trail and was the sole breadwinner for the couple during their first months in the West.

Bravely accepting the challenges of their times, Cynthia and Cyrus Stafford went out from St. Lawrence County to the uncharted lands of the West. Cynthia lost early on. Although she contributed through her teaching, her time was short. Cyrus, however, went on to be a major player in the early days of America's development of the West when its natural resources were so abundant and seemed so limitless.

Today south of Scotia, California, is a small community called "Stafford." It is located beside the Eel River on part of the once vast redwood timberland holdings of Cyrus Girsham Stafford, born at Staffords Corners, Parishville, New York.

## NOTES

### I.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Venerable Turner, "David Parish's Country House Reconstructed," *St. Lawrence County Historical Association's Quarterly*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, October, 1986, pp. 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> All letters from Cynthia Abram quoted here are in the Archives, Dwight Hall, Williston Memorial Library, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Hitchcock, *The Power of Christian Benevolence Illustrated in the Life and Labors of Mary Lyon* (Northampton: Hopkins, Bridgman and Company; Philadelphia: Thomas Cowperthwaite & Co.; 1855) p. 305.

<sup>4</sup> Randall H. Hewitt, *Across the Plains and over the Divide* (N.Y., Argosy-Antiquarian Ltd., 1964) p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* (N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1962) Vol. I, p. 796.

<sup>6</sup> Several accounts and journals of travel on the Oregon Trail in 1862 provide an excellent description of the journey West during the exact same months that the Staffords travelled: Randall H. Hewitt, *Across the Plains*, *op. cit.* (one of the classics of Oregon Trail journals); Report and Journal of Captain Medorem Crawford in Letter of the Secretary of War, January 8, 1863, Senate Executive Document No. 17, 37th Congress, 3d Session (Washington, Government Printing Office), U.S. Congressional Serial Set, Vol. 1149; E.S. McComas, *A Journal of Travel* (Portland, Oregon: Champoeg Press, 1954); Elizabeth Paschal Gay in Fred Lockley, *Conversations with Pioneer Women* (Mike Helm, ed.) (Eugene, Rainy Day Press, 1981); Catherine Tuttle Norville in Fred Lockley, "Impressions and Observations of the Journal Man," *Oregon Journal* (Portland), May 3, 1928; Louisa Cook and Nancy Glen in Kenneth L. Holmes, ed., *Covered Wagon Women* (Spokane, The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1989), Vol. VIII; Jane Gould Tortillot in Lillian Schlissel, *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey* (N.Y., Schocken Books, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> These letters have evidently been lost.

<sup>8</sup> Randall H. Hewitt, *Across the Plains*, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>9</sup> Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The American Indian* (Lexington, Mass.; D.C. Heath & Co.; 1980) p. 490.

<sup>10</sup> Market Report from Brown & Co., Grocers, Potsdam, N.Y., *Courier-Freeman* (Potsdam, N.Y.) Nov. 5, 1862.

<sup>11</sup> Cynthia Stafford would have been calculating the mileage from Cedar Falls, Iowa; but the figure still seems high. Captain Medorem Crawford reported the mileage of the Oregon Trail from Omaha to Walla Walla as 1,620 1/2 miles.

### II.

<sup>1</sup> *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVII, No. 1 (March, 1946) p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Verne Bright, "Blue Mountain Eldorados: Auburn, 1861," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXII, No. 3 (September, 1961), pp. 213-236.

<sup>3</sup> *Oregon Freemason*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3 (August, 1954) pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Paschal Gay quoted in Fred Lockley, *Conversations with Pioneer Women*, (Mike Helm, Ed.) (Eugene, Rainy Day Press, 1981) p. 196.

<sup>5</sup> Verne Bright, "Blue Mountain Eldorados," *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>6</sup> Isaac Hiatt, *Thirty-one Years in Baker County* (Baker City, Oregon; Abbott & Foster, 1893; reprinted in 1970) pp. 38, 86. Hiatt uses the varying figures.

<sup>7</sup> Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984) p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Hitchcock, *The Power of Christian Benevolence Illustrated in the Life and Labors of Mary Lyon* (Northampton: Hopkins, Bridgman and Company; Philadelphia: Thomas Cowperthwaite & Co.; 1855) p. 305.

<sup>9</sup> Verne Bright, "Blue Mountain Eldorados," *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Cyrus G. Stafford to William and Margaret Abram, April 19, 1863, in Archives, Dwight Hall, Williston Memorial Library, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts.

<sup>11</sup> *Washington Statesman* (Walla Walla), November 29, 1862.

<sup>12</sup> Catherine Tuttle Norville quoted in Fred Lockley, "Impressions and Observations of the Journal Man," *Oregon Journal* (Portland), May 3, 1928.

<sup>13</sup> Jeanette Love Esterbrook quoted in Fred Lockley, *Conversations with Pioneer Women*, (Mike Helm, ed.) (Eugene, Rainy Day Press, 1981) p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> *Oregonian* (Portland), October 11, 1862, as quoted in Verne Bright, "Blue Mountain Eldorados," *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> *Washington Statesman*, February 14, 1863.

<sup>16</sup> *Washington Statesman*, January 31, 1863.

<sup>17</sup> Isaac Hiatt, *Thirty-one Years in Baker County*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

### III.

<sup>1</sup> William Carter, *Ghost Towns of the West* (Menlo Park, California; Lane Magazine & Book Company, 1971) p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> For details of this case, see Isaac Hiatt, *Thirty-one Years in Baker County* (Baker City, Oregon; Abbott & Foster, 1893; reprinted in 1970) pp. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> J.M. Guinn, *History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Coast Counties* (Chicago, Chapman Publishing Co., 1904) p. 440.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Ruth E. Teasley, of the Redwood Genealogical Society, who made grave-rubbings of the Stafford stone, Myrtle Grove Cemetery, Eureka, California.

<sup>5</sup> Unnamed and undated newspaper clipping, Susie Baker Fountain Papers, Vol. 83, Eureka-Humboldt Library, Eureka, California.

<sup>6</sup> *Potsdam Recorder*, July 28, 1903.

## Apologies

*from the Editors*

We were happy to hear from quite a few of our readers that they enjoyed the Fall 1991 issue of *The Quarterly* with its articles on the Morley Chapel, School and Grist Mill and on Potsdam Sandstone and its use in buildings in the Potsdam-Canton area. We might add that there is now good reason to hope that the Morley Chapel, one of about a dozen buildings in New York State to be placed on a high-priority list for preservation, will in the future be assured of appropriate maintenance and public appreciation.

We regret having to announce at the same time that the Fall issue was spoiled for others by our having blundered badly in the identification and labeling of two historic sandstone homes in or near Hannawa Falls.

Our attention was called to the error

when Dorothy Gordanier, a good friend of the Association, wrote us.

"I just received 2 copies of 'The Quarterly' Fall 1991 and am *very* upset. In the article by Sally Lynch on 'Potsdam Sandstone' the pictures were certainly a botched up job and there was very poor editing.

"The picture with the caption that I live in that house is false. The house in the picture is not on the Back Hannawa Rd. There is no picture of my house in the whole article. You could have found a picture of the house I have lived in since 1935—in the Potsdam Museum, or taken one. I cannot understand how an organization of your importance, recording history, should be so inaccurate. You have caused me and yourselves considerable embarrassment. I insist you print a retraction and

a correct photograph in your next issue.

"I hope in the future your editors will do more checking before publishing.

"Thank you."

We wish to express herewith, in public, our sincerest apologies to the two persons most obviously affected, Dorothy Gordanier of the Back Hannawa Road and Sydney Cayward of Route 56, Hannawa Falls, the pictures of whose homes we got confused. We want as well to apologize to our author, Sally Lynch, for the mess that our carelessness and ignorance, no matter how infrequent or slight they can otherwise seem, might have made of her fine article.

To set the record straight, here are pictures of the two houses correctly captioned.

*The house pictured here and at the top of page 16 in the Fall 1991 Quarterly is the home of Sydney Smith Cayward and her late husband Richard. The house was built in 1837-38 by Reuben Dorothy, a stone mason, and his brother, a carpenter. In its 154 years the house has had only four owners, accounted for in part by the fact that the second owner, a step-child of Reuben Dorothy, Harriet Sanderson, lived there until her death at 102. (Photo by Marian O'Keefe, SLCHA Archives)*



*This is the picture of the historic home of Dorothy Gordanier that we meant to place at the top of page 16 in our Fall 1991 issue. It was built in 1809 by Captain Nathaniel Parmeter as his own home. He was the first to quarry Potsdam sandstone. (Photo by Marian O'Keefe, SLCHA Archives)*



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The St. Lawrence County Historical Association has changed the dating of **The Quarterly** from January, April, July, and October to Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall since our experience over the years has made it clear that dating by month raised unrealistic expectations among our readers in light of the complex and unpredictable circumstances faced by our contributors and staff.

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