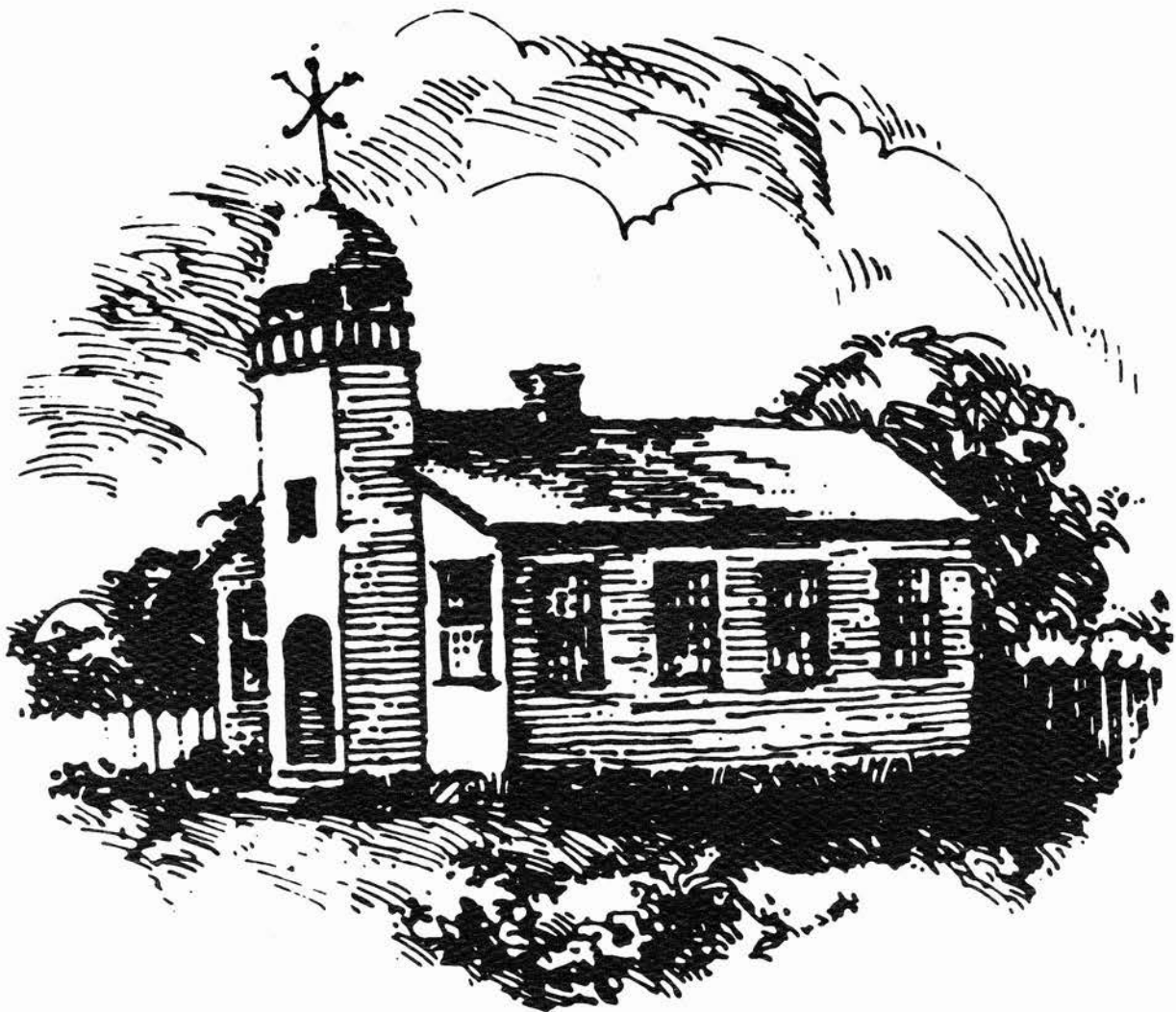


THE
QUARTERLY

Official Publication of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association

Summer 1992



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Cover: An artist's conception of the original St. Lawrence Academy built in 1812 which was the predecessor of the Potsdam Normal School. (*Courtesy of the Potsdam College Archives*)

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Leadership in the Potsdam College Tradition

by William C. Merwin

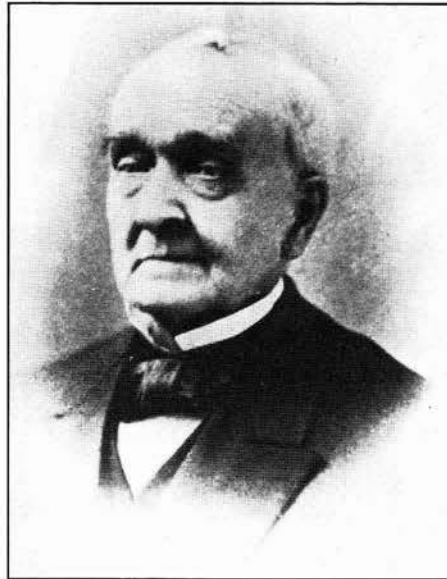
*This article was inspired in large part by Professor W. Charles Lahey's invaluable book, **The Potsdam Tradition: A History and a Challenge** and has been prepared with assistance from Helen Chapple, Writer-Editor in the Potsdam College Office of College Relations.*

This essay is about six people, each of whom made a crucial difference in the development of Potsdam College, while simultaneously sustaining its traditions: a spirit of innovation and experimentation, a commitment of educating the common man and woman and a symbiotic relationship with the community. They themselves established another tradition: strong and farsighted leadership. One learns that vision can overcome difficult times and that perseverance can prevail. But one also learns that it is essential to recognize the directions society may be taking and respond in an appropriate and timely fashion.

Asa Brainerd, who was named principal of the St. Lawrence Academy in 1828, was, as an adherent of Jacksonian democracy, a committed advocate of advanced education for the common man and woman. This was a relatively new idea: traditionally education had been reserved for the children of the upper class. The dominant belief had been in knowledge for knowledge's sake rather than for practical application. Studying such topics as Latin and Greek disciplined the mind and thereby prepared one to assume positions of leadership. Insofar as teaching was concerned, it was thought those who could, for example, read or cipher, could pass those skills along.

Brainerd, however, in addition to his belief in education for all, thought the teachers of the common schools should be specifically prepared for that task. By establishing an organized teacher education program at the Academy, he hoped to realize that goal while simultaneously promoting the growth of the institution by attracting more students and obtaining state support.

In 1831 he began a course of lectures titled *Principles of Teaching* and cannily publicized his work among state educational circles. When the Board of Regents began petitioning the state legislature for support for teaching training it used Brainerd's course as an example of the proper direction. His efforts resulted in the Academy being selected as one of eight in New York State to receive state funds to support a Teaching Department, and he was personally called to Albany to draw up a program of study for the new departments statewide.

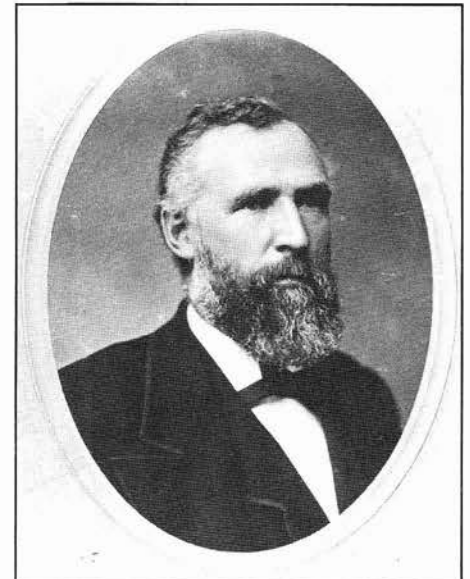


Asa Brainerd became principal of St. Lawrence Academy in 1828 and in 1831 introduced a course of lectures in teacher education, making him and the institution in Potsdam leaders in that new discipline. (Except as noted, all other photos used in this article are courtesy of the Potsdam College Archives)

Teacher education was to characterize the institution from that time forward. But while Brainerd played a pivotal role in its history, St. Lawrence Academy was suffering lean financial times in 1846, and George Sweet, its last principal, tells us that Brainerd left that year "with the esteem of all and as a substantial souvenir a mortgage on the North Academy building for the amount due him as teacher."

As the nineteenth century moved into its second half, educators and legislators began debating the best course for teacher preparation. Should it continue as part of the academies or should the state establish normal schools, based on the Prussian system, that were devoted to study and training in pedagogy? The latter idea prevailed. Shortly thereafter the Town of Potsdam, under the leadership of General Edwin Merritt, succeeded in gaining a normal school. Malcolm MacVicar, a strong proponent of this type of education, was named its first principal.

Fortunately, he was also a proponent of teachers gaining an "exhaustive knowledge" of the subjects they would teach.

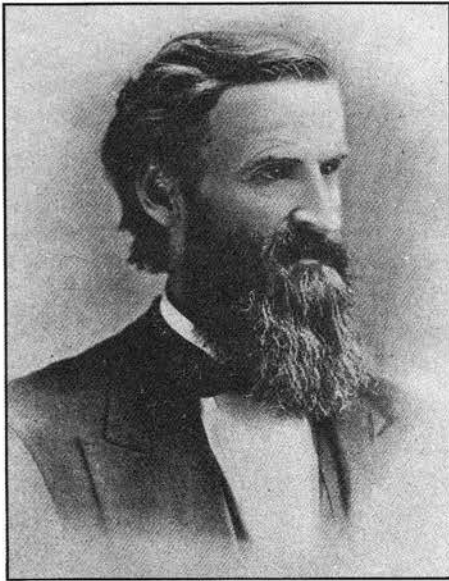


General Edwin A. Merritt headed the local movement that led to the replacement of the Academy with a state-supported normal school in Potsdam.

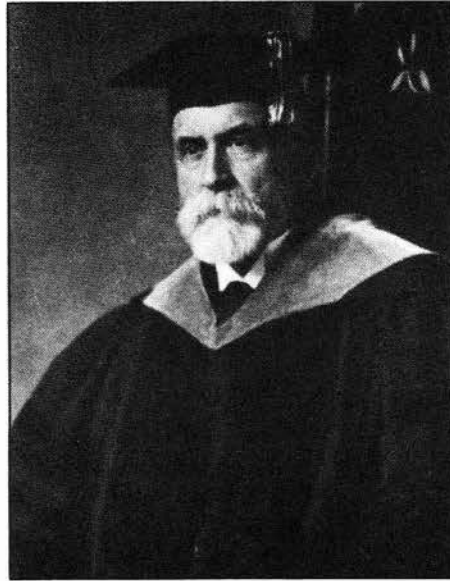
And furthermore, according to Professor Lahey, "MacVicar was one of the American educators to sense the impact of sociological forces on the child and the learning process."

The practice school was an integral part of the normal school, the belief being that it was not enough to simply observe good teachers. The student also needed to actually teach under the guidance and supervision of those teachers. MacVicar made the practice school central to the Potsdam Normal School program and so it continued to be as the School trained teachers in the twentieth century.

MacVicar is an interesting figure. While he was progressive and prescient in his view of education, his ideas of morality were firmly locked in the Victorian era. He tried to ensure strength of character and proper deportment in his future teachers by running a school with stringent rules of conduct, including a requirement that periodically students confess their sins during morning chapel. But, letters written to *The Normal Magazine* by former students express gratitude for a tough regimen that later stood them in good stead.



Dr. Malcolm MacVicar, the first principal of the Potsdam Normal School, was a strong proponent of the thorough grounding of teachers in their subject-matter areas of practice teaching as a necessary part of teacher preparation.



Thomas B. Stowell, as MacVicar's successor, introduced courses in both the sciences and the social sciences and also brought to the campus a rich program of cultural activities.



Julia Crane, herself a graduate of the Potsdam Normal School, founded in Potsdam a school for the special training of teachers of music. In 1888 it graduated "the first formally trained public school music teacher in America."

While today's college no longer stands sternly *in loco parentis*, we can still look to many of Malcolm MacVicar's educational principles as models.

MacVicar accomplished much. Thomas B. Stowell "stood on his shoulders" and achieved even more. Like MacVicar he sensed the impact of sociological forces on education. As the United States became more urban and industrial, Stowell realized there would be increasing demand on the public schools for more science and social science courses, for vocational training and physical education. He acted accordingly, enriching the science offerings at the Normal School. A distinguished scientist himself, he encouraged experimentation and active research in all areas of the curriculum, both academic areas and the methods for teaching them. Teachers, he believed, in addition to conveying knowledge and enthusiasm had an obligation to improve their profession through research and working in the field of their discipline.

He instituted a manual training program by sending students to the new institution in town, the Thomas S. Clarkson School of Technology, for courses in sewing, cooking, forging, whittling and joining.

Stowell also believed in an enriched cultural life, brought to the students in the public schools through the teaching of art and music. Whereas in Brainerd's day, drawing was taught to the point necessary for map making, art was now appreciated as an aesthetic experience for

both artist and observer. Music, of course, had become readily available to Normal School students through the establishment of the Crane Institute of Music in 1886.

This remarkable man also completely changed the atmosphere for students. He viewed student life as an integral part of the educational process. He encouraged the establishment of organized athletics as well as such activities as dancing and skating. Because he believed students should be treated as mature young women and men, that they could enjoy themselves without destroying their characters, a new tradition—that of a rich student life—began at Potsdam Normal.

While Potsdam College has never experienced a woman president, there are two women in its history who assumed leadership roles that equaled or surpassed in significance those of many presidents. Dr. Lahey describes Julia Crane as the "flowering of the Potsdam tradition." This extraordinary Potsdam Normal graduate successfully founded and directed her own Crane Normal Institute of Music which worked in conjunction with Potsdam Normal to graduate the first formally trained public school music teachers in the United States in 1888. She was committed to bringing music to people in all walks of life, to the welfare of her students, to a deep understanding of her subject matter, and to a constantly evolving curriculum.

She was also, fortunately for those of us who followed, immensely articulate.

Whether one is reading her contributions to the proceedings from a national conference of music educators or an article from *The Normal Magazine* her impassioned desire to share her knowledge and beliefs continue to inspire. It is of little wonder that her efforts received national acclaim and that her textbook, *Music Teachers Manual*, went into eight editions.

Julia Crane's disciple, Helen Hosmer, not only shared her talent, philosophy, leadership ability, energy and commitment, but went her one better. Julia Crane brought the music of the world to Crane; Helen Hosmer took Crane to the world. During the 1930s, a period when the rest of the Normal School tended to rest on its laurels, Helen Hosmer and the Crane Department of Music kept the Potsdam tradition of innovation alive and growing. For example, in 1936 she instituted a semester-abroad program in Europe for music students, an occurrence duly noted by *The New York Times* as "a first in the history of teacher training in the U.S."

Crane Chorus, founded by Miss Hosmer in 1931, ten years later was invited to sing with the New York Philharmonic in Town Hall in New York City at a benefit for Polish relief. The fifties found the Chorus and Symphony at Carnegie Hall and the Chorus at the United Nations under the baton of Leopold Stokowski. Musicians who accepted Miss Hosmer's invitation to conduct her musicians in Potsdam, often during her famed Spring Festival of the Arts included Nadia Boulanger, Robert

Shaw and Virgil Thompson.

Finally, Dr. Lahey in his book cites Frederick W. Crumb, a man who took the helm of Potsdam State Teachers College in 1946. Dr. Crumb has assumed almost mythic proportions in Potsdam College lore. He is particularly remembered

for his persuasive abilities. For example, in the early days of his presidency, each of the state teachers colleges negotiated its own budget allocations with the State Budget Committee. Almost immediately after his appointment he was successful in increasing the equipment appropriation

from \$14,000 to \$110,000, a significant sum in the mid-1940s.

Ralph Wakefield, Dean Emeritus of The Crane School of Music and a historian of the college, likes to tell the story of Dr. Crumb making his way to Albany with his budget request and a few gifts of "liquid refreshment." He presented his equipment list, which included a glockenspiel, to Director of the Budget Ed Furman, who balked at the request for this musical instrument. But finally Dr. Crumb prevailed with the argument that you couldn't have a music department without a glockenspiel. The business meeting concluded, they adjourned to a social hour and after a few tots of liquid refreshment, Mr. Furman said, "Tell me, Fred. What is a glockenspiel anyway?" Dr. Crumb's reply: "Damned if I know, Ed."

Dr. Crumb's stated aim in 1946 was to make Potsdam State Teachers College "the best four-year teacher preparation college in the country." By the time of his death in 1967, he had well exceeded that goal. By then a part of the State University of New York, the College at Potsdam had gone far beyond an institution restricted to training teachers. On a completely new campus with further building underway, it offered degrees in the liberal arts and had established graduate programs. In other words, it had been transformed into essentially the institution we have today.

Each of the presidents discussed here responded to a changing society. Over their lifetimes the United States became industrial rather than agrarian and experienced such major upheavals as the Civil War, the First and Second World Wars and the Great Depression. They modified the curriculum and their methods to meet the societal needs of their time.



Dr. Fred W. Crumb, who became president of Potsdam College in 1946, is remembered as its most persuasive champion in Albany, a quality indispensable in college presidents. He brought to Potsdam College immensely increased growth and support.



Crane Normal Institute of Music was at first housed in this village residence. (Courtesy of the Potsdam Public Museum)



Helen Hosmer, who "took Crane music to the world," perhaps most notably through the Crane Chorus which she formed in 1931, here stands outside the auditorium built in 1972 and named in her honor.

In Search of a Hero

by Harry W. Paige

At first there was only a rumor, a rumor that led to a gravesite in Bayside Cemetery in Potsdam. The rumor was that one of the Civil War veterans buried there had won his country's highest tribute, the Congressional Medal of Honor. The grave was easier to verify than the rumor. With the help of Lawrence Barlow, Sr., caretaker of the cemetery, I found plot I-69 beneath the rising fountain of a huge shade tree not far from the meandering Raquette River. On the tombstone was the name: Col. William H. Walling and the dates 1830-1912. There were two other names: Sarah T. 1838-1909 and Julie T. 1870-1963. There were three small markers at the foot of the gravestone that read: *Father, Mother and Julie*. I learned later that there were other children, a son and two daughters. The son, William, was the one who purchased the lot for \$25 in the year 1897, according to cemetery records.

Heroes, especially military heroes, are an elusive lot. They are elusive because so much of them is contained in a single action or performance that often lasts but a short time. Sometimes they are defined for life by that single, brief action. And once it is over the rest seems so anti-climactic. Heroes welcome peace, but many do not know quite how to deal with it. Having experienced the most intense that life has to offer they sometimes have difficulty with the routine and ordinary.

I do not know if such was the case with Colonel Walling. And in the absence of any supporting evidence I will tell his story as I discovered it in an obscure book entitled *A Memorial Record of St. Lawrence County, New York*, edited by Gates Curtis and published at Syracuse, New York in the year 1904.

The dead are resurrected in this world in special ways: one is through the record that others compile about them, the public record. Another is by what the dead leave behind—works of art perhaps, children, letters or political or social legacies. The other is the most fragile: by memories of them by those who still live and remember. Then there is a more mystical way—by the feelings their memories inspire in the living. And if you do not believe that these feelings exist go to a loved one's grave and trace the braille of remembrance on cold marble. Put your hand on the black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on any one of the over 58,000 names. Go to the Lincoln Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Stand and



The unobtrusive grave of Colonel William H. Walling of Gouverneur and Potsdam, winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. (Courtesy of the author)

listen and let the dead speak in their own way.

The public record states that William H. Walling was born in Hartford in Washington County, New York, on September 3, 1830. When he was four years old, his family moved to Gouverneur, and there he went to public schools and what was then the Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary. In the spring of 1855 he moved West to Wisconsin and Minnesota where he was a land surveyor. When the clouds of Civil War threatened, he came back home to Northern New York where he attempted to raise a company, himself one of the first two men to enlist. His company later became Company D of the 16th Regiment, New York Volunteers and, upon his promotion to Second Lieutenant from First Sergeant, he assumed command. The Regiment served in all the bloody battles of General McClellan's Peninsular Campaign: Bull Rull, South Mountain, Antietam, and the first and second battles of Fredericksburg. After being wounded at Salem Church, Lieutenant Walling and his unit were mustered out and disbanded at Albany in June of 1863.

Back home in Gouverneur he received a letter from General Curtis, in command of the 142nd Regiment, New York Volunteers, asking him to accept a commission and take over G Company of his regiment. Once again he heeded the call of duty and returned to active service. In an assault known as the battle of Chapin's Farm in Virginia, he was severely wounded by an enemy bullet which passed through his right lung, nearly killing him. When he recovered from this second wound, he re-joined his regiment, now under General Terry, on the way to the first military expedition to Fort Fisher, North Carolina. When the attackers were some 150 yards from the Fort, the rebel flag flying over it had its staff cut off by a shot from the Navy. Captain Walling then crawled through a hole in the stockade, climbed to the parapet of the Fort and captured the rebel flag and in so doing turned the tide of the battle. For his gallantry in the face of the enemy he later was brevetted by President Johnson to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Exactly one hundred years ago, in 1892, Col. Walling, then 62 years of age, received



Colonel Walling's Medal of Honor, a rare picture of him in uniform, and his war-time journal. (Photo courtesy of Ann Walling Billings of New Canaan, CT who is the great-granddaughter of Col. William H. Walling)

the following communication:

War Department, Washington City
March 28, 1892

Captain William H. Walling, Late 142 Regiment, N.Y. Volunteers

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that I have this day forwarded to you by registered mail a Medal of Honor awarded you by the Secretary of War for gallantry in action at Fort Fisher, North Carolina, December 25, 1864, in accordance with the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1863, providing for the presentation of Medals of Honor to such officers, non-commissioned officers and privates as have most distinguished themselves in action.

Very respectfully,

F.I. Ainsworth,

Major and Surgeon, U.S. Army

The Regiment had been mustered out at Raleigh, North Carolina in 1865 and disbanded at Ogdensburg.

Having returned to Gouverneur Col. Walling worked in a clothing store there. Later he became a customs inspector in Ogdensburg and in 1870 he was elected sheriff of St. Lawrence County. In 1874 he moved to Potsdam where he operated a hardware store in the Village. He was active in town and church affairs, serving on the board of trustees and the board of water commissioners. He was also a member of the school board.

In 1868 he married Sarah, daughter of Abram Thompson of Gouverneur, and they had four children: William W., Julia T., Mary Louise and Ruth E. Three of his children were graduated from the Potsdam Normal and Training School.

And so ends the public record except for this brief postscript. Colonel Walling died on June 18, 1912 at the age of 82. His was a long and full life, as obituary writers like to note. A patriot, twice wounded, Colonel Walling turned the battle for Fort Fisher around and helped win a victory for the Union forces while earning his country's highest decoration.

On plot I-69 in Bayside Cemetery there is also a veterans' marker with the dates 61-65. I am not sure who put it there, but I suspect it was the Congressional Medal of Honor Society whose representatives visited the grave several years ago, according to Mr. Barlow. I have written to the Society, but have not heard as yet. I looked in the local telephone directory for the name *Walling*, hoping there might be some relatives with personal stories to tell, with pictures perhaps or letters. There is not such a listing for Gouverneur, Potsdam or Ogdensburg.

I started out in search of a hero and found him in the explosion of a moment in Time on the parapets of Fort Fisher in

North Carolina on Christmas Day. At that time he was 33 years old. It was a scene that the imagination could easily dramatize, playing it over and over like a video tape. But I discovered that in finding the hero I lost someone else, perhaps the hero's hero. Lost was the man of flesh and blood, the man like us. For that was the man who lived for 82 years, no doubt as a loving father; a good neighbor; a true believer; a mourning widower; even as a good-natured dealer in penny nails and cast iron wood stoves. And he too was a man worth knowing.

But that is not the way with heroes who, by definition are larger than life and isolated by their own extraordinary deeds. Very often the *other* man, the man inside, is sacrificed for the hero. Nor do heroes have the luxury of choosing how they shall be remembered. The pick-locks of biographers and the keepers of records have made that choice for them. And posterity conspires to keep the public version of the man. In the case of heroes more often than not the quiet whispers of their living are drowned out by the tunes of glory and the long moment's strife. But, given Eternity, the hero will find his special place again—beside the Other who was lost.

Logging on the Raquette River

A Photo Essay

by Evelyn Riehl

Few homes or businesses in America in the 19th and even the early 20th century could feel themselves independent of the reliance acknowledged by their predecessors on this continent on the forests and the timberlands that surrounded them. For more than a century the Adirondacks with their bountiful harvests of spruce, pine, and the hard woods supplied the needs of the growing population of the northeast as it shifted toward the interior and the expanding western frontier.

Logging was and still is a prominent industry in our area and, although tools and techniques might have changed somewhat, harvesting timber is the work of men with saws and axes. In the forests along the Raquette River the cutting was done during the winter when roads into and out of the woods were surfaced with ice or hard-packed snow so that logs could be taken by sledge or wagon to the river's edge where each was marked at one end with hammered indentations, the individual "brand" of the mill owner down-



"Ice is out!" High water washes logs and melting ice over the "old" Colton dam in the spring. From the top of town hill.



Logs pile up at the second falls. Looking up-river toward the Bicknell sawmill and Colton village.

stream. Then the heavy logs were skidded onto the iced-over river. There they stayed until the "the ice went out" in the spring.

That's when the excitement started. Spring floods converging on the river carried the logs downstream at a tremendous rate until something, a rock, an eddy or a sharp turn, hung up a log or two, then more, until they all jammed, sometimes covering the whole width of the river. At that point the River-drivers took over. With great skill and bravery they worked their way out to the jam to free the key logs with their pike poles and start the drive again. Down the river the "drive" went, in some places controlled by piers and booms to keep the flow of logs in the mainstream, at other spots to sort branded logs into "gaps" for each of the mills. There the sawyers took command and transformed rough timber into lumber for the building of the nation.

(All these pictures from the Colton Historical Society are gifts from Irene Hepburn, Bernice Enslow, and Jennie James. A musical, "Sunday Rock," based on Raquette River lore was staged at Colton in the summer of 1992.)



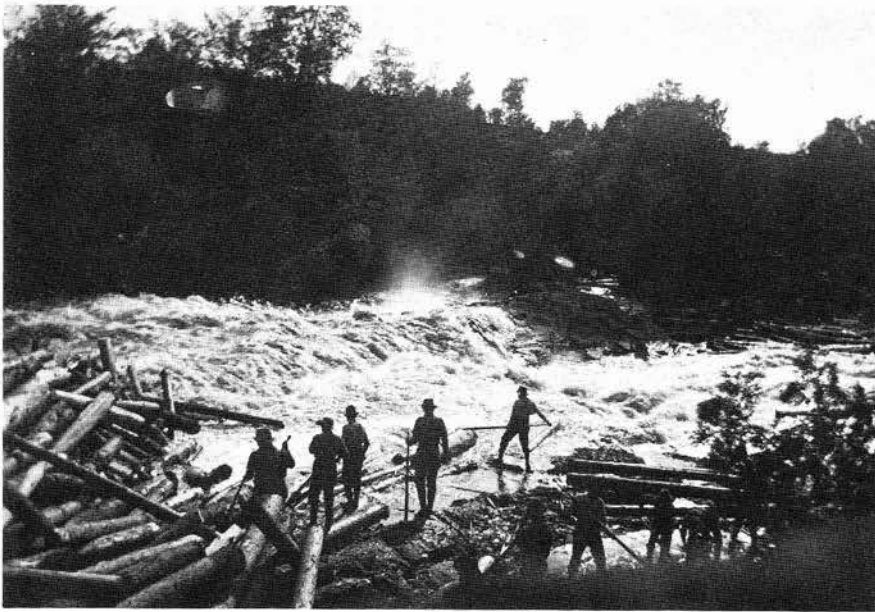
Zena Hepburn on the east side of the Raquette, above the sand-eddy, enjoying the roar of the rapids. The famous tannery is visible across the river.



Interested observers standing on the hill and watching the river-drivers use a temporary cable to reach a jam at the top of Munger Pitch.



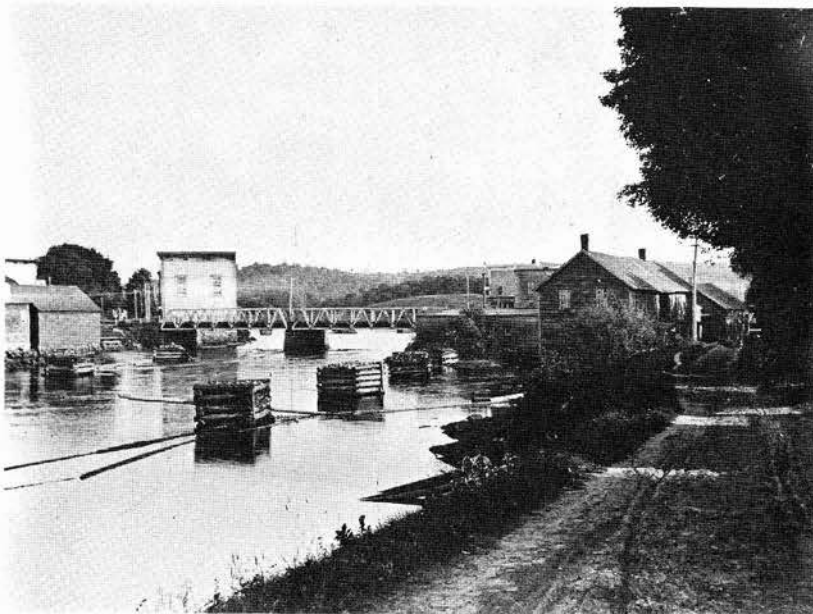
The "Head of the Narrows," a notorious trouble spot where the 13' logs often jammed and had to be freed with pike poles, a lot of muscle and not a little folly.



A jam below Colton Falls brings out the rivermen. If a man did not do his stint of dangerous duty either in the woods or on the river, he "went down the tote road," that is, he was fired.



Probably old Dan Donahue, "the best in a boat on the Colton stretch," and his crew work their way upstream toward trouble, meaning yet another jam.



Piers and booms for sorting stranded logs. The mainstream then carried logs going downstream as far as the St. Lawrence River.

Skilled men at "sorting gaps" picked out the branded logs for Bicknell Mill, moved them into the mill's holding area in slack water. These logs seem to be a mixture of culls and good ones.



Holding area above the sorting gaps for Colton mills at a bend in the Raquette. It has been said that many a riverside home was warmed in winter with free floating logs snaked in quietly during the drive the previous spring.

"The biggest jam in history" below Higley Falls in about 1908.



The History of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center

Ogdensburg, New York

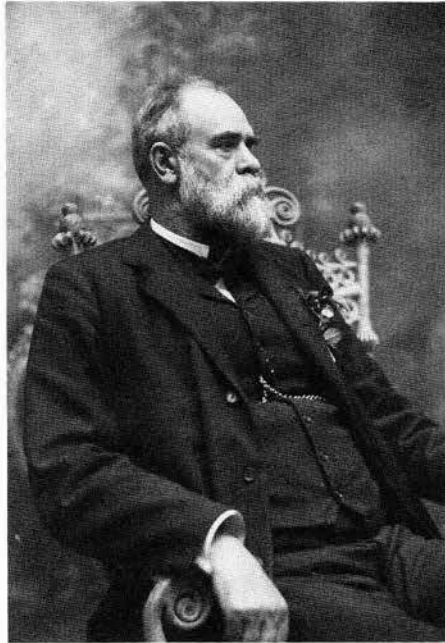
by Marcia L. LeMay

Just outside the eastern limits of Ogdensburg is located the St. Lawrence State Hospital, a state institution for the care of the insane, and one of the largest public institutions in the state of New York. The buildings are magnificent stone structures and the grounds have a total acreage of 1,015 acres as well as 297 acres that are being rented. About 513 acres are under cultivation, foodstuffs for the hospital and fodder for the stock being raised here. The population of the hospital, including doctors, nurses, attendants and patients numbers close to 3,000. (*Ogdensburg Illustrated*, 1909)

Built in 1890 the State Hospital soon became a national leader in the treatment of the insane and in the training of psychiatric nurses.

In the late 1800's the United States was in the midst of a social welfare revolution. It was commonly believed that the best care for mentally ill citizens was to place them in continuous care psychiatric hospitals. Contemporary philosophy suggested removal of patients from the stresses in their environment, stresses that were considered to be the most probable root of their illness. A homey atmosphere without tension would aid in the patient's recovery. (Ahmed)

Several psychiatric hospitals were built in New York State in such places as Buffalo, Utica, Middletown, and Hudson River, yet there were none north of the present-day Thruway. The State Commission on Lunacy decided the psychiatric needs of the state would best be served by locating a mental hospital in Northern New York. Thus, on April 29, 1886, Senator General Newton M. Curtis of DePeyster secured approval of his bill authorizing the appointment of five commissioners to find a suitable location for a mental hospital in Northern New York. Governor David B. Hill appointed Dr. Peter M. Wise, William P. Letchworth, C.C.B. Walker, James Spencer, and Joseph M. Cleveland to research various sites during the summer. The committee found adequate sites in Ogdensburg, Plattsburgh, Gouverneur, Watertown, Carthage, Adams, Oswego, Lowville, Malone, and Greenfield. (Baule) Upon further research Plattsburgh, Ogdensburg, Malone, and Watertown were chosen as the preliminary favorites, each



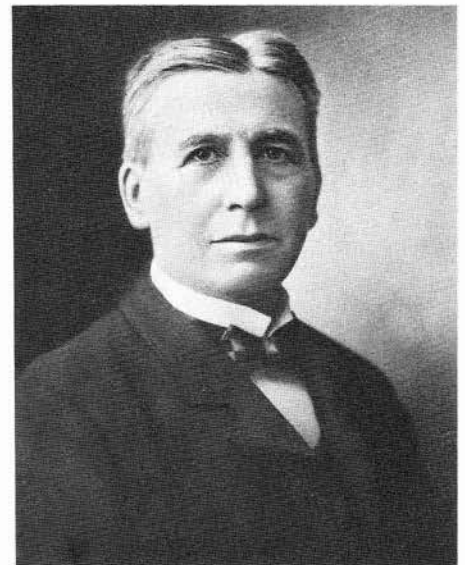
It was this man, General Curtis, hero of the Civil War, who first proposed that an asylum for the mentally ill, if one was to be built in northern New York, be situated in Ogdensburg. When it came to arguing for this site in the Legislature in Albany, that task fell to Colonel E.C. James, who had law offices in both Ogdensburg and New York City. (All photos in this article appear by courtesy of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center Archives)

site having its own particular merits. In December, 1886, the *St. Lawrence Herald* announced that Plattsburgh would most likely be chosen. Meeting in Albany the commissioners prepared a report to the legislature and selected Plattsburgh for location of the mental hospital. The *Troy Times* released the following information regarding the asylum as reported to the *Herald*:

It was announced exclusively in the *Times* several weeks ago that the commission to locate an insane asylum in Northern New York has selected Plattsburgh, and yesterday at a meeting in Albany a report recommending Plattsburgh was prepared for presentation to the Legislature. Sites at Ogdensburg, Malone, and Watertown were considered and the selection of Plattsburgh was made because of the cheapness of

the land and the water facilities the village agreeing to furnish the asylum a water supply without expense to the State. (*St. Lawrence Herald*, 12/24/1886)

The *Troy Times* was erroneous in its reporting. Two months later an article appeared in the *St. Lawrence Herald* reporting a meeting between the Ways and Means Committee of the New York Assembly and the Committee on State Charitable Institutions. The committees were to hear arguments on the two pending bills concerning the location of the proposed insane asylum. Large delegations from both St. Lawrence and Clinton counties were present. Ex-assemblyman Nathaniel O. Boynton of Essex County spoke first on behalf of Plattsburgh, presenting the superiority of the bluffs of Plattsburgh as the best site for the asylum. He assured the committee members there would be plenty of pure water, good drainage, a bracing atmosphere and many other advantages. Mr. Boynton also questioned the ethics of many prominent figures in St. Lawrence County politics. Colonel E.C. James spoke on behalf of the Ogdensburg bill. No conclusion was



Dr. Peter M. Wise, the first director of the State Hospital in Ogdensburg, a physician of unusual humane insight and administrative ability, who made the new institution on the St. Lawrence River a model of the best of modern thought concerning the care of the "insane," a term he steadfastly rejected.

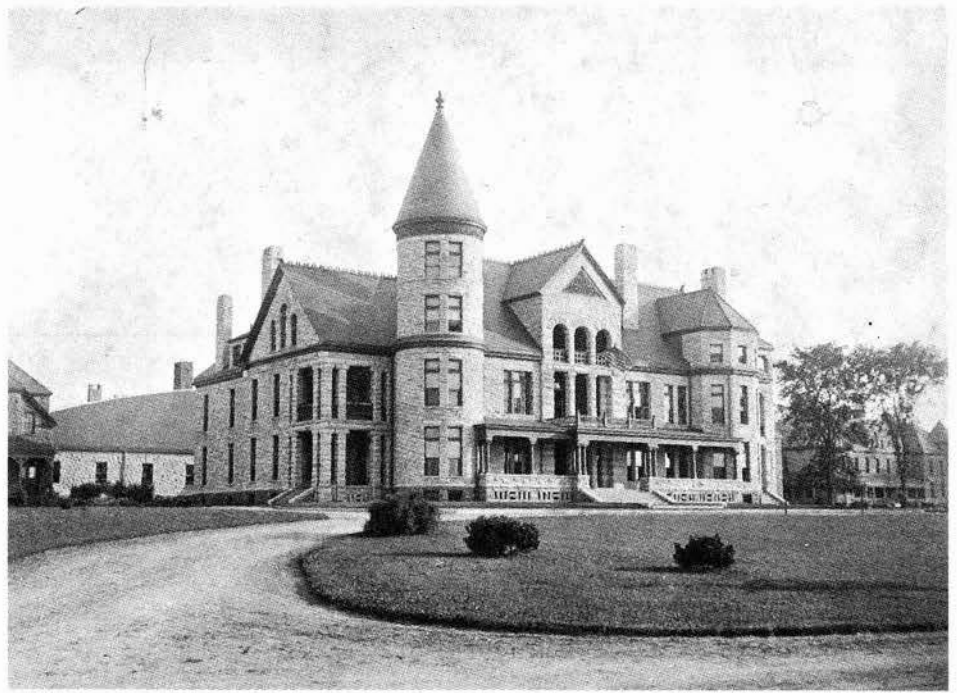
reached. (*St. Lawrence Herald*, 2/11/1887)

Mr. James Spencer, the secretary of the asylum committee, further assured them that the rumor about Plattsburgh being chosen over another site was false. He said that the commission can only recommend a site that seems the most advantageous and it is up to the legislature to decide. As there was a Republican majority in the New York State Senate, Sen. Smith M. Weed, a powerful Democrat from Plattsburgh would not have any extraordinary influence. (*St. Lawrence Herald*, 11/19/1886)

Some time later information from the *Utica Herald* elaborated on a commissioners' report submitted to the Legislature. Three of the commissioners favored the site at Plattsburgh while Dr. Wise and Mr. Letchworth preferred Ogdensburg, citing strong reasons supporting their choice.

If merits of the two sites alone are allowed to decide instead of [partisan politics,] there can be no doubt that Ogdensburg will be chosen. At Airy Point close by the city and on the St. Lawrence River a site embracing 948 acres of the garden land of St. Lawrence county is offered. It combines the advantages of abundant fertile land, pure air, the inexhaustible St. Lawrence as a water supply, the best of sewerage facilities, and cheap freights with water competition seven months in the year. In Plattsburgh the Saranac would be the water supply. Along the [Saranac] river are many saw mills and their waste lines the bottom and banks of the stream and pollutes its waters to an extent that the citizens of Plattsburgh do not use it. The sewerage facilities are declared even worse . . . The land at Plattsburgh is declared of very inferior grade, stoney and of thin soil. In every respect touching the welfare of patients, the superiority of the Ogdensburg location is demonstrated with convincing clearness . . . By the terms of the law authorizing its erection it is to meet the future requirements of the State in providing for the insane. If it is desired to place it where it will be most difficult and costly of access possible, Plattsburgh is the natural place for it . . . Ogdensburg is as clearly and unmistakably the natural place for it. (*St. Lawrence Herald* 2/18/1887)

Following this speech in support of Ogdensburg, Mr. Erwin, the chair of the Assembly Ways and Means committee, approved General Curtis' bill to purchase Point Airy for \$188,000.



Center Building, which looks today pretty much as it did when it was built the better part of a hundred years ago.

The factor probably the most important to defeating Plattsburgh's chances for the psychiatric center was the water famine in the city. In January, 1887, the Plattsburgh Water Commissioner announced that all waste water from faucets must be stopped. "The waste water during the past two weeks from Plattsburgh water works has been so great that there is a danger of water famine. This waste must be stopped at all hazards to prevent the possibility and very strong probability of serious disaster." (*St. Lawrence Herald*, 1/21/1887) Those in support of Plattsburgh receiving the asylum had previously and erroneously proclaimed the supply of water to be abundant and permanent.

On March 8, 1887, the bills proposing the location for the insane asylum were ordered to a third reading by the Assembly. Senator Weed moved that his bill be substituted for General Curtis'. Weed favored the Plattsburgh site because he still thought it was a superior location, and, of course, it would insure his reelection if Plattsburgh was chosen. Mr. Weed continued at great length in favor of Plattsburgh. It was suggested that Gen. Curtis answer Mr. Weed's speech, but he declined and a vote was taken. The motion was defeated 66 to 29. General Curtis' bill then progressed to the third reading, and full opportunity was given to discuss and amend it. Following this discussion the editor of the *Plattsburgh Telegraph* took the opportunity to "thoroughly abuse Assemblyman Erwin, through whose influence," he claims, "the Ogdens-

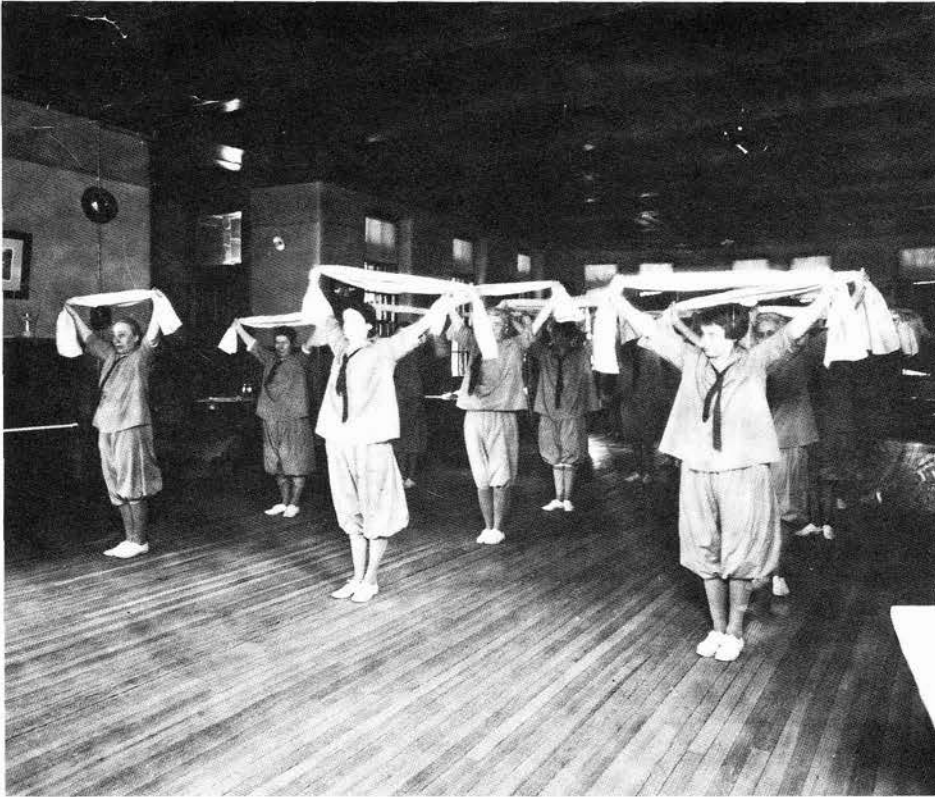
burgh bill has been progressed." It is now almost certain that Ogdensburg will be the site of the new asylum. (*St. Lawrence Herald* 3/11/1887)

The New York Assembly voted in favor of Ogdensburg for the asylum on Wednesday, March 23, 1887, by a 90 to 23 margin. The bill was submitted for final approval on the previous Tuesday but General Curtis requested the vote be deferred as Mr. Weed was not present. Upon tabulation it was found that with the exception of four Republicans and eleven Democrats it was a party line vote, easing the St. Lawrence County residents' fears that Mr. Weed would be unduly influential in the selection of Plattsburgh over Ogdensburg.

The margin of the voting concluded that the bill could override Governor Hill's veto if necessary. This, though, was highly unlikely as research had shown conclusively that Ogdensburg was the more desirable location. Additionally, New York State policy was to distribute its large projects and until that period of time, St. Lawrence County had been overlooked with the exception of the Potsdam Normal School. Clinton County had already been granted a state prison in Dannemora and state-maintained railroads from the mines in the Adirondacks to Plattsburgh. (*St. Lawrence Herald* 3/25/1887)

On May 19, 1887 the following article appeared in the *Ogdensburg Journal*.

A telegram printed elsewhere announces the gratifying fact that Governor Hill has signed the Og-



An exercise class for women. As it is today, physical and mental busyness was a hallmark of therapy from the beginning of the hospital's service near the turn-of-the-century.

densburg asylum bill and it is therefore a law. We have always had an abiding faith that such would be the end of the earnest struggle which has been going on since the meeting of the legislature over the location of the new institution for the amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate insane. We do not care to rejoice over the defeat of a rival locality for the site. We have believed that the one offered at Airy Point was the best, and that the report of the minority of the commission to recommend a location for the institution presented the best and most weighty reasons in favor of their choice. The legislature by a large majority in both branches, has taken the same view. The Governor suggested a few minor changes in the bill. It was immediately recalled and changes made, and the bill received his Excellency's approval. It locates the asylum on Airy Point adjoining the St. Lawrence River and appropriated \$188,000 to purchase the site and erect buildings. The site also contains more than 900 acres of excellent land and has a number of good buildings which can be used for a new institution. The news was received by the citizens with lively satisfaction and credit given to

Senator Curtis. The next step is to select a committee. (*Ogdensburg Journal*, 5/19/1887)

The bill selecting Point Airy was ratified by Chapter 375 of New York State Law. It also allocated over \$100,000 for land purchase and some \$300,000 for surveys,

plans, and foundations. (*Watertown Times*, 12/1966)

The Assembly selected a committee which held their first board of managers meeting in Syracuse on October 27, 1887. The board consisted of chairman William Proctor, secretary George Hall, treasurer William Averell, John Hannan, all from Ogdensburg. Other members were W.F. Porter of Watertown, James D. Tracy of Canton, Thomas Ryan of Syracuse, James S. Thurston of New York City, George W. Pratt of Corning, Oscar Wood of Dexter, and George S. Weaver of Albany. At their first meeting the men arranged for the actual purchase of farm land at Point Airy and then selected Isaac G. Perry, a state architect, as their Chief Architect. The committee spent \$90,500 on a total area of 950 acres. (Baule)

The hospital was designed to serve 1500 patients even though the original plans accommodated only 500 people at a time. Perry's preliminary plans included a central group of administration buildings and cottages with a capacity for 600 patients and outlying cottages for 900 more patients. The facility was designed in what is now known as the Kirkbride style, which had been successfully utilized at another state hospital. In the first report to the commission, dated September 28, 1887, Perry supported his design because the buildings "meet the varied needs for the successful care and treatment of the bodily and mental conditions of inmates at a minimal maintenance cost." (Baule)



A music class for women.

Consultations with several experts such as Dr. Carlos F. MacDonald of the State Asylum for Insane Criminals; Dr. Smith, state lunacy commissioner; Dr. Peter M. Wise, Willard Asylum superintendent; and Dr. G. Adler Blumer, led Perry to believe that the buildings should not exceed two stories, with the first floor used for day activities and the second floor used for sleeping. Dr. MacDonald also recommended that the buildings used for the care of the "feeble, helpless, and greatly disturbed" should be only one story high and fairly accurately replicate domestic life. Another important characteristic is that the patients should be separated according to psychiatric disorder in connecting cottages. The Kirkbride design became the primitive forerunner of family-type care.

Perry's original plan included five central groups and fourteen distinct cottages with each group containing as many as twenty-two buildings. He had designed space for the newly admitted, infirmaries, treatment wards, patient housing for both mobile and bedridden, and also dining areas, kitchen employee residences, occupational therapy workshops, and recreation rooms. Unfortunately due to budget constraints Perry's design was never realized.

On January 27, 1888, Perry submitted to the committee his final and reduced plans for the St. Lawrence state hospital. This plan was a scaled-down version of the original, consisting of three groups instead of five, and fewer buildings in each group.

Construction began on September 10, 1888, with Center Group and Letchworth. Center Group was to contain the administration building, sunrooms, a library, infirmaries for sick patients, a central kitchen and laundry, and housing for physically competent patients. Letchworth was to be a one-story complex for the care of the "feeble and filthy classes of chronic insane," the patients in need of constant care who had no chance of recovery.

The experts' specifications had been met and the construction progressed according to plan. Perry summarized their goals in his January 12, 1889, report to the board of managers.

Buildings are to have abundant air and sunlight, also grouped and massed so that the outlines produce the main feature representing their leading purpose, and harmonizing with their surroundings, ornamentation having been almost entirely avoided. The intention has been to produce a sense of solidity and a style of architecture requisite and proper for asylum purposes, and the

buildings are characterized by discretion, moderation and propriety. (Baule)

The buildings were constructed with almost all local materials. The majority are made of blue limestone and trimmed with Potsdam sandstone. Other buildings are faced with sandstone or Gouverneur marble. (Garand)

On August 29, 1889 the committee appointed Dr. Peter M. Wise of the Willard State Hospital as the first superintendent of the "Ogdensburg State Asylum for the Insane." Dr. Wise was optimistic about the future of the hospital as he liked the general cheerful atmosphere and appearance and also the lack of structural monotony. Upon his arrival, however, Dr. Wise requested that the name be changed to the "St. Lawrence State Hospital" because the "Ogdensburg State Asylum for the Insane" had seriously negative connotations. The change was formally adopted in 1890. (Baule)

Dr. Peter Manuel Wise was born March 7, 1851, in Clarence, New York in Erie County, son of Joseph and Elizabeth Wise. He attended the Parker Institute and the University of Buffalo, earning his M.D. in 1872. He then was employed at the St. Louis City Hospital where he earned distinction for his work with tuberculosis. His talents were then requested at Willard State Hospital where he was superintendent from 1873 until 1890 when he then transferred to the St. Lawrence State Hospital. He served as superintendent there for six years until he was promoted to President of the New York State Commission on Lunacy from which he retired in 1901. Dr. Wise died September 22, 1907 in New York City. (*Ogdensburg Journal*, 5/1966)

The new State Hospital opened on December 9, 1890 with patients arriving by horse-drawn sleigh from the depot in downtown Ogdensburg. The patients came from all over St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, Clinton, Essex, and Onondaga counties. It was said that it was so cold that night that the slip at the Custom House froze, further inhibiting the movement of the patients. (Baxter, undated) In addition to the bitter cold, the hospital electric plant had not yet been put into operation so the admission of 150 patients was done by lanterns. Dr. Wise was rather proud of this accomplishment that he had orchestrated and wrote in his first report that this was "... an achievement which has never before been equalled in the history of the care of the insane in this state." (Baule)

In the course of the next few years the construction of the physical plant was slowly completed. The projects finished included the rest of Center Group and

Letchworth, the superintendent's residence, the power plant, the pumphouse and Group Three which was destroyed by fire in the midst of construction.

By 1893 Group Three, designed to house 400 female patients in accordance with the State Care Act, was almost completed. Planned for the facility were two patient wards, staff housing and service facilities. Unfortunately fire destroyed Group Three before it could be finished. The State Commission for Lunacy had already allocated \$221,750 for construction of the buildings but on request from a delegation from the St. Lawrence State Hospital, Governor Flower granted an additional \$181,000 for repairs. Governor Flower pushed the emergency bill through both houses before the government recessed, and in gratitude in 1912 Group Three was renamed Flower Group. (SLCHA, 1966; Baule) A matching men's residence known as Group Four was planned but the funds were never granted.

Adequate monies, however, were provided for a recreation building. Construction of Curtis Hall began in 1895 but was interrupted in December when an ice build-up caused the walls to collapse. Construction did not start again until May 1, 1896, because of difficulties in securing funds from Albany. (*Ogdensburg Journal* 6/11/66) When the building was finally completed it was built on a plateau overlooking two miles of waterfront and housed a patients' library, a nurses' dietary lab, lecture rooms, a large auditorium and, of course, patient recreation rooms.

Dr. Wise insisted on the construction of a proper recreation building because he felt varied entertainments, especially the ones involving physical development, played a prominent role in treating the mentally ill. In his first annual report, Dr. Wise wrote:

In the armamentarium for moral treatment the most valuable are the varied forms of stage amusements—concerts, plays, lectures, stereopticon entertainments, etc. Dancing is a mental stimulant that often meets quite hopeless conditions, for in this form of amusement we have combined with physical exercise the most potent of all the factors of moral treatment—music. (Baxter, 1966)

Until Curtis Hall was built, recreational activities took place in the day rooms. However, the staff was inconvenienced because religious worship occurred there. In the 1892 annual report Dr. Wise reported that recreation for the patients had been restricted by want of facilities, but that they had employed the day room to

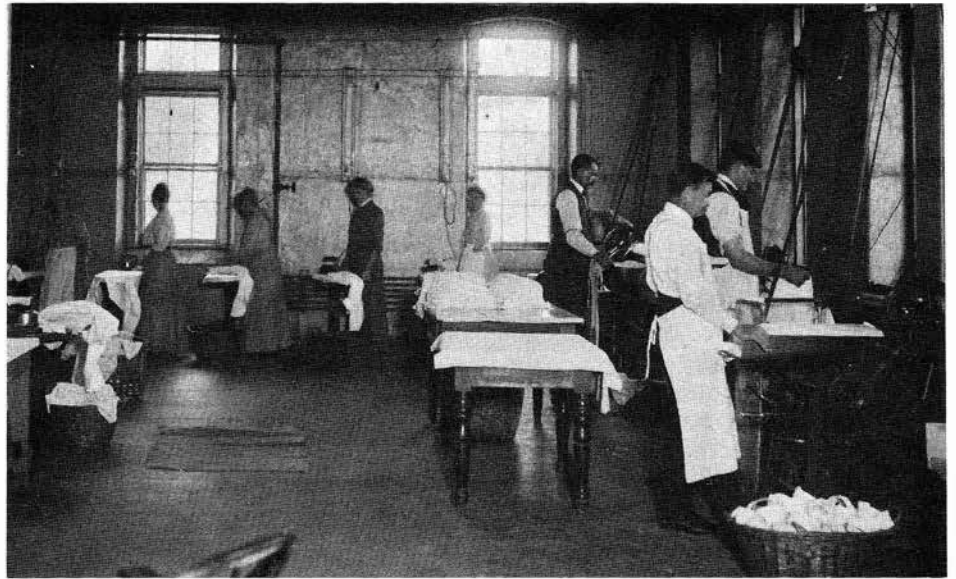
maximum use. In 1892 the patients participated in 26 social parties with dancing, music provided by the employees, a Jubilee Concert with music provided by Minnie Church and Professor E.P. Phillips, 11 sleigh ride parties, five popcorn parties, many phonograph entertainments, and six baseball afternoons. In the summer, activities included river excursions on the psychiatric center's steamboat "Dorothy" and camping on nearby Lotus Island. Winter activities included skating on the river and sledding on nearby hills. (Spring Tour 6/18/66)

The 1893 annual report stated that the day room was used for 34 dances with music provided by the hospital orchestra. Other entertainments included songs and comedy by W.H. McCollin, a stereopticon show by Mr. Alberry, 37 recorded candy pulls as well as many unrecorded ones, outdoor concerts, picnics near the south end of the hospital farm, more sleighing parties, baseball games, and on July 1, 1893, the first annual field day featuring athletic contests for the patients. In the spring of 1893 fifteen female patients were driven to DePeyster for blackberrying on the farm of Charles Snyder where they reported having a great day. In June the patients watched the ships traveling up the river on their way to the Columbian Expo in Chicago. (Baxter, 1966) All these activities are quite an accomplishment considering the recreation center had not yet been completed.

In 1916 parts of the recreation program became a casualty of World War I. "Dorothy" became unseaworthy and had to be dry-docked for lack of money and manpower to repair her. As a result there were to be no more camping and no more river excursions. Replacement activities included knitting, bandage rolling and other war support oriented activities. With the return of the men from World War I, an improved recreation program was implemented in 1922. A new patients' orchestra was established along with an annual masquerade ball. (Baxter, 1966)

In addition to recreation as therapy, Dr. Mabon and Dr. Hutching, the second and third superintendents respectively, planned programs that were seen as the forerunners of modern occupational therapy. Under Dr. Mabon all patients were encouraged to participate in some outdoor work. He was under the impression that the fresh air and sun would be good for their progress. Additionally looms were provided so that the women could become involved in weaving. Soon all the floors in the buildings were covered with beautiful handmade rugs.

In 1908, Dr. Hutchings established a



Part of the treatment for all patients who could manage it was productive work that would contribute directly to the welfare of the institution and would also serve to prepare them for jobs in society. Here a group works at the continuous task of doing the laundry.

program that was imitated in state hospitals all over the country. He assigned all patients to "employment in various occupations for the purpose of re-educating the facilities of attention and volition." This theory of selected purposeful activity succeeded in arousing from apathy many previously unreachable patients. (State Department of Mental Health)

In addition to purposeful activity as a therapy aid, Dr. Paul Taddiken, the fourth superintendent established aesthetic standards to help in the cure of the patients. In 1928, the first beauty salon opened in any state hospital. Immediately it was recognized and copied for its therapeutic value. The morale of the women it served was promptly boosted, which in itself was a step in the right direction. The women were also allowed to pick the patterns and materials for their clothing which they then sewed and cared for themselves. In effect this program was also a form of occupational therapy. Dr. Taddiken then created a food planning committee with the goal of planning meals that were both nutritious and aesthetically pleasing. Following the food committee, Dr. Taddiken also established a dental hygiene program. This program was not only for health reasons, but also gave patients an added interest in their appearance.

Because of the formation of these programs of "purposeful activity" the St. Lawrence State Hospital became a self-supporting institution. The main factor was the farm which covered almost 500 acres of the State Hospital property. The

patients raised enough vegetables and fruit in the garden to feed the entire population and the animals too. The patients raised pigs, cows, and chickens for food, sheep for wool and food, and horses for work purposes. In its occupational therapy department the hospital held classes in woodworking, sewing and knitting using wool from the sheep. Hardly any food or other necessities had to be ordered from outside sources. In addition to foodstuffs, tobacco was another product produced on the farm. In 1905 one patient raised enough tobacco for use by the entire patient population for one year. This involvement gave the patients ambition, precisely what Dr. Hutchings was looking for. (State Department of Mental Health) Due to changes in New York State rules and requirements concerning patient care, the farm was forced to close down in 1960, and the land was sold to the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority for industrial development. In addition to the farm, the State Hospital also had its own power station and fire department.

Another crucial factor in the self-supporting character of the hospital was the nursing school. The St. Lawrence Training School for Nurses was opened on December 10, 1890, because Dr. Wise found it easier to train nurses than to recruit them. This subject will be covered in more depth further on.

One factor where the hospital was not self-supporting was its reliance on the Ogdensburg water system. Point Airy was chosen because of its location on the St. Lawrence River and its abundance of

fresh water. The State Hospital, however, had been plagued by typhoid outbreaks in its first ten years of existence, especially in the winter and spring months. There were 57 recorded cases in the winter and 50 in the spring from 1891 to 1900. At first it was just assumed that outbreaks of contagious diseases would occur when people were living in close quarters, but it was soon discovered that the typhoid was being caused by the contaminated ice in the St. Lawrence River. It was because of this fact that the State Hospital officially became part of the city of Ogdensburg.

On March 1, 1901, Senator George Malby sponsored a bill in the New York Legislature allowing the State Hospital to legally draw water from the city system, even though it was technically not part of Ogdensburg. The bill never had a chance to make it through the state government because on June 1, 1901, the mayor of Ogdensburg, George Hall, and the city council voted to annex the State Hospital grounds. The question of water availability was solved; the hospital now had a right to the water because it was now a part of Ogdensburg. The city council signed a ten-year contract providing the hospital with no more than 400,000 gallons of water per day for a yearly fee of \$4,000. They also agreed to lay a fourteen-inch water main for \$11,400. The annexation added 2,400 people to the city of Ogdensburg, including 300 voters. (*Watertown Daily Times* 6/4/66) After the ten-year contract expired the hospital began paying for water at the city business rate. Presently that rate is \$1.70 per 1,000 gallons of water. (Baker, 1992)

In addition to city government cooperation, the people of Ogdensburg aided a great deal at the hospital. Local volunteers served as chaperones at the recreational events, some providing equipment for the patients but most providing just their time. When Curtis Hall was built, community members donated books, papers and magazines for the library. A book drive was begun by Arnold E. Smith. Edward Strong donated 80 volumes and Elizabeth Strong donated over 150. Louis Hasbrouck, a prominent Ogdensburg citizen, donated over 100 paperbacks and General Curtis generously bestowed many magazines and newspapers. All these materials were graciously catalogued by Charles W. Huntington and Charles H. Bailey. (Baxter, 1966)

Church choirs often donated their time to sing at religious services. In the early 1900's, the Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg gathered funds to build a proper place of worship for the patients. In 1907 the



Patients learned crafts as part of their continuing therapy in addition to the chores performed in the maintenance of daily living in the hospital. Here a man is weaving at a loom.

St. Vincent de Paul chapel was built, completely funded by the parishioners. The Diocese also contributed a new altar in 1961 blessed by James J. Navagh, Bishop of Ogdensburg. Other religious groups donated a Jewish synagogue and a Protestant Chapel, dedicated in 1958. (History of St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center)

Community involvement was most necessary during World War II. With a patient population of close to 3,000 the hospital found itself with only two physicians and a greatly reduced support staff. Community workers volunteered as aids and occupational teachers. As during World War I, war support activities became the norm. Courses like first aid and self defense were taught by experts from the community. Material shortages were also common. The patients agreed to donate to the war effort scrap iron drive the landmark cannonballs from the battle of Levis on Point Airy in 1760.

The end of World War II brought major changes in the hospital in addition those that had occurred prior to the First World War. In 1908 the State Hospital had first allowed the voluntary admission of patients, thereby removing a large part of the social stigma attached to mental illness. Then, in 1910, the free dispensary was opened. This was the first outpatient clinic to open in any state institution. In the first six months alone 34 people sought treatment, some coming from as far as 100 miles. Later, the opening of the outpatient clinic marked the beginning of a decrease in hospital population. There was now less need to spend huge sums of money to treat mental illness in a residential setting when it could be adequately treated on an outpatient basis.

March, 1955, marked the advent of the use of tranquilizing drugs. These drugs made the patients less aggressive and therefore they could live without constant supervision. Their relaxed demeanor



A public crafts sale in the "opera house" within Curtis Hall. Income was used to continue support of crafts and other programs. Plays and musical entertainments were performed in this auditorium.

made them more amenable to treatment allowing more privileges. The administering of tranquilizing drugs immediately improved the conditions of some patients. It was learned that many of the symptoms of mental illness came from the fact that they lost a lot of their personal freedom when they entered the hospital.

The introduction of the tranquilizing drugs was a much preferred method of treatment to the more common method under the superintendency of Robert C. Hunt. Between March 1, 1950, and July 1, 1952, a number of patients had been subjected to treatment by a prefrontal lobotomy, performed by a prominent brain surgeon from Utica.

In 1957, the St. Lawrence State Hospital became known as an open door hospital. Patients could be admitted and discharged at their will. Care became more community-based.

This idea of community-based care was the foundation of a major reorganization in 1968. Instead of patients being grouped by illness or sex, they were organized by geographical area. People from Jefferson and Lewis counties were assigned to Flower building, Center building was for St. Lawrence and Franklin county residents

and Clinton and Essex county people lived in Letchworth. This program was planned to provide cooperative arrangements with the communities for continuity of mental health care between the State Hospital, community mental health centers, and other facilities in the patients' home communities. (*Watertown Daily Times*, 11/9/68) It was later found that this program was not as successful as had been hoped and it was discontinued a few years later.

Other additions to the psychiatric center included the construction of a children's unit, the only one north of Syracuse. A new facility was built in 1989 in addition to the one that was created earlier. The introduction of Alcoholics Anonymous and Farm Cottage were planned to aid in the treatment of alcohol abuse. Under the direction of superintendent Herman Snow, the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center Federal Credit Union, one of the largest financial institutions in Ogdensburg, was established in July, 1954. Dr. Snow was also noted for his creation of two intensive therapy units, one for reception of patients and one for continued care. Moreover, Dr. Snow secured the donation of many television

sets from the Arthur Murray Foundation of New York City and had a dial telephone system installed to link the different buildings in the hospital. (History of State Hospital)

As was mentioned before, the St. Lawrence Training School for Nurses had been opened on December 10, 1890, by Dr. Wise when he realized that there were not enough adequately trained nurses to cope with the demand of this newly-formed institution. Since its inception the school had always been coeducational. In 1890, there were only 23 nursing schools in the nation and only 11 of them had existed long enough to have graduates. Since Dr. Wise could not even find a suitable text for instructing his students he wrote his own. *The Textbook for Training Schools for Nurses*, published in 1896 by G.P. Putnam Sons, became the standard text for all the State Hospital schools in New York. The text included practical knowledge in anatomy, physiology, ethics, preventive medicine, aseptic treatment, food chemistry, and dosage. (State Department of Mental Health)

The two-year curriculum followed the standards set by the McLean Psychiatric Hospital in Boston, a top school in the



Using Gouverneur light gray limestone and Potsdam red sandstone construction of Center Building began in 1888.



A ward in the regular medical infirmary maintained for patients at the State Hospital.

training of psychiatric nurses. Soon though, the St. Lawrence Nursing School was recognized as the leading school in New York for training psychiatric nurses. In 1896 the State Commission on Lunacy assembled all state hospital nursing schools under one system. They established uniform entrance exams and issued a diploma to those who successfully completed the course. The St. Lawrence school served as a model for the other schools in the system.

By 1913 there was too much material to be effectively taught in two 30-week school years; thus the curriculum was changed to a three-year program. In addition to classroom instruction, exchanges were planned with general hospitals so that the students could get practical experience. In 1910, a four-month stay in the maternity and children's ward at the House of the Good Shepherd in Syracuse was established. This program gave the students the opportunity to gain practical

knowledge in obstetrics, pediatrics, surgery, and contagious diseases. In 1912 a nine-month affiliation with Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital in New York City was created.

1915 marked the advent of the three-months probationary period following graduation. This again was another first in the State Hospital Nursing School. The State Mental Health Commission liked what the St. Lawrence school was accomplishing, so in 1922 they mandated that all State Nursing Schools were to offer the three-year plan followed by a short probationary period. Other general nursing schools admired the curriculum at St. Lawrence so they sent their students there to gain experience in psychiatric nursing. Alice Hyde Hospital in Malone sent their students to Ogdensburg for one week beginning in 1927. In 1929 Mercy Hospital of Watertown also began an exchange and then in 1933 nursing students from Syracuse Memorial Hospital began to come for a three-month program. (Baxter,

1966)

The curriculum changed greatly over the years; new affiliations were added and others dropped. In 1966, the first year of the nursing program consisted of two semesters and a summer session at St. Lawrence University and practical nursing experience on the home campus one day per week. The collegiate experience at SLU had been added in 1953. The second year was an extended stay at the Elmhurst City Hospital in Queens and the third year included residence at the St. Lawrence School of Nursing studying psychiatric, geriatric, advanced medical, and advanced surgical nursing. The course was augmented with ten more weeks of extra affiliations. Students went to Sunmount in Tupper Lake to learn about nursing the severely mentally handicapped. Then they went to Mount Morris Tuberculosis Hospital for another four weeks and then finally they spent two weeks at the Onondaga County Home. (Baxter, 1966)



A class of nurses trained in the hospital's nurses education program.

As the curriculum became increasingly difficult the requirements for registration also became progressively stricter. When the school opened in 1890 only one year of high school or the equivalent was necessary for admission. In 1930 two years were necessary, in 1931, three years and finally in July, 1932 four years of high school or the equivalent were required for entrance to the school.

The nursing school was tied closely to the community through the efforts of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center School of Nursing Alumni Association. Established in 1914 by Daniel J. Farley '08 it included 62 charter members. By 1965 the Alumni

Association counted a total of 187 men and 1008 women, for a grand total of 1195 members. (Baxter, 1966) Through the years the Association members have served the community in educating people about the services the State Hospital provides. Mostly though they volunteer their time wherever it is needed.

Although it was recognized as a leader in New York State in educating nurses, the state found it necessary to close the school in 1981. Educating a person in the State Hospital schools was simply too costly. With all expenses added in, it cost approximately \$30,000 to provide schooling, transportation, and instruction for one

person for three years. The individual him/herself only paid about \$2,100 for books and the uniforms.

Actually the St. Lawrence School of Nursing stayed open the longest of all the State Hospital schools, an additional three years, largely through the efforts of Senator H. Douglas Barclay of Pulaski. Senator Barclay managed to find funds for the school for six years before the school had to close. (Chambers, 1992) In 1972, the state had begun closing its nursing schools six at a time and ironically the St. Lawrence School of Nursing grew larger before it closed as it absorbed students from the other schools.



Herman B. Snow, MD, Director, 1954-1962, initiated the "Open Door Policy." Through the advances in psychiatric medications, patients were, for the first time, allowed greater freedom to come and go within the psychiatric center's grounds.

Since 1970, Director Lee D. Hanes MD, in addition to being a leader in developing programs in Community Psychiatry at St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center, presided over three major building projects to modernize the campus in order to provide state-of-the-art psychiatric care to the North Country.



Just as the hospital was a pioneer with the open door policy of the 1950's, St. Lawrence has been a leader in community based treatment. Successes include one of the state's oldest—initiated in 1935—and largest family care programs (enabling patients to reside with local families) and a north country network of community support services run in cooperation with the six counties served. The Central Day Treatment Program, crisis residence beds, and on-grounds state operated community residence all opened in 1987 and solidify a vital link between the Center and the community.

The plan for St. Lawrence Psychiatric

Center in the 1990's and beyond represents a shift in emphasis reflective of current research in the mental health field. Large institutions for long term care of psychiatric patients have given way to smaller, shorter term, rehabilitation style facilities, focusing on stabilization of problems with quick return to community based programs. The St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center's mission in the coming decades is to provide a temporary base of support for clients who require inpatient hospitalization, followed by a smooth transition to community based rehabilitation programs that help clients achieve their highest possible potential.

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SLCHA Annual Report 1991

by Shirley Tramontana



Marian M. Brackett, Canton, wrote one of her memories of World War II on *The Story Wall*, an exhibit created by the visitors to the museum gallery. (Photo courtesy of the Watertown Daily Times)

Introduction

1991 was a year of assessment, policy making, and preparation for positive change at the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. Director Shirley Tramontana hired and trained a new staff, developed a new plan of work, reorganized the administrative function, and, with the cooperation of the Board of Directors, readied for the task of producing the next five year strategic plan.

The initial phase of the work plan was the establishment of solid administrative and organizational structures that supported and strengthened the Association's continuing role in the community. Not only were the Association's resources identified and the communication systems evaluated and upgraded, but, also, the administrative information system was reorganized with the installation of a newly acquired Macintosh computer. Along with the development and institution of a new filing system, the Association's membership records were converted to a computerized data base, and a computerized financial reporting system was

designed.

Further progress of the Association's new plan of work provided for the mapping of the Association's collections. This identification and location of artifacts and documents is proceeding as the staff becomes more familiar with the Association's extensive collections.

Concomitant with organization is maintenance. The Association hired a professional cleaning service, Clean Sweeps, operated by Wendy Murray of Potsdam, and instituted a housekeeping schedule that preserves and maintains the museum and library interiors.

With regard to the maintenance of the physical plant of the Association and the Museum: the exterior of the Silas Wright House Museum was repainted; the old sign was replaced with a new one announcing the change in museum and library hours; the County Historian's office, on the second floor of the Association's History Center, was reorganized, and its interior repainted; the public library space, on the first floor of the History Center, was cleaned and re-

arranged, making room for the newly hired Archives Manager and for new photo-copy equipment; and, new security measures were instituted.

Board and Staff Notes

Due to illness, Betty Coats resigned from the Association's Board of Directors. Her seat on the board was filled by Historian Cornell Reinhart. Dr. Reinhart is an Assistant Professor in the history department at St. Lawrence University and has done extensive work with the Clinton County Historical Society.

Ms. Diane Jones, a recent graduate of the history program at Potsdam State College, joined the staff of the Association as Archives Manager. Lorene Thoms was hired as the new Administrative Assistant, and she has begun the task of reorganizing, restructuring, and computerizing the Association's information systems.

Exhibits, Programs, Education, Publications

1991 saw the close of the Dairy Farming exhibit curated by Dr. Doug Harper, formerly of the State University of New York, Potsdam College. From the SLCHA gallery, the exhibit went to the Gallery Association of New York State (GANYS) where it was prepared as one of the traveling exhibit selections available to other cultural institutions throughout New York State. The exhibit, *Changing Works: Forty-five Years on the Family Farm*, contrasted historic and contemporary photographs and used interpreted interviews to reveal farmers' perceptions of the changes new technologies have made in dairy farms.

The first new presentation of the year, *An Abiding Place: The Search for a Decent Life in Rural New York*, was a loan exhibit from GANYS. The exhibit, organized by the New York State Rural Housing Coalition, was designed to document the needs and concerns of low-income rural people across the State. In conjunction with the exhibit, the museum offered two presentations concerned with rural poverty. Dr. Mark Diffenderfer, an Associate Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York, Potsdam College, spoke about the "Cycle of Poverty" in rural Appalachia and in the North Country. A round-table discussion, moderated by Dr. Doug Harper, focused on the characteristics of poverty and its

reflection in St. Lawrence County Housing problems. Participants included: Millie Whalen; Executive Director Fred Hanss of the St. Lawrence County Housing Council; Joseph O'Hare, Executive Director of the Association for Neighborhood Rehabilitation; and Mark Jacobs, President of the Mohawk Indian Housing Corporation. The panel discussed deterioration of the area's housing stock, housing affordability, and the housing of special populations.

Diane Jones, the Association's Archives Manager organized a display featuring materials about J. Henry Rushton and the Rushton Races. Chris Angus of the Canton Canoe Club gave Ms. Jones excellent research assistance and support. The presentation featured maps, brochures, Rushton catalogs, posters, photographs, and artifacts that illustrated the history of the Rushton Races. Since the Canton Canoe Club commemorates, on a yearly basis, the Rushton Races (the first of which was held on August fifth in 1880 on Lake George, with the winner receiving one of J. Henry Rushton's canoes as a prize), Ms. Jones coordinated the opening of the Association's exhibit with the Canton Canoe Weekend, which featured a Rushton Memorial Race. During the Canton Canoe Weekend, Rushton authority, Dave Baker, lectured about Rushton as a local legacy. Mr. Baker's presentation drew a standing-room-only crowd.

The Silas Wright House Museum's exhibit areas changed dramatically when the staff transformed the attic gallery into a replica of a Victorian parlor used as an entrance to a presentation of "crazy quilts" that was part of the Association's exhibit: North Country Historic Quilts. The Main Gallery, painted red and white, showcased an additional ten quilts, all selected from the Association's extensive textile collection. Programming coordinated with the exhibit and designed to provide the audience with a range of information about the traditional craft and the art of quilting, included: Mardee Cook's presentation on the history of quilting; Betsey Tisdale's presentation on Amish Quilting; and Director Tramontana's program, *The Artist and the Quilt*. The production of a contemporary art quilt, based on an 1810 land survey map, donated by Tisdal Associates and done in collaboration with the staffs of the Potsdam Museum, the Norwood Museum, the Frederic Remington Art Museum, the Gibson Gallery, and the Silas Wright House Museum, introduced the Association's new staff to and fostered a relationship with other museum pro-

fessionals in the area.

In anticipation of the fiftieth anniversary of the American entry into World War II, the Association's staff developed the concept for the final exhibit of the season: The World War II Story Wall, an exhibit created by and continuously recreated by the audience. The exhibit became a living-history document that focused on the experience, memories, and feelings of those who lived during that war, with a special emphasis on the woman's experience. World War II: The Story Wall opened in September with four wonderful stories written by people who lived during the war period. Over the four-and-one-half-month run of the exhibit, more than 200 stories were added to the wall. Contributors included women and men who served in the military and on the home-front during the war, local school children, and visitors from Germany, Hungary, and the former Soviet Union. After the exhibit closes, stories will be transcribed and the walls photographed. The second phase of the exhibit is currently located at the Frederic Remington Art Museum in Ogdensburg where the "Nimble Thimbles," led by Carmen Patterson, are creating the World War II Story Quilt from muslin transcriptions of the wall.

School children, parents and teachers toured the museum house and galleries throughout the school year. Museum staff included a visit to the archives in the tour program this year. This segment of the tour explained to children in what

ways a museum library is different from school and community libraries. It was the most popular part of the tour. Fourth grade students continued to get the local history publication, "The St. Lawrence Chronicler" produced and published as a cooperative project between the St. Lawrence County Historical Association and the St. Lawrence/Lewis BOCES.

The most outstanding project of the year was the full color, special artists edition of "The Quarterly" co-edited by George McFarland and Marvin Edwards. Published by the St. Lawrence County Historical Association in cooperation with the Frederic Remington Art Museum, the issue featured articles about three North Country artists, Sally James Farnham, Frederic Remington, and Charles Chapman. The special art edition was facilitated in part by the generous support of the New York State Council on the Arts, by local advertisers, and by a large contribution by the late Mrs. Jean S. Newell, a continued patron of the publication.

Collections and Collections Management

Early in the year, a wind and rain storm damaged part of the History Center roof, tearing off some shingles. Several collection items had to be hurriedly moved off site while workmen removed and replaced wet insulation and repaired the roof. Insurance covered the damage, but the quick response of the staff and board, and the reliable assistance of Peg and



Association President Ruth McKean surveyed the many and different items donated for the First Annual Antique Show and Silent Auction held at the Canton Pavilion. (Photo courtesy of the Watertown Daily Times)

Grant Cornwell, Lynn Ekfelt, Laurie Rush, RCHA, H.A. Brouse Van and Storage, Massena and Service Master, Canton, made a near disaster a manageable problem that could be solved quickly and efficiently.

In response to an identified deficiency of storage space, the Canton Federal Savings and Loan Association generously donated clean, climate-controlled storage space to the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. The much-needed space enabled the Historical Association's staff to start the relocation of the textile collection from its cramped quarters in the History Center to the new storage area. Relocation of the entire collection is expected to be completed by the end of 1992. Eight rolling textile racks, donated by friends of the museum, Mr. and Mrs. John Tramontana of West Pittston, Pennsylvania, made provision for the safe hanging of some of the textiles until inventory and recordkeeping can be done and funds can be secured for photographing and boxing these textiles for storage. Director Tramontana has begun a search for stainless steel storage units and for archival boxes and supplies to be used for the proper storage of this collection. To further aid with the Association's textile collection, the Director has developed a plan to seek volunteers for a Textile Committee that will concern itself with the care and preservation of the Association's textile collection.

In November of 1991, Dr. Reinhart, Director Tramontana, and Archives Manager Jones developed and wrote a request for a substantial Documentary Heritage Program (DHP) Grant designed to provide a baseline, professional and comprehensive assessment of the manuscripts collection. This grant, if awarded, will evaluate the depth and kind of materials housed in the Association's History Center library. It will also provide the institution with the services of a professional archivist to assist in drawing up a plan for the organization, cataloguing and management of the records collection. Most importantly the grant provides for training and guidance for the staff and volunteer support team. The long range result will be an organized, accessible research library that is easy to use, with trained personnel to supervise and assist the public.

The library space has been rearranged to accommodate researchers as comfortably as possible. New rules pertaining to the use of the Association's archives and designed for the protection of collected materials have been posted. At the end of the year, a generous donation by a



Archives Manager Diane Jones showed Canton school children from Mrs. Beauvais' 4th grade class 19th century cooking tools at the Wright house. They were among the hundreds of school children to visit the museum in 1991. (Photo courtesy of the St. Lawrence Plaindealer)

member who chooses to remain anonymous, was received and will be used for continued improvements to the Association's library of St. Lawrence County materials.

County Historian

The new Director's first year as St. Lawrence County Historian was a year of orientation, identification of resources, and of getting acquainted with the community and with the local government historians. The job description presented by the State Historian's Office provided a guideline for defining the new responsibilities of the position. A brief outline of the County Historian's tasks include: reading and writing history, teaching and public presentations, historic preservation, organization and advocacy.

Annual Meeting

Attendance was high at the Annual meeting of the membership of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association held at the Clearview Restaurant in Gouverneur. Guest speaker Dr. Mark Peterson, Architectural Historian from Clarkson University, presented slides and a lecture on the architecturally significant Trinity Church in Morley, complementing a fall Quarterly article on the same subject.

At the business meeting, an updated statement of the mission of the Association was presented to and adopted by

the membership. The new mission statement states:

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is a not-for-profit educational research center and museum that researches, collects, preserves, and interprets St. Lawrence County history through collections development, publications, exhibitions, and programming; whose purpose is to help establish the intellectual and cultural connections that expand awareness and place St. Lawrence County in its state and national context, while revealing its unique identity. The Association examines different aspects of life in St. Lawrence County, from multiple and diverse resources through community partnerships and collaborations.

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association values quality, integrity, and accessibility, and it operates within established museum standards, befitting its AAM accredited status. The new statement of purpose restates the Association's educational mission, signifies its place in the community, and reaffirms its status as a primary cultural institution in the North Country.

Special Events

After many years of dedicated service to the St. Lawrence County Historical Association, Rich Rummel, Program Coordinator, resigned his position as of

February 1, 1991, to seek new challenges in the community. A gala farewell event was planned by trustees Pat Carson and Madeleine Gray. Many members and friends turned out for the good food and the "Rich Roast" prepared by Virginia Christensen and Janet McFarland. The Association expressed its gratitude to Rich for his contribution and wished him well in his new endeavors.

In April of 1991, the Association excitedly unveiled the framed and restored Clarissa Wright portrait attributed to the 19th century portrait painter, Horace Bundy. Clarissa had been at the Williams-town Conservation Laboratory since 1989, where restorer, Tony Moretti carefully cleaned and refurbished the canvas. Mr. Moretti reported that he fell in love with Clarissa's radiant complexion as it became revealed in the painstaking and tedious process of restoration. The unveiling of the portrait was celebrated with a lawn party, where invited guests (contributors to the Clarissa fund) were served fabulous treats prepared by Northern Catering's Gary Blackwell.

One of Lorene Thoms' first tasks as Administrative Assistant of the Association was to research and prepare the 1991 tour selection. The resulting tour program provided opportunities: to visit Ottawa during the Spring Tulip Festival (unfortunately sans tulips at the time of the tour); to explore the nearby Thousand Islands, with a special guided tour of the Amsterdam's Casablanca House on Cherry Island; to travel to historic Fort Henry in Kingston; and to spend a day discovering the sights and sounds of Colonial America at the outdoor museum in Shelburne, Vermont. All participants in the tour programs reported good times and pleasant memories, in spite of occasional mishaps and unpredictably inclement weather.

Perhaps one of the most successful events of the year was the First Annual Antique Show and Sale, held at the Canton Pavilion. The Association's new venture attracted approximately twenty vendors who displayed and sold their wares alongside Association-sponsored booths that presented the Association's publications and the items solicited for the Silent Auction. The antique show and sale raised a much-needed \$3000.00 that benefitted the Association, which had experienced state and federal funding cuts during the course of the year. Good-humored, patient antique dealers, wrapped in blankets and sipping hot coffee, weathered a cold autumn day in the unheated pavilion and served visitors looking for treasures to take home.

The Fall Garden Club House Tour

**St. Lawrence County Historical Association, Inc.
Balance Sheet
Cash Basis
December 31, 1991**

	Operating		Plant Fund	Endowment Fund	1991 Company Totals
	Unrestricted	Restricted			
ASSETS					
Cash and Cash Equivalents.....	\$ 2,134	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$214,424	\$216,558
Investments (Notes A and B).....	-0-	-0-	-0-	108,996	108,996
Deposits.....	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Silas Wright House and Museum-Note A..	-0-	-0-	291,827	-0-	291,827
Contents and Office Equipment-Note A..	-0-	-0-	36,589	-0-	36,589
Accumulated Depreciation.....	-0-	-0-	(16,440)	-0-	(16,440)
Total Assets.....	\$ 2,134	\$ -0-	\$311,976	\$323,420	\$637,530
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE					
Payroll Tax Withholdings.....	\$ 176	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ 176
Total Liabilities.....	\$ 176	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ 176
Fund Balance (Exhibit II).....	\$ 1,958	\$ -0-	\$311,976	\$323,420	\$637,354
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$ 2,134	\$ -0-	\$311,976	\$323,420	\$637,530

**St. Lawrence County Historical Association, Inc.
Statement Of Revenue, Expenses And Fund Balance
Cash Basis
For The Year Ended December 31, 1991**

	Operating		Plant Fund	Endowment Fund	1991 Company Totals
	Unrestricted	Restricted			
Revenues					
St. Lawrence County.....	\$ 11,000	\$12,000	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ 23,000
Gifts.....	15,521	3,000	-0-	-0-	18,521
Membership Dues.....	17,441	-0-	-0-	-0-	17,441
Investment Income.....	669	-0-	-0-	22,387	23,056
Fund Raising Events.....	17,639	-0-	-0-	-0-	17,639
Grant Income.....	16,588	-0-	-0-	-0-	16,588
Advertising.....	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Campaign Receipts.....	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Miscellaneous Income.....	1,983	-0-	-0-	-0-	1,983
Fixed Asset Acquisitions.....	-0-	-0-	3,989	-0-	3,989
Total Revenues.....	\$ 80,841	\$15,000	\$ 3,989	\$22,387	\$122,217
Expenses					
Salaries.....	\$ 61,153	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ -0-	\$ 61,153
Payroll Taxes and Fringe Benefits.....	5,751	-0-	-0-	-0-	5,751
Depreciation.....	-0-	-0-	8,422	-0-	8,422
Office Expense and Postage.....	9,029	-0-	-0-	-0-	9,029
Utilities.....	6,822	-0-	-0-	-0-	6,822
Insurance.....	4,448	-0-	-0-	-0-	4,448
Library Supplies.....	633	-0-	-0-	-0-	633
Repairs and Maintenance.....	6,137	-0-	-0-	-0-	6,137
Publication and Printing.....	16,636	-0-	-0-	-0-	16,636
Dues and Subscriptions.....	1,065	-0-	-0-	-0-	1,065
Exhibits and Programs.....	2,830	-0-	-0-	-0-	2,830
Conservation.....	1,005	-0-	-0-	-0-	1,005
Travel.....	612	-0-	-0-	-0-	612
Fund Raising Events.....	9,904	-0-	-0-	-0-	9,904
Miscellaneous Expense.....	235	-0-	-0-	-0-	235
Professional Fees.....	3,270	-0-	-0-	-0-	3,270
Workshops & Conferences.....	1,924	-0-	-0-	-0-	1,924
Investment Fee.....	-0-	-0-	-0-	250	250
Total Expense.....	\$131,454	\$ -0-	\$8,422	\$ 250	\$140,126
Excess of Revenues over Expenses before Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation) in Marketable Securities.....	\$(50,613)	\$15,000	\$(4,433)	\$22,137	\$(17,909)
Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation) in Marketable Securities (Notes A & B).....	-0-	-0-	-0-	13,629	13,629
Excess (Deficit) of Revenue over Expense	\$(50,613)	\$15,000	\$(4,433)	\$35,766	\$(4,280)

included a stop at the Silas Wright House and Museum. Over two hundred visitors viewed the galleries.

During the Yule season, the Silas Wright House was festively decorated in the colors of the holiday—the red, green, white, and gold of Christmas—as area quilters displayed their seasonal quilts throughout the house. The highlight of the show was a beautiful, showcase-filling, family quilt loaned by Mary Jo Whalen. The display of quilts was a non-juried exhibition organized through the efforts of local quilter, Fran Van Horne.

The staff looked forward to and enjoyed the annual Christmas Open House. The arrival of the holiday season meant that the new staff had survived that difficult first year when everything is

new—new jobs, new homes, new friends. Moreover, it also was an opportunity for the staff and director to socialize with Association members, once new, now familiar faces, thanking those members for their continued support and generosity in a difficult year filled with budget cuts and financial uncertainties, staffing and administrative changes, and minor and major emergencies.

The Association celebrated its final event of the year when it honored Garden Club members, volunteers, and exhibit contributors at a special tea, where holiday treats were served by trustees and staff.

The Board of Trustees have provided patient guidance and enthusiastic support throughout this year's many and varied tasks. The Director and Staff are appre-

ciative of the long hours that many individual board members contributed in 1991 and we thank you.

The Association will miss the hard work and support of Ruth McKean, who completes her term on the Board and served as President so ably this year. However, the St. Lawrence County Historical Association does not succeed only by the efforts of the members of its Board or by the hard work of a dedicated staff. The Association is a community, and its success is dependent on the efforts and goodwill of all its members, volunteers, patrons, donors, contributors, interns, visitors, and participants. It was a year well done.

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—NOTICE—

Annual Membership Meeting
Saturday, October 24
8th Floor, Raymond Hall, Potsdam College

Featured Speaker:
 Dr. William Merwin
 President of Potsdam College
 Topic: 175th Anniversary of Potsdam College
 Reservations Required

Please check the next Association newsletter, or
 call the SLCHA office at 386-8133, for more details and information.

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If you have enjoyed reading **The Quarterly** and are not currently a member of the Historical Association, please consider joining now.

To become a member, simply send a check with your name and address to: St. Lawrence County Historical Association, P.O. Box 8, Canton, NY 13617.

1992 Membership Rates

Patron Member	\$100 and up
Sustaining Member	\$75
Contributing Member	\$50
Regular Member	\$20
Senior Citizen (65 and older)	
and Student (Under 22) Members	\$15

PUBLICATION DATES

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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