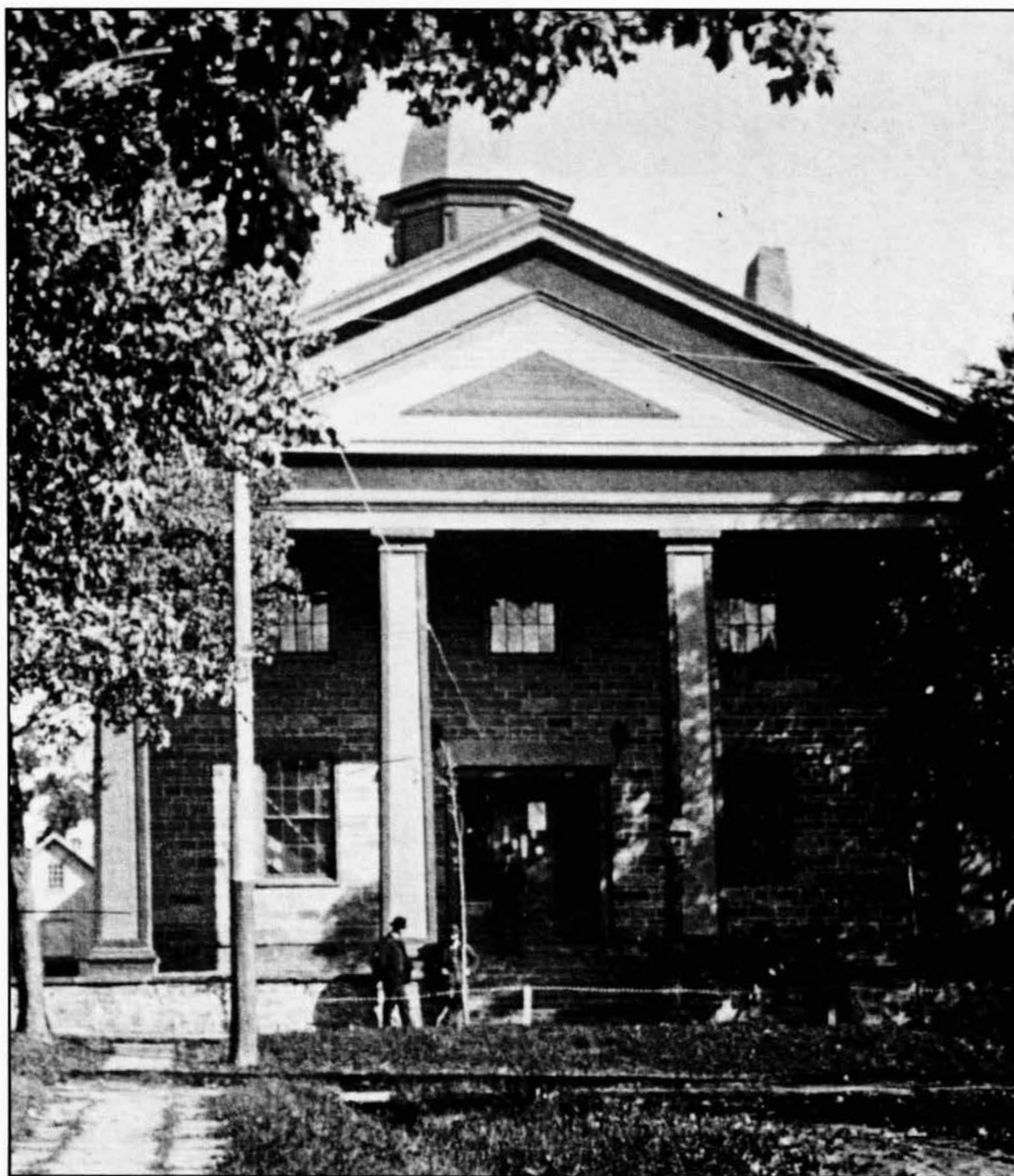


The St. Lawrence County Historical Association
QUARTERLY

Volume XL - Number 4 - Fall, 1995



**Published continuously
since 1956**

The SLCHA Quarterly is endowed in memory of Albert Priest Newell and Ella Waterman Newell. Publication of *The SLCHA Quarterly* is also made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Managing Editor:
J. Rebecca Thompson

Production Editor:
Stewart J. Wilson

Editorial Board:
Melissa A. Barker
Don Butters
Dennis E. Eickhoff
George Gibson
Stanley M. Holberg
Jan Shideler

*Copyright © 1996 by the
St. Lawrence County Historical
Association. All rights reserved.*

Except for brief excerpts, no part of this publication may be copied or reproduced without the express written permission of the author and the Historical Association. The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is not responsible for the statements, interpretations, and opinions of contributors to *The SLCHA Quarterly*.

The SLCHA Quarterly is published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall each year by the St. Lawrence County Historical Association for its members and friends.

Additional copies may be obtained from the St. Lawrence County Historical Association, P.O. Box 8, Canton, NY 13617 at \$4.00 each (\$2.00 for members), plus \$1.00 for postage.

Contributions:

The SLCHA Quarterly welcomes contributions. To submit a manuscript, or for further information, please contact the editor through the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. Please address communications to: Managing Editor, *The SLCHA Quarterly*, P.O. Box 8, Canton, NY 13617.

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association
QUARTERLY

Volume XL - Number 4 - Fall 1995

ISSN: 0558-1931

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| The Moncrief Case <i>Stanley M. Holberg</i> | 1 |
| From the Bookshelf <i>Chris Angus</i> | 16 |
| Quarterly Update: The Ogdensburg Trolley <i>Thomas E. Price</i> | 19 |

Issue Editor:

J. Rebecca Thompson

Production Assistance:

Thomas E. Price
Timothy A. Wright

Cover Illustration:

Photograph of the St. Lawrence County courthouse, in Canton, c. 1890. This courthouse, scene of the Moncreif trial, burned on February 21, 1893, and was replaced by the building still standing today.

(From the SLCHA collections, 1000-2984)

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association at the Silas Wright Museum

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is a private, not-for-profit, membership organization based at the Silas Wright Museum in Canton, New York. Founded in 1947, the Association is governed by a constitution, by-laws, and Board of Trustees. The Historical Association's membership meets annually to elect its officers and trustees.

Officers:

President: Roselie Bambrey, Canton
Vice-President: J. Rebecca Thompson, Hannawa Falls
Treasurer: David Swanson, Canton
Secretary: Cay Zabriskie, Ogdensburg

Staff:

Shirley Tramontana, *Director*
Thomas E. Price
John Pvirre
Stewart J. Wilson
Timothy A. Wright

Trustees:

Chris Angus, Canton
Patricia Carson, Canton
Richard Foster, Gouverneur
Ruth Garner, Potsdam
E. Jane Layo, Waddington
Carl Stickney, Norwood
Anne Townsend, Colton
Peter Van de Water, Canton
Robert Wells, Canton

Our Mission

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is an educational resource center and museum that researches, collects, preserves, and interprets St. Lawrence County history through collections development, publication, exhibition, 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 collaboration. SLCHA values quality, integrity, and accessibility and operates within established museum standards befitting its American Association of Museums (AAM) accredited status.

SLCHA Membership

Membership in the St. Lawrence County Historical Association is open to all interested parties. Annual membership dues are: Individual, \$25; Senior/Student, \$20; Family, \$35; Contributor, \$50; Supporter, \$100; Patron, \$250; Businesses, \$50 to \$1,000. Members receive the *SLCHA Quarterly*, the Historical Association's bi-monthly newsletter, and various discounts on publications, programs and events.



St. Lawrence County Historical Association
at the Silas Wright Museum
P. O. Box 8, 3 East Main Street
Canton, New York 13617
(315) 386-8133

The Moncrief Case

by Stanley M. Holberg

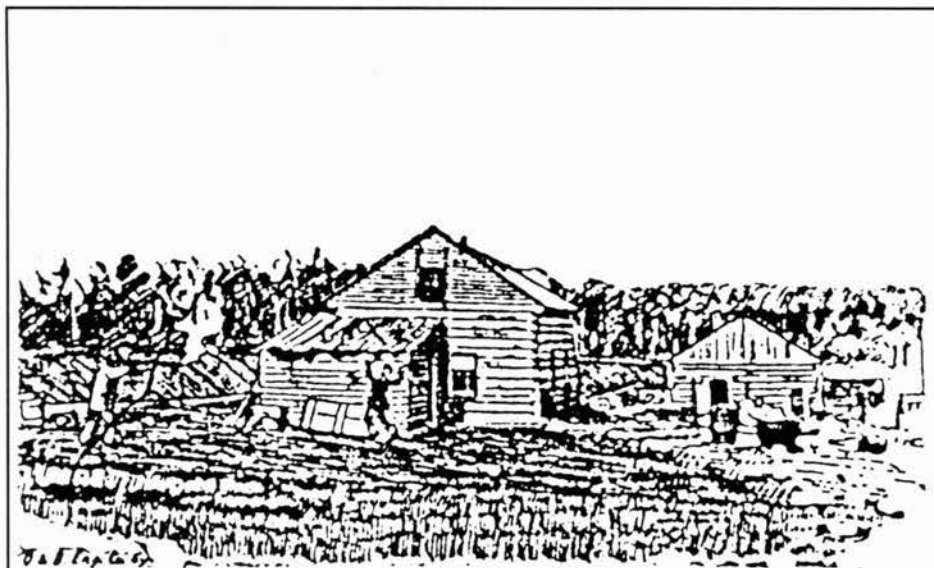
In the nineteenth century, St. Lawrence County had its share of sensational murder trials, and after 1828, when the county seat was moved from Ogdensburg, Canton became the scene of these events. Newspaper accounts give the reader the impression that the trials provided one of the chief and most exciting sources of public entertainment for the village and its outlying areas. People thronged to the proceedings themselves and were furnished with reports of them, of varying degrees of completeness and accuracy, by the area press.

One of the most interesting of these events was the case of William Moncrief, who was brought to trial in March, 1891, for the murder, in the preceding May, of the eldest son of his neighbor, a farmer of French Canadian birth, Joseph Forney. Moncrief had gone to the yard of the Forney home armed with a shotgun, with the self-avowed purpose of killing twenty-one year-old Leonard Forney if the latter did not pay him the twenty dollars that he had borrowed about a year earlier. Leonard did not go out of the house, but his older brother Henry

did, to warn Moncrief away. Moncrief became enraged and shot Henry through the heart, killing him instantly. Making no attempt to see if there was something he could do to aid Forney, he walked away.

The scene of the shooting, about five miles southeast of Oswegatchie and two miles from Star Lake, was well described by the correspondent from the *Watertown Times*.

It was the last of all the places that had been seen on the entire trip [taken by county officials from Canton] which one would

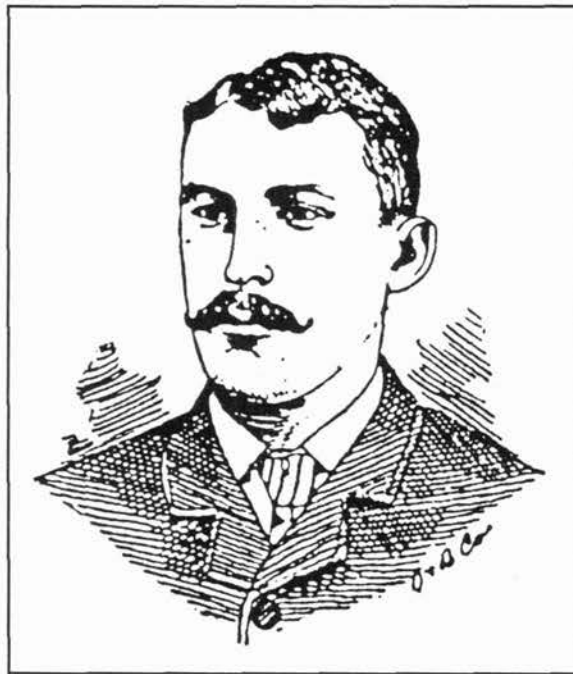


Drawing of the Forney house, where Henry Forney was shot by William Moncrief in 1891. This drawing originally appeared in Potsdam's Courier and Freeman, March 18, 1991.

have guessed at as the scene of such a terrible crime. Nature has smiled on it and the industry and thrift of the Moncriefs and Forneys have helped to make it brighter and fairer than any of its immediate surroundings which are mostly thick woods, the wagon road [leading south from the village of Fine] ending at Moncrief's house. The horses stepped along on the soft green turf as they reached the Forney place, the road having been used so little that the grass grows unobstructed all over the clearing, which is about three hundred acres in area. It is on a large knoll and commands a fine view of the mountains. The ground, though not fertile, is in good condition and yields a fair living to the three families who occupy the farms — the Forneys, the Moncriefs, and the McPherons [one of Moncrief's daughters and her husband].

The coroner's inquest was held on the day following the killing. The scene of the inquiry was the Forney home. The *Times* correspondent so acutely captured its human flavor in his report that it deserves preservation here as a vignette of rural life of those times. Under the heading, **WORKING UNDER DIFFICULTIES**, he wrote:

The holding of a coroner's inquest in a log house near the end of a road leading to an almost trackless portion of the forest, is not apt to be a task into which many elements of ease and comfort enter. At first it looked doubtful whether it would be possible to have the minutes of the court taken in ink as is required by law. But Justice Kilbourne [the Justice of the



Courier and Freeman, March 18, 1891

Henry Forney

Peace of Fine] brought forth a small phial of ink and a pen. The *Times* representative was pressed into the service as clerk and the taking of evidence was begun.

The scene was a strange one. In a little square room which was the main "living" room of the home, kitchen, dining and sitting room combined in one, sat the officials of the county, the jurors, witnesses and newspaper men, ranged around the sides on chairs and boxes. At the table sat the coroner, the district attorney and the clerk. The foreman of the jury occupied a seat on a pair of rude stairs which led up through the room to the floor above. In the adjoining bedrooms some of the women of the family and some friends among whom was Henry's sweetheart, sat to listen to the proceedings; up-stairs, through the trap door, could be heard the voice of the mother of the murdered man occasionally speaking to some member of the family in the room

below. [Later, the same article reveals that Henry's sweetheart was engaged to be married to him in the near future and that she had seen him only the night before the killing.]

All the while, "in a little woodshed attached to the front of the house, within ten feet of where he was shot down, Henry Forney's body was lying on a rude couch, dressed as it was when he breathed his last."

The testimony of the witnesses called by the coroner provided essentially the same narrative as that outlined above. The jury rendered the verdict that Henry Forney had come to his death by buckshot wounds inflicted by Moncrief with the intent of causing death.

That evening at his arraignment at Fine, Moncrief was charged with murder in the first degree. His

attorney, Earl Bancroft of Edwards, entered the plea of not guilty. The grand jury's consideration of his case, involving almost forty witnesses, was held October 10, 1890. The proceeding culminated in Moncrief's being indicted for willful murder.

After the grand jury's action, Moncrief granted a revealing interview to Canton's *St. Lawrence Plaindealer*. The court's decision had apparently come as a shock to him, for "he [had] continually been heard to say that no grand jury would find anything against him." Now he was visibly shaken. However, this sudden realization that he would be soon on trial for his life did not so preoccupy him that he failed to display the kindly, generous spirit that was in evidence whenever he was interviewed by the press. He spoke of his faith in his chief defense attorney's efforts on his behalf and of his appreciation of the kind treatment he had received from Sheriff E. P. Backus at the county jail.

Moncrief went on to tell the *Plaindealer* reporter that "in the old country [Ireland, where he was born] he had been taught a little piece that he had always tried to live up to and that in his opinion there were mighty few lawyers who had ever heard of it or had obeyed the sentiments expressed therein." He recited this childhood teaching for his interviewer:

My duty towards my neighbor is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me; to love, honor and

succor my father and mother; to honor and obey the President and all those who are put in authority under him; to submit myself lowly and reverently; to hurt nobody by word or deed; to keep my hands from picking and stealing and my tongue from evil speaking, lying, or slandering; to keep my body in soberness and chastity; not to covet nor desire other men's goods, but to learn to get my living in that state of life in which God shall place me.

Of course it is difficult to identify the appreciative, gentle man who still remembered the moral teachings of his childhood with the one who had intended to shoot a man over a twenty-dollar debt and did shoot another for no discernible cause.

State Supreme Court Justice John R. Putnam presided at Moncrief's trial for murder in the first degree, which commenced March 18, 1891. Chief counsel for the defendant was Wilbur F. Porter, who was assisted by Bancroft. A much-admired man and a successful attorney, Porter was serving his fifth and last term as mayor of Watertown at the time of the trial. The prosecution was in the hands of the St. Lawrence County District Attorney, Charles A. Kellogg, assisted by N. M. Claflin.

The particular kind of judicial assembly in which these proceedings took place was a court of oyer and terminer. *Oyer and terminer* is a legal term meaning "to hear and determine" that had its origins in Anglo-French law and designates "a high court of

criminal jurisdiction." It was first used in English in the early fifteenth century and came to be employed in various states in this country. In New York State prior to 1896, when they were abolished, courts of oyer and terminer, held periodically in each county, had essentially the same authority as county courts, except that, unlike the latter, they had jurisdiction in capital cases. Although the courts of oyer and terminer were legally and jurisdictionally separate from the Supreme Court, they were presided over by justices of that court.

The centuries-old lineage of the term *oyer and terminer* reminds us of the great tradition of English law that forms a cornerstone of the legal systems of our own federal and state governments. In the present context, it lends a sense of continuity and stability that counterpoints the otherwise strange, not to say bizarre, qualities of the Moncrief case. In his opening remarks in the trial, the District Attorney said, according to the *Times*, that "the case was one of the most peculiar he had ever known or read about," and the correspondent from that paper wrote at the end of the trial, "In many respects the case was one of the most remarkable ever tried in New York state." Almost everything about the case was unusual: the crime itself, the courtroom proceedings, and their aftermath. But most exceptional was the defendant himself, an enigmatic person to say the least. The story bears retelling.



Courier and Freeman, March 18, 1891

William Moncrief

Moncrief was, according to his own statement, 67 years old at the time of his trial. He was a widely liked "Uncle Billy," as many called him: well-behaved, gentle and soft-spoken, described by Potsdam's *Courier and Freeman* as "a short, grizzly man about five feet four inches tall, not at all a bad looking man and the very reverse in general appearance of the 'bloody villain.'" Pictures of him in the newspapers suggest something of the appearance of a teddy bear.

The *Times*, reported that he was "a well-to-do farmer." Moncrief himself is quoted in the *St. Lawrence Plaindealer* as saying, "I own my own farm and have some money, enough to see me through this, I guess" (an assertion that was something of an understatement, considering how much money it probably would have taken to engage Wilbur Porter). In an interview granted to the *Courier and Freeman*, he provided some significant information about his personal history:

... Moncrief said he was a native of Ireland, and came to America when about twenty years of age, settling in Canada. After about twenty years he crossed the St. Lawrence river into this country and found his way to the Star Lake region in the "South Woods." There he settled upon one hundred acres of the best land in the section, which he cleared of timber and made into the productive farm that he has occupied ever since. He spoke with pride of his home, saying he had the best hundred acres in Fine, with a fine fish pond, well stocked with trout, within a few rods of his residence.

From reading the Canton, Potsdam, and Watertown papers, one is inclined to conclude that Moncrief was a simple rustic whose horizons were bounded by the backwoods area where he lived. But the *Ogdensburg Journal* reported that, "Moncrief is by no means a stranger in this vicinity. He was a former resident of Lisbon and is well known there and in this city."

He was not what is ordinarily called "a drinker," but he would often, in a bar at Oswegatchie or Fine, stand treat to "the boys" for a drink or a cigar. The paper related a touching instance of his generosity that was remembered by Oswegatchie people:

There was a picnic at Star Lake, and nearly all the people residing in that locality, and many for a considerable distance were present, among them a dozen or so who had brought no lunch, and who were not in such financial shape as to be able to buy a hotel meal. Moncrief invited

them into the dining-room and had them served with a regular dinner, paying the bill himself.

The *Times's* account of this admirable side of his behavior concludes, "He was always ready to accommodate friends with a small loan, and he paid his debts the very minute they became due. . . ."

But there was another side to the personality of this complex man. "He evidently is not what his face says he is," declared the *Times*. "The people say he has a bad temper and has always been considered a dangerous man when roused." The paper relates two stories about Moncrief's difficulties with other men regarding promissory notes. In each of them, Moncrief believed that he had been improperly dealt with, and in both he threatened to kill his adversary. One of the stories, corroborated by Moncrief's principal antagonist in the case, an attorney of Fine named John Conboy, has it that Moncrief threw out of a window a constable who was serving a summons on him.

Nothing of an overt nature was reported as having passed between Moncrief and the Forneys. However, the *Plaindealer* remarked that "there has been bad blood between him and the Forneys for some time," explaining, some time later, "For years [Moncrief] has been working up a trade in keeping horses for those visiting the woods, and was making a little money when the Forneys came and got a deal of his custom away from him." (The Forneys

had been neighbors of Moncrief for seven years.)

Finally, two months short of a year after Henry Forney's death, the trial began. Even for the empaneling of the jury during the afternoon and evening of the day before, the courtroom had been filled. Now that the trial was about to begin in earnest, it "was literally packed; every inch of standing room being occupied by the eager throng, and quite a number of ladies having seats inside the rail surrounding the space appropriated to the bar and officers of the court," observed Canton's *Commercial Advertiser*, the *Plaindealer* adding that "even then the insufficient ventilation of the place was oppressively manifest."

In their opening remarks to the jury, the prosecution reviewed the story of what had happened, described the scene where it took place, and then made some new disclosures: that two weeks previous to the killing, Moncrief inquired of Justice of the Peace Kilbourn, what would happen to him if he were to kill Leonard for not paying what he owed (the young man had, in fact, been doing lumbering work for about a year in Lewis County); that Moncrief had arranged with a friend to be notified as soon as Leonard came home; and that he had made frequent threats in the neighborhood to shoot Leonard.

As the *Times* put it, the people's argument was:

Moncrief went there with murder in his heart, not against Henry his victim, but against Leonard; but that when Henry crossed him he had abundance of time, according to the limit fixed by the law, to form a deliberate purpose to kill Henry.

Although, as the *Plaindealer* pointed out, there had been reports that "Leonard Forney was and is a dissipated youth," it is curious but perhaps not anomalous that Moncrief should have lent money to the boy. He was, after all, a generous man, and he may have acted simply out of fondness for young Leonard. But what is anomalous is the fact that a man of Moncrief's age should be *outraged* by the twenty-one year-old's failure to make good on his debt, for it would seem that a man at that time of his life, with sons of his own, would have found it possible to view Leonard's trespass in a more forbearing, understanding manner. Particularly is this true in the light of testimony to which Leonard had sworn at the coroner's inquest and which was reported by the *Times*:

He borrowed the money from Moncrief over a year ago, not saying when he would pay it, but with the understanding that it would be soon. In June Moncrief sued and obtained a judgment against him. Leonard says this made him mad and he made up his mind he would make the old man wait awhile longer for his money, and he did. . . . A somewhat curious feature of Leonard's story is that Moncrief has never asked him for the money or written to him about it,

and that he has talked with Moncrief only once after he borrowed it. That was three days after he borrowed it, and then nothing was said about the loan. The two had no other trouble, and Leonard swore that he knew of nothing else which might have caused Moncrief's enmity toward him.

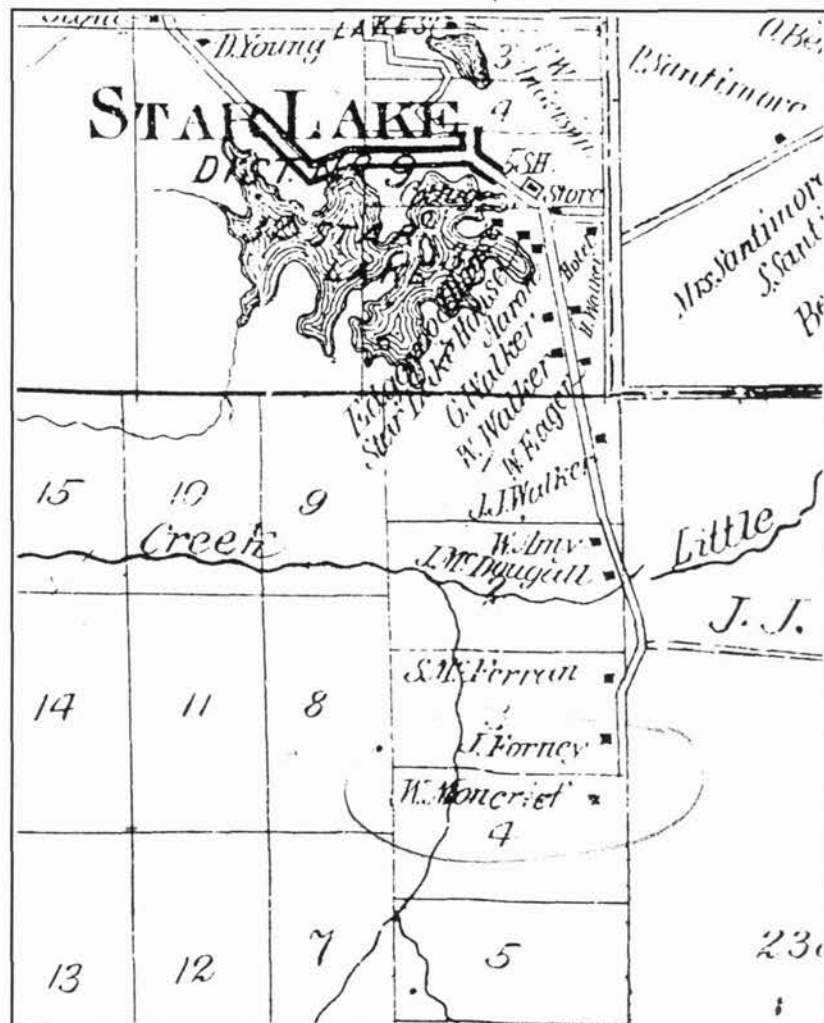
(It would be interesting to know what Leonard meant when he testified, in the middle of May, that he borrowed the money "over a year ago." One senses that if it had been a matter of several months, he would have said something like "last winter," but as it is, the statement makes it seem that the debt was incurred in spring and that Moncrief did not wait for a very long time before obtaining the judgment.) At any rate, Moncrief's comment to a representative of the *Plaindealer* was terse and made no attempt to gainsay the young man's testimony: "Since I let [Leonard] have [the twenty dollars] he has kept out of my sight. I had not seen him for a long time before the day of the accident."

The human — as distinguished from the legal — center of the Moncrief case lay in this impasse: Moncrief's refusal to communicate with Leonard before obtaining the warrant against him, followed by his continuing sense of high indignation, and Leonard's decision to make Moncrief wait for his money. How could either of them foresee the grim resolution of this deadlock?

The legal proceeding was concerned with quite other matters.

The story developed by witnesses for the prosecution (the first of whom was Joseph Forney, the father) begins with William Moncrief's appearing shortly after six in the morning of May 14, the day after Leonard's return, in the Forney front yard while the family were at breakfast. He was carrying a double-barreled shotgun and he made gestures signifying that he wanted somebody to come out of the house.

Joseph Forney went out to learn what he wanted. Moncrief angrily demanded that Leonard be sent out, and when Forney tried to forestall him, saying, "You'd better go away and put up your gun. We don't want any shooting or any trouble here this morning," Moncrief raised his gun to his hip and replied, "I want Leonard, and I will shoot him and you too." Hearing the gun being cocked, Joseph retreated into the house.



Detail of the 1896 Blankman map of St. Lawrence County, showing the locations of the Forney and Moncrief family residences.

The oldest son of the family, Henry, a month short of his twenty-seventh birthday, was at the breakfast table when he heard what had just passed between his father and Moncrief. Saying, in effect, "I'll go out and send the old man away," he started to go out of the house. His mother, who had been busy at the stove, made a typically maternal gesture. According to the *Plaindealer's* account of her testimony, she went to him, put her hand on his arm, and asked him not to go. Henry, with an equally typical filial gesture, said something on the order of "Pshaw! The old fool won't hurt me," and went out.

When Moncrief again demanded that Leonard be "fetched out," according to Joseph Forney's testimony, Henry said, "You had better go home and put

up your gun, or the first you know you will get yourself into trouble." Moncrief raised the gun to his breast, pointing it at Henry, who dodged to one side. Seeing that Moncrief followed his movement steadily with the gun, Henry stooped to the ground and dodged to the other side. But by this time Moncrief had raised the gun's stock to his cheek, still pointing the weapon at Henry. He discharged the piece and shot Henry Forney at a distance of about fifteen feet. The injury was devastating. Making a wound six inches in diameter, seventeen pellets of shot entered the breast. Ten of them entered the heart, five of them passing through it. Death was instantaneous.

Without stooping down to see if there was something that he could do to attend his victim,

Moncrief walked a few yards down the road toward the nearby home of the McPherons. He turned once to look back at the Forney family now grouped around the dead man; then, turning his back on the scene, he continued on his way.

Moncrief returned to his home through the woods (to avoid being shot by the Forneys, he later said) and laid out an assortment of rifles and shotguns, apparently intending to "shoot it out" with whatever officers of the law came to arrest him. Moncrief denied to the *Plaindealer* that this was his intention, but his claim is belied by the fact that the first attempt to take him, by a constable from Star Lake and a deputy, was turned back by the muzzle of a Winchester rifle poking out of a window. Later that afternoon, the Star Lake



Courier and Freeman, March 18, 1891

William Moncrief's home.

constable, now with support from Fine deputies, was able to gain entrance into the Moncrief home through the rear and to seize Moncrief. He was arrested and conducted to the village of Fine to await the coroner's inquest and his arraignment. Having been charged with murder, on the following day he was taken to the county jail in Canton to await the grand jury's hearing of his case.

At some time after he was arrested, *en route* either to Fine or to Canton (the newspaper reports are not clear on this point) Moncrief maintained that Forney had threatened him with what looked like a club or a piece of a whiffletree and that, in waving his gun about to ward off the blows, he accidentally touched the trigger. (*Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *whiffletree* as "a wooden bar swung at the center from a hitch on a plow, wagon, etc. and hooked at either end to the traces of a horse's harness." *Whippletree* and *singletree* are other words for the same object.) During the trial, the prosecution pointed out that Moncrief's not making this claim until some time after his arrest suggested that the story was a fabrication. But why, in these circumstances — Moncrief's being armed with a double-barreled shotgun with which he had just threatened to shoot both Leonard and the Forney father — Henry should have come out in the yard to deal with him *armed with a club* was neither questioned nor explained.

In the course of the trial, much of the testimony that the prosecution was able to elicit from witnesses seemed to support the charge against Moncrief. Most damaging was that of Eugene Davenport, a deputy special officer of Fine, who had been present at the arrest of Moncrief, had handcuffed him, and had joined Star Lake Constable D. Scott in conducting him to Fine and then to Canton. He recalled saying to Moncrief that the killing was a "bad job," to which Moncrief replied, "Yes, I went to shoot Leonard but Henry came out and aggravated me and I shot him." Davenport stated that Moncrief made this same comment three times of his own accord on the way to Canton. He also reported that on the way to Fine the group came upon Moncrief's son Willie and that the following words between father and son were exchanged:

Willie: Father, do you know what salvation is?

Moncrief: Yes, but he has got it.

Willie: But you did wrong, Father.

Moncrief: No, I did just right.

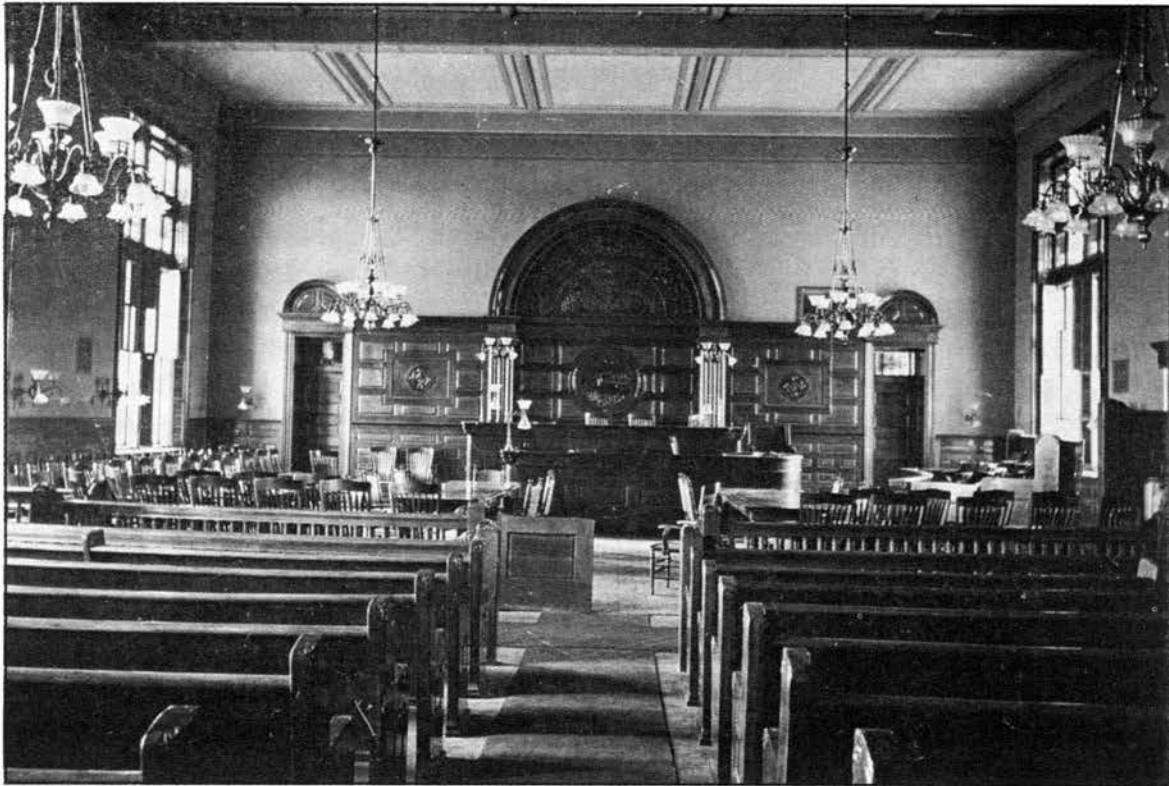
Davenport further testified that on the way to Canton Moncrief declared that "Leonard owed him \$20, and if he should meet him in the road then he would shoot him like a dog; that it was no worse for him to shoot Henry than it was for Leonard to beat him out of \$20." He said that Moncrief did not express any sorrow for the shoot-

ing at any time during the trip. In all, his testimony made Moncrief seem a remorseless killer. At this point, the court rose for the day.

On the morning of the second day, the court was as crowded as before. Most of the morning was taken up with the cross-examination of witnesses for the people by the defense, finding little that would mitigate the prosecution's steady accretion of damaging evidence. The only testimony that could have provided material support to the defense would have concerned Forney's alleged attack on Moncrief. In this connection, the key witness to be cross-examined was Constable Scott, but he became confused and self-contradictory on the stand. The judge found it necessary to order some of his testimony stricken from the record, and Scott ended up largely discredited as a witness.

The prosecution then rested their case. It must have seemed to most of the people in the courtroom that the outlook for William Moncrief was bleak indeed. As the *Courier and Freeman* reported:

Mr. Kellogg had formed a network of evidence around the accused through which there was no possible escape. No link in the chain which fastened the crime to the prisoner was missing. The facts that he had gone to Forney's house for the purpose of committing a crime, that he was warned against firing his gun, that he made no attempt to assist Henry when he fell, that he did not immediately claim that the shooting was accidental, and



From the SLCHA collections, 1909-4-96

Photograph of the court room in the old St. Lawrence County courthouse, where the Moncrief trial took place.

that he at first resisted arrest, all went to show that defendant willfully and deliberately murdered Henry Forney. As the crowd left the court room, nearly all expressed the opinion that only the prisoner's age, if anything at all, could now save him from the death chair.

Porter began by requesting the judge to instruct the jury that the evidence was insufficient to convict William Moncrief of murder in the first degree. The motion, which seems to have been a *pro forma* gesture, was refused. Porter then opened the case for the defendant in an impassioned, spirited manner, making much of Moncrief's having been a gentle, peaceable, well-liked member of

the community, against whose character not one word had been said during the twenty-seven years of his residence in the area. He was approaching the time of his life, Porter went on, when he "was now standing on the threshold ready to meet his maker, and to join hands with that wife who had gone on before."

As far as substance was concerned, Porter's remarks focused on the club, declaring that the defense intended to show that Moncrief had said to Charles Evans, one of the numerous deputies who had been at the scene at the time of the arrest, the same thing that Deputy Scott had already tried to say in his testi-

mony: that according to Moncrief, Forney threatened him with a club (the whiffletree) and in his struggle to defend himself, he accidentally discharged his gun. The defense further claimed that they would show that Mrs. McPheron had been able to view the scene in Forney's yard from her pantry window, that she had seen a person come out of the house and approach her father closely with a club, that she saw Moncrief move his gun, after which there was a puff of smoke, and that her father arrived at her home soon afterward. *The Plaindealer* characterized Porter's opening as "one of the most forcible speeches ever recorded in the court house at

Canton.” The *Times* agreed mildly, saying that it “was one of Mr. Porter’s strongest, the circumstances being considered,” but adding, “It was chiefly an eloquent presentation of the sentimental elements surrounding the case.” After Porter finished his address to the jury, the court rose for adjournment until early afternoon.

The *Times* correspondent, writing about the trial some seven years later, offered an extremely interesting analysis of Porter’s strategy. He pointed out that the attorney began his opening in the standard manner, reviewing evidence that could be interpreted as pointing to the defendant’s innocence. The correspondent makes it clear that these remarks were, of necessity, weak. Then, according to this analysis, Porter launched into a plea for the old man’s life as he would normally have done in his closing, after calling witnesses for the defense, not in his opening. The purpose in doing this was to detect whether there was “a spark of sympathy” for Moncrief in any of the jurors. The newspaperman wrote:

The astute attorney made one of the most eloquent pleas of his life, bringing into play all his powers of persuasion, touching every chord which might respond with the music of hope, and eagerly scanning the face — looking into the very soul — of first one jurymen and then another, searching for the ray of promise which he could not find.

The court then recessed for lunch.

The importance of Porter’s unusual ordering of his presentation soon became clear. The courtroom was again crowded to capacity for the afternoon session, and the excitement in the air must almost have been palpable. The *Plaindealer* reported:

Never before has a larger crowd been seen in the court house. . . . A hushed air of expectancy pervaded the air, and the audience rose en masse to get a sight of Moncrief as he walked before the tribunal to his seat. All wanted to hear him testify on his own behalf. There was a short consultation among the lawyers and Judge Putnam. When they resumed their seats it was evident that something was up.

“While suppressed excitement held that huge throng spellbound in intense silence,” the defense addressed the court:

If your honor please, after consulting fully with members of Mr. Moncrief’s family, and a full consultation with the defendant, and a full and complete discussion with my associate with reference to the case, and with the District Attorney’s very generous and kind-hearted offer to accept of the defendant a plea of guilty of manslaughter as an end of this trial, and after an intimation that that plea might be accepted, it has placed a responsibility upon counsel which at least is embarrassing; but in a cool moment of deliberation, believing it to be for the best, this defendant has authorized me to state to your honor that he will make that plea.

Clearly, Porter had come to the decision that a conviction of mur-

der was imminent and that this new plea would be the only means of averting that disaster. Implicit in that decision was the attorney’s understanding that although he had told the jury that he intended to call his client to the stand to testify for himself, he knew that this would be a most dubious undertaking, so equivocal did the testimony against Moncrief make his case seem, so precarious, considering that if Moncrief were to take the stand, the District Attorney would have the right to cross-examine him. Time was of the essence, for if he was to save the old man from being found guilty of murder, he had to do so then, not later.

Moncrief had strong objections to this course, objections of rather long standing, it seems, for, according to the *Plaindealer*, it was reported that at the grand jury session that had found an indictment against Moncrief six months earlier, the defense attorney advised his client to plead guilty of manslaughter in the first degree then, but to no avail. Moncrief still refused, still expecting to be found innocent. But now, apparently, the attorney was able to convince his client that continued refusal would very probably result in the worst consequences for him.

In our time, the legal maneuver (of which the remarks of the defense attorney quoted above are the first stage) is called “plea bargaining,” a proffered arrangement whereby a defendant pleads guilty to a lesser charge in order to avoid

being found guilty of a more serious one. Today the negotiation normally takes place before the trial begins. Its appeal to the defense is obvious; to the court it offers the possibility of reducing the number of cases on an already crowded docket; one of its benefits to the prosecutor is that it may provide an opportunity to avoid his being placed in the paradoxical position of winning an unpopular verdict.

Plea bargaining was probably not uncommon in the nineteenth century, but the Moncrief trial may have been the first, and very possibly the only, occasion on which courtroom spectators in St. Lawrence County could witness the maneuver taking place before their eyes. As the remarks of the defense make clear, there had already been some behind-the-scenes negotiations. To some degree, these seem to have involved the judge. Nevertheless, that official seems to have thought it preferable not to go through the official transaction in his chambers, as he was empowered to do, but rather before the public, probably because public interest in the trial had been so high.

The District Attorney spoke immediately after Porter was through. He announced:

I would say that in this case I now stand a little different than I would at the opening of the case, because now the court is in full possession of all the facts which make up the people's case — has in possession every fact which could be proven upon this trial unless it would be upon rebuttal.

Therefore I feel that the court is a better judge than I would be myself, and I feel entirely willing to leave it with the court, and would say that if the court deems it fit to accept that plea, the District Attorney will be satisfied with it.

This proposal was not quite enough to satisfy Justice Putnam, who apparently wanted a more definite assertion.

The Court: Do you approve of it, Mr. Kellogg?

Mr. Kellogg: Yes, I approve of it.

The Court: Well, I will say that I deem that a wise and a very proper disposition of the case. There are circumstances in the case that would render it, in my judgment, improper to have a severe finding against this defendant. There are circumstances that render it proper that this plea should be accepted, and the acceptance of it has my full concurrence and I authorize it, and the plea may be entered.

Counsel for the defendant then entered a plea of guilty of manslaughter in the first degree. Justice Putnam, showing deep feeling for the defendant and prefacing his announcement in a gentle manner by saying, "...although I personally have no ill-will against you, it is my duty as an officer of the law to impose a sentence," sentenced Moncrief to confinement in the State Prison at Dannemora at hard labor for eighteen years, adding, "By good behavior you can shorten the period of imprisonment by several years." (Moncrief, inci-

dentally, thus narrowly escaped the distinction of being the first St. Lawrence County resident to be electrocuted in New York State, for this means of execution had only recently been established in the State, at the beginning of 1889.)

The reaction of the spectators in the court was tumultuous. The area papers had made much of his appealing qualities before the trial began, and evidences of the warm feeling with which he was regarded abounded as soon as the verdict was announced. The *Plaindealer* reported, for instance, that "long lines of friends pressed forward to shake hands probably for the last time with their old neighbor, and it was evident that although they might think him guilty of the crime, he still had their sympathy." Leonard Forney himself seems to have been swept up in this outpouring of sympathy, for according to the *Plaindealer*, he went to the jail after the trial and, "crying, paid the \$20 with interest to Moncrief, begging forgiveness for all that he had done in bringing about the deplorable state of affairs."

One who scrutinized the area newspapers for some indication of interest in the Forneys, the family that had just recently lost a son and brother, would search in vain. There is no word about them. It was as though Henry Forney had been a minor character in a drama whose central figure — perhaps hero — had been his killer.

It is as difficult here as elsewhere to account for the bias of

the *vox populi*. Undoubtedly a good deal was made of the fact that Leonard did not, after all, pay his debt (not made, one imagines, of the fact that Moncrief did not give the young man a chance to pay before having a judgment served against him). In addition, the substantial prejudice against French Canadians in the county would also have to be taken into account in any serious attempt to understand this complex matter. Then, too, there was the attitude of people in Moncrief's home area, who seem to have made up a considerable portion of the courtroom spectators. The *Ogdensburg Journal* observed:

At his home in the South Woods, although one of the leading men, if not the leading man in his locality, he has the reputation of being a man of ungovernable temper and of a vindictive nature. Among the people in that locality, it is not thought extraordinary that such a man should consider the non-payment of \$20 sufficient cause for inflicting death on the debtor; or that opposition to carrying out his design should be considered sufficient cause for taking the life of the one who interposed.

While in jail, reported the *Courier and Freeman*, Moncrief had been allowed every liberty that St. Lawrence Sheriff E. P. Backus could legally give him. He was, for instance, the only prisoner in the jail allowed to smoke. When Justice Putnam pronounced his verdict, the Sheriff went to Moncrief, put his arm around him, and "cried

like a child," in the words of the Potsdam paper.

It is doubtful that many of his well-wishers, if in fact any at all, understood the manifold implications of the judgment against William Moncrief. The plea of guilty of manslaughter in the first degree asked the court to accept the admission that the defendant had killed Henry Forney while "under the influence of extreme emotional disturbance," in the language of the New York State Penal Law that defined this crime at that time and still does. Had Moncrief been a man of steady, stable behavior, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to imagine that he would have been susceptible to emotional disturbance so strong that it would lead him to take another man's life in the circumstances that prevailed in the Forney front yard. But he was not such a man, and this fact is what saved his life.

For years he had been known to have had a vicious temper, particularly prone to violence when he thought he had been crossed in money matters, as has been pointed out. Certainly in all that came to light about his conduct during the crucial period in question there is much to identify him as a man "beside himself." His obtaining a warrant against Leonard a scant two months after the loan; his making his intention to kill Leonard if he did not make good on the loan a matter of public knowledge; his asking a public official (let alone a justice of

the peace) what the legal consequences would be if he shot Leonard; his terrible expressions to Davenport of his fury with Leonard and Henry, still obdurate two days after the killing of Henry — all these are some examples among many. But the single, central fact that attested to William Moncrief's not being responsible for his actions in this situation is that from all appearances *he seriously meant to kill the young man over a twenty-dollar debt*.

But why Henry? Why kill him? Armed with a gun, Moncrief had nothing to fear from the younger man. Obviously Moncrief had no quarrel with Henry; in fact the press reported that Moncrief had declared that Henry was a good friend of his. Forney's role as a causative factor, at just that time and in just that place, was probably that of "the straw that broke the camel's back." It is easy to imagine a sense of frustration and outrage boiling over in Moncrief as Forney tried to get him to go home, not directed at this man alone but, rather at the whole Forney family, with Moncrief screaming to himself, "After all this time I'm not getting satisfaction! They aren't taking me seriously! They're treating me like a boy!" And in that paroxysm of emotion — at least according to this scenario — he fired the gun. Hence Justice Putnam: "There are circumstances in the case that would render it, in my judgment, improper to have a severe finding

against this defendant. There are circumstances that render it proper that this plea should be accepted. . . .”

All in all, the plea of guilty of manslaughter in the first degree must have seemed to most a fitting — indeed a welcome — solution to the problem of what was to be done with this ordinarily kindly and peaceable killer of another man.

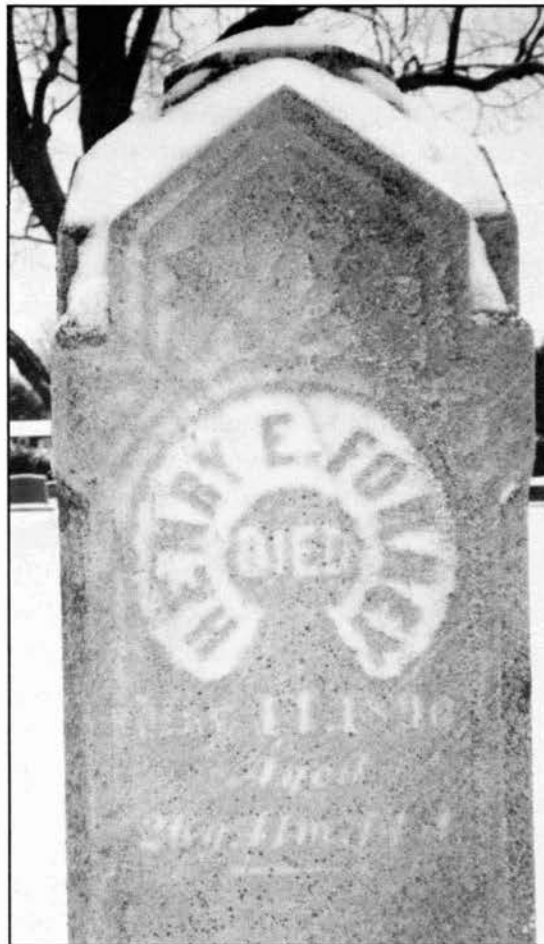
It must also be said that the story of the club may not have been a lie: it may have taken place in Moncrief’s imagination so vividly that it remained there immovably. Still claiming innocence on the basis of that story, even though he knew that according to Davenport’s testimony he had spoken of the killing of Henry as a deliberate act, he was not entirely pleased with the outcome of the trial. The *Plaindealer* reported that he declared that “it would have been better if he had insisted on proceeding with the trial [*i.e.*, without pleading guilty to manslaughter], but seemed to take the result calmly.” At any rate, he was taken to Dannemora, where, for all he knew, he would spend the rest of his days.

In an interview with a *Courier and Freeman* reporter after the trial, Moncrief had said that his counsel had told him confidentially that, “if a certain man — Buttercup is his name, I think — is nominated for governor, he will surely be elected and will pardon me within a week after the inauguration.” “Buttercup” was Roswell Flower, who was indeed elected Governor in 1892, but it was not he who

pardoned Moncrief. This act was taken by Governor Frank S. Black in 1898.

Once again “Uncle Billy” had won the sympathy of a St. Lawrence County Sheriff, now C. C. Caldwell, who had steadfastly believed in Moncrief’s innocence and was solely responsible for winning the governor’s pardon of him. The *Plaindealer* published an engaging account of this man’s heroic efforts on Moncrief’s behalf. In the winter of 1896, he circulated a petition asking for a gubernatorial pardon

of Moncrief. It seems that the petition was sent to Albany early in 1897, signed by a number of St. Lawrence County people, among them former District Attorney C. A. Kellogg. A year went by without any action from Albany, and so, early in May, 1898, Caldwell decided to go to the state capital himself to see if he could get the project in motion. Exercising what must have been impressive energy, persuasive power, and patience, he managed to get the petition before Governor Black, who signed it — all this between a



S.L.C.H.A. photograph

Henry Forney's headstone in the Oswegatchie cemetery.

Sunday and a Tuesday. Wednesday morning he arrived at Dannemora, and he returned to Canton with Moncrief on Thursday, May 12, a little more than seven years after the prisoner had begun to serve his eighteen-year sentence, two days short of the eighth anniversary of the death of Henry Forney.

Again Moncrief had been a model prisoner, winning the affection of the prison staff. Upon his return to Canton, he spoke to a *Plaindealer* reporter of his time in prison, telling about his *modus vivendi* while there and providing some interesting insight into his personality:

He [said] that he had received the kindest treatment from all who held positions at the prison, and he took pride in the fact that never while there was his conduct criticized in any way. He said that while the other prisoners were afraid to speak to the guards, and never did so, he felt free to address them at any time and ask questions or gossip with them. He has not been obliged to do any work for the last five years, and has had a great deal of liberty on the premises.

The *Commercial Advertiser* and the *Plaindealer* had different views of Moncrief's physical and mental condition on his arrival in Canton. The former wrote of him as "old and broken and nearing life's sunset." The latter reported that, "he looks exactly as he did when tried, save that his beard is shaved off, and mentally he is as bright as ever, and seemed like a child in his eagerness to start for

his home. . . ." One is inclined to credit the *Plaindealer's* account more than the *Commercial Advertiser's*, for William Moncrief lived for five more years, until 1903.

Henry Forney was the first person to be buried in the Oswegatchie Cemetery, in the village of Oswegatchie. The only other member of the family buried in the Forney plot was his sister Bertha, eleven years old at

the time of Henry's death. Whatever became of his mother and father and Leonard — how, for instance, they withstood their grief and how they held together (if they did) after the loss of their twenty-seven year old mainstay — are not known either.

Moncrief's grave, less than fifty feet from Forney's, is flanked by those of two of his sons, Willie (who predeceased his father by four years) and Hugh,



William Moncrief's gravestone. Henry Forney's grave is visible in the distance, on the top right side of the photograph.

and Hugh's wife Mellissa. The inscription on the father's tombstone offers two surprises, one trifling, the other rather less so. It reveals that his name was actually spelled "Moncrieff," although that spelling was never used by the newspapers nor the prison at Dannemora, if the Chaplain's Office Register can be relied upon (the admission and discharge registers for the period of his imprisonment having been lost), nor the census records.

The other surprise has to do with the question of Moncrief's age, which is puzzling. The *Times* correspondent's first mention of the subject two days after the killing, is, "though he is 64 years old he looks as if he might not be more than 55." On the first day of the trial, he wrote, "One would guess that he was 72 instead of 68" and in the same issue of his paper, he wrote of Moncrief's "long life of 67 years." As part of the sentencing procedure, Moncrief was required to give certain information about himself under oath: his occupation, religion, age, state of literacy, and so on. For his age, he stated that

he was sixty-seven. His gravestone, which, by its very nature, carries with it a certain grim authenticity, makes it difficult for one not to conclude that he had lied and committed perjury. Chiseled into the gray stone is the year of his birth, 1819. He was seventy-two at the time of his trial.

Oddly enough, Moncrief's age according to the Dannemora Chaplain's record was seventy. Perhaps this was a clerical error; perhaps not. The intriguing question here is why — certainly before Justice Putnam and possibly to the chaplain — did he choose not to tell the truth? Was he one of those men, common enough, to whom the truth is not a commodity that is easily dealt with, believing that the less known about themselves the better? Perhaps the *Times* man's intriguing statement about Moncrief, "He evidently is not what his face says he is," carried a broader meaning than he intended.

Moncrief, with all his ambiguity, rendered enigmatic by bouts of something akin to madness, would make an interesting character in a story. In fact, the entire Moncrief case would make an

engaging fiction: it has some vivid characters; it features two clearly defined plots that rise in intensity, one taking place in the personal realm (the killing and all that went before it), the other in the public (the trial); both involve a quest for justice, one of them demented, the other as reasonable as court trials ever are; both plots rise to climactic outcomes that deeply affect the lives of the participants, who are powerless to avert them; and all is saturated in dramatic conflict. The author's greatest trouble would be to try to make sense of it all.

Acknowledgement

I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. James D. Folts, Head of Research Services, New York State Archives, for the kind help he gave me during the preparation of this article.

About the Author

Stanley M. Holberg is an emeritus professor of English of St. Lawrence University.

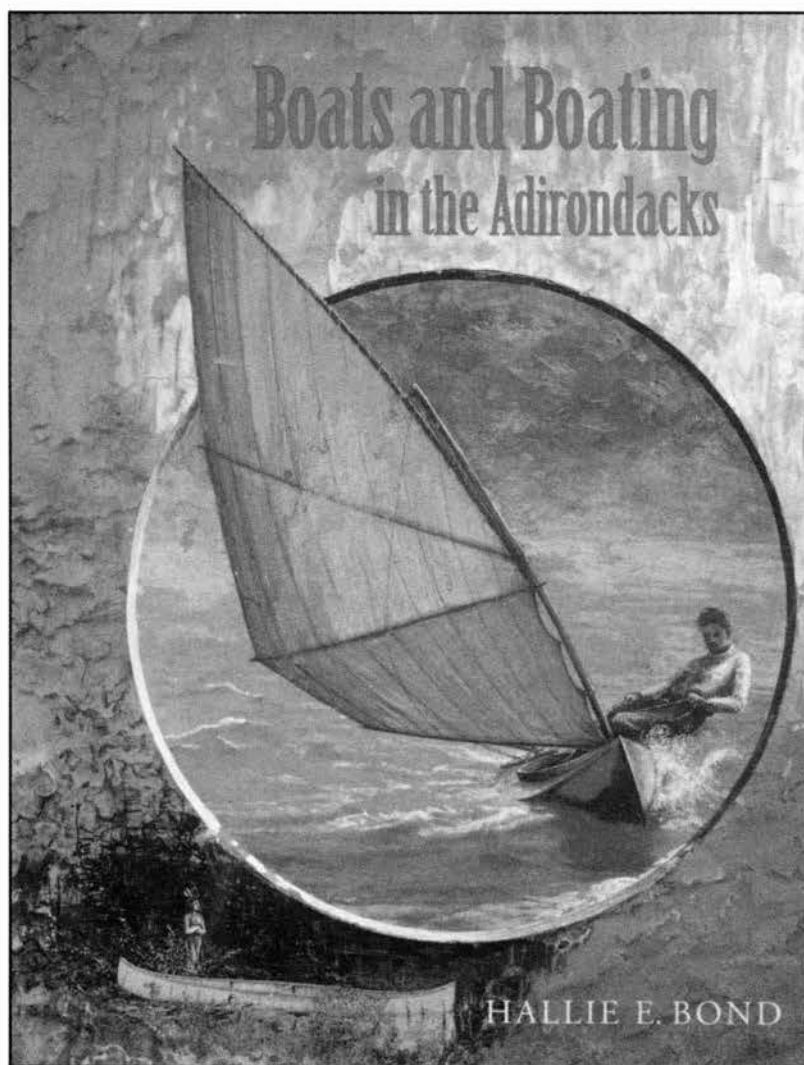
From the Bookshelf

by Chris Angus

Boats and Boating in the Adirondacks, By Hallie E. Bond, Introduction by Philip G. Terrie, illus., The Adirondack Museum/Syracuse University Press, 1995.

In a recent correspondence with Christine Jerome, author of the widely acclaimed book, *An Adirondack Passage—The Cruise of the Canoe Sairy Gamp*, she mentioned to me that she had just attended an author's gathering at the Adirondack Museum, where she purchased a copy of *Boats and Boating in the Adirondacks*. It was, she wrote, a "feast." Her word stuck in my mind and solidified my intention to review the work.

Now, after reading the book, I can honestly say that "feast" is precisely the right word for this impressive volume on small recreational boats in the Adirondacks. Hallie Bond, Curator of Collections and Boats at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, leaves no stone unturned. Her text encapsulates the history of the region, a history so closely associated with boats as to be nearly inseparable. From early exploration, scientific study, and pioneer settlement to the advent of the sportsman, the building of the



Book jacket cover of Hallie Bond's Boats and Boating in the Adirondacks.

Great Camps, and the creation of a world-class park, we are carried along in a delicious narrative of humanity's presence in the Adirondacks.

Using early photographs and illustrations along with blueprints of specific boat designs, Bond takes full advantage of the magnificent museum collection at her disposal. There is an exhaustive photo-catalog of the boats in the Adirondack Museum, a comprehensive listing of pre-1975 boat builders, a glossary of terms, and an appendix containing complete plans for nine types of boats described in the text. It is an imposing body of work and an invaluable reference for boat lovers. The mere thought of the labor required to put all of this material together might have sent a lesser researcher to bed for a week. It should also be noted how finely the book has been designed, from the large pages and heavy paper to the exquisitely reproduced illustrations. Nearly every page combines photo and text to make the book a joy to peruse at length.

The reason that small boats became so central to life in the Adirondacks is no secret. As Philip G. Terrie writes in his introduction, the Adirondacks are a region "where geography and topography resist easy exploration The uncut forest . . . was roadless, nearly pathless, and often close to absolute impenetrability." But crisscrossing the region was a vast chain of interconnected lakes, ponds, rivers and streams that pro-

vided an avenue of transport for the small boat traveler. From the early bark and dugout canoes used by the Indians to the bateaux of the rivermen to the guideboats, skiffs and canoes of the "sports" who came later, small boats were the lifeline.

The ideal Adirondack boat combined three important qualities. It had to be light enough to carry from waterway to waterway. It had to move swiftly across the water. And it had to have a large carrying capacity. Farmers and early pioneers found the small boat essential. Joel T. Headley, the Protestant minister who penned a romantic and effusive appreciation of the region in 1849 entitled, *The Adirondack: or, Life in the Woods*, explains: "You travel in boats, go on pleasure excursions in boats, get all your meat, and fish, and vegetables in boats, and finally your milk and butter in boats." Headley relates the story of one pioneer woman desperate for conversation. Bundling her six-month-old baby and fourteen-year-old daughter into their craft, she rows and carries the trio 30 miles through unbroken forest in order to visit a friend. "I hope," Headley writes, "she had a glorious gossip to pay for her trouble."

The story of the small boat in the Adirondacks is also the story of the ever-expanding human occupation of the region. The Adirondacks were, at first, a trackless wilderness so little known to nearby residents that Mount

Marcy, the highest peak in New York State was not climbed until 1837, fully two centuries after the first ascent of Mount Washington in New Hampshire. From such obscurity, the mountains and lakes grew by steps into one of the pre-eminent recreational meccas of the Northeast.

It was through the writings of men like Headley, Samuel H. Hammond and W.H.H. "Adirondack" Murray that the Adirondacks first came to the serious attention of sportsmen and tourists in the 1850s and 1860s. Soon, tales of magnificent fishing and hunting adventures were being published in *Forest & Stream* and other magazines. Citified "sportsmen" required the services of professional guides to provide not only guided and human-powered excursions, but all the necessary woodland amenities from gathering firewood and cooking to tracking game and making camp. "Roughing it" had a decidedly different meaning in the 1800s. In *Camp Chronicles*, her description of her family's move from Forty-second Street to their island camp at Ausable Forks, Mildred P. Stokes Hooker listed the necessities brought along: "about ten servants, Miss Rondell, one coachman, three horses, two dogs, one carriage, five large boxes of tents, three cases of wine, two packages of stove pipe, two stoves, one bale china, one iron pot, four washstands, one barrel of hardwood, four bundles of poles, seventeen cots and seven-

teen mattresses, four canvas packages, one buckboard, five barrels, one half barrel, two tubs of butter, one bag coffee, one chest tea, one crate china, twelve rugs, four milk cans, two drawing boards, twenty-five trunks, thirteen small boxes, one boat, one hamper.”

As the century progressed to its close, hotels and boarding houses sprang up to cater to the growing numbers of sportsmen and tourists. There were stage coaches and even a railroad as far as North Creek by 1871. In addition, large private clubs grew popular among wealthier outdoorsmen. All of this increased the demand for small boats. There to meet the demand were builders and craftsmen like J. Henry Rushton, Caleb Chase, Henry Dwight Grant, Herbert M. Sprague and Reuben Cary. By the end of the 19th century, the boat building profession had caught on fire. All types of small craft for sail and oar were perfected and refined using the many new technical innovations that were developed prior to the advent of the gas engine.

Small boat lovers who are uninterested in lengthy discourse on building techniques need have no fear. While such discussions are well done, Bond does not draw them out unnecessarily. As one whose own interests lie more in the realm of what can be seen while riding in a canoe rather than in the construction itself, I nonetheless can appreciate the beauty of finely made skiffs, guideboats

and canoes. Herein lies, perhaps, at least part of the reason for the widespread popularity of the small boat. Literally works of art, they can be enjoyed on many levels, by craftsmen, recreationists, sportsmen or even by someone who may never set foot in a canoe. The high attendance at the Adirondack Museum’s fine collection is testimony enough to the enduring fascination we all have for these boats.

By the late 1920s, guiding as a profession was in decline. The Adirondacks had grown more tourist friendly with good maps, plentiful accommodations and rail transport increasingly easy to come by. Well-made and inexpensive canoes were widely available. More and more people were becoming familiar with the region. By 1925, the mountains boasted no fewer than 54 children’s summer camps. Another big change was also well underway, the advent of the gasoline powered boat.

J. Henry Rushton of Canton was one of the earliest power boat builders. He constructed his first steam launch in 1882 and advertised naphtha and electric boats in his catalog of the same year. In 1902 he added internal combustion. Rushton’s venture into powered craft was never a true success, however. By 1903 his catalog stated categorically, “I build no power boats of any kind.”

But others were embracing the new technology. By 1910 Lake George had a fleet of 600 powered

boats and Lake Placid boasted 150. Powerboaters formed the same sorts of clubs and associations and held the same sorts of regattas and races that the early guideboat and canoe enthusiasts had so cherished. While human-powered craft remained the most common boats in the north woods until after the Great Depression, the fine craftsmen who made them virtually disappeared. The guideboat was a rarity by the 1930s, replaced by wood/canvas boats and, in the 1940s, by the aluminum canoes built by the Grumman Corporation. In the 1970s, Grumman would turn out 20,000 aluminum canoes a year.

At the 1969 New York Boat Show, the nation’s premier showcase for recreational watercraft, there were no wooden boats. Yet there is a happy ending to the demise of the finely crafted wooden boat. A revival in interest is well underway. Hallie Bond’s fine book can only ensure that it will continue and grow as modern boaters once again learn to value the quiet and serenity of an Adirondack lake without motors and oil slicks.

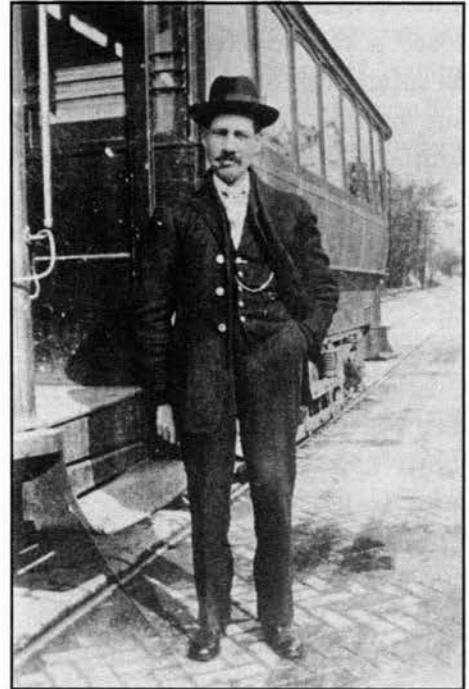
Quarterly Update: The Ogdensburg Trolley

Inspired by the *SLCHA Quarterly* article, "The Ogdensburg Trolley," by Scott Wich (Summer, 1994, pages 1-7), long-time Historical Association member, Floyd Beswick of Madrid, recently donated copies of two photographs of his grandfather, Charles Beswick, who worked for many years on the trolley.

Charles Beswick was a conductor on the New York Avenue trolley. Prior to his Ogdensburg days, Beswick was a conductor on the Rutland Railroad, travelling on the Malone line.

In the photograph to the right, Charles Beswick is pictured next to his trolley. Below, Beswick (on the left) and an unidentified man are standing in front of the New York Avenue trolley. The photographs were taken between 1910 and 1915.

*-Thomas E. Price,
SLCHA Collections Manager*



THE OLD WEST LIVES!

In February, 1882 *Harper's Weekly* magazine published an illustration of a twenty-one year old New Yorker, Frederic Remington. And so began the career of an artist who would be celebrated for generations as an artist who captured the Old West. Remington would go on to create hundreds of images as diverse as the exciting *Charge of the Rough Riders Up San Juan Hill* to the serene *End of the Day*. During his career, cut short at the age of forty-eight, he would become a painter, sculptor and writer.

Although Remington was drawn to the West by the excitement of conflict, he always returned to the land he loved—Northern New York. He produced many paintings of the St. Lawrence River and the Adirondack Mountains. Make plans to visit the Frederic Remington Art Museum and see the Old West come to life. The works are so realistic you may think you hear the thundering of hooves.

Tuesday, July 30, 1907

"Blowing like hell-and quite tiresome. I to day [sic] finished *Indian Raid* and the work I had laid out for summer. Intend to sketch for study now and loaf-a sort of vacation. Mrs. picking her last peas. Our garden is so poor it hardly repays our pains but could be enriched. Ebbie H. posed for little indian and wounded buck picture. I have good drawing for it. Island is dry as a desert. They're afraid there will be a fire on Chippewa Point."

Frederic Remington

from Remington's personal journal

Plan to visit today!

The Frederic Remington Art Museum is open year-round.

Hours

May-October
Monday-Saturday 10 am - 5 pm
Sunday 1 - 5 pm
November-April
Tuesday-Saturday 10 am - 5 pm
Closed Sunday & Monday

Admission

Museum members are free
General admission \$3
Seniors \$2
Youths under 12 Free
Organized group tours \$2

Last gallery tour at 4:00 pm

Closed major holidays

Visit the Museum Shop for Remington reproductions, books, t-shirts, Native American music and videos, Navajo woven rugs, and sterling silver jewelry.



**FREDERIC
REMINGTON ART MUSEUM**

303 Washington Street ♦ Ogdensburg, New York 13669 ♦ 315/393-2425

Address Correction Requested
P.O. Box 8
Canton, NY 13617

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 21
Canton, N.Y. 13617

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION



canton federal

SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATION

Visit a Canton Federal Savings Mortgage
Loan Officer today and let us help you
obtain the home you have always
dreamed of. We'll work with you
to make it a reality.

Negotiable Order of Withdrawal (N.O.W. Accounts)
Passbook Savings Account
Christmas Clubs
Money Market Deposit Account
Money Market Passbook Account
Certificates of Deposit
Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA's)

Home Mortgage Loans
Equity Loans
Property Improvement Loans
Auto & Consumer Loans
Student Loans
Personal Loans
Mortgage Life & Disability Insurance

Direct Deposit Services
Money Orders
Travelers Checks
Drive-in Window
Banking By Mail
Free Notary Services
Automated Teller Machine



Member
FDIC



127 Main St., Canton, NY
386-4533