

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association

QUARTERLY

Volume XLVI - Number 2 - Spring 2001



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

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is a private, not-for-profit, membership organization based at the Silas Wright House 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 trustees.

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The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is a not-for-profit membership organization and museum which serves as an educational resource for the use and benefit of the citizens of St. Lawrence County and others interested in the County's history and traditions. The Association collects and preserves archival material and artifacts pertinent to the County's history. In cooperation and collaboration with other local organizations, the Association promotes an understanding of and appreciation for the County's rich history through publications, exhibits, and programs. The St. Lawrence County Historical Association operates within museum standards established by the American Association of Museums.

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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.

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Quarterly

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Pamela Ouimet

Cover Illustration

Following the St. Lawrence County Historical Association's 54th Annual Meeting on November 3, 2001, held at St. Mary's Parish Hall, Waddington, a tour was given of St. Paul's Church in Waddington, the oldest standing church in the North Country. (Photo courtesy of SLCHA)

Editor's Notes

By Pamela Ouimet

One of our readers, Robert Shaw, pointed out that in the *Quarterly* fall 2000 edition, an article commented on Prohibition. He said most historians believe Prohibition was introduced by the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, and was repealed by the Twenty-First Amendment in 1933.

We would like to thank Mr. Shaw for bringing this to our attention.

We would like to remind all the readers of the *Quarterly* that the St. Lawrence County Historical Association unfortunately fell behind in getting the publication out on a quarterly basis a couple of years ago.

It will take us into 2004 before everything gets back on track again, as we are publishing five editions each year until we are all caught up.

We want to make sure that no edition is left out, so on occasion, you may read about something that happened in the current year, but the actual edition is dated from the year before.

If you have a historical article, story or photos you would like published in the *Quarterly*, please feel free to submit them to the SLCHA. Please be sure to include your name, phone number and address so we can reach you if we have any questions.

TRENT TRULOCK INTERVIEWS

SUSAN LYMAN

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is an interview conducted by SLCHA Executive Director Trent Trulock with former Town of Potsdam and Village of Norwood Historian Susan Lyman.

The interview was held on July 16, 1998 at Susan's home, 38 Prospect St. in Norwood.

TRENT: Thanks for taking time out to talk to me today, Susan.

SUSAN: I'm glad to do it. I've been beating the drum for historians and historical societies for ... well, since 1960 ... and we got our museum and historical society in Norwood organized in 1962, largely due to Louise Fletcher Chase, who was a teacher, a musician, a person who was very interested in Norwood and the people. Her father had been an attorney here for about 60 years, and she had the know-all to get us organized. And we finally got rooms up over the library (Prospect and Main) which is now entirely the museum.

TRENT: Okay; so, that whole building is now the museum?

SUSAN: We have the whole building now, and it's full ... it's overflowing, practically. And, it's just ... just a delight to go in there. We have had an excellent director there for 3 years ... He retired last night because of his ill health, but he actually painted

and papered and sanded and mopped and dusted and did everything ... made arrangements of artifacts. Really, he's ... he's been the first one who has gone ahead. Well, now we have a little more money. To begin with we didn't have any money.

TRENT: Right.

SUSAN: If we needed some paper or some pencils, we took it out of our own pocket.

TRENT: Right.

SUSAN: So naturally, we didn't have money to spend on the building. We rent the building from the Norwood Library for \$1 a year, but we have to maintain it.

TRENT: Oh, Okay.

SUSAN: And we have had to put in a new furnace, this summer; we had to have a new electrical system – it had to be rewired and all that sort of thing. And now, the trim on this beautiful brick building is in bad shape – it's got to be scraped and repainted.

Well, I've seen changes since I was first appointed historian in 1962. We were sort of far down on the totem pole. When I was appointed by Robert Park, who was then mayor, I was told I had \$25 for the year. So I spent that money for stationery.

TRENT: [Sure]



SUSAN: Any stamps, or anything ... other expenses came out of my pocket – well, it did of all the other historians, because historians were not paid anything, not even postage money. In fact, I think there are one or two now who don't have a salary.

But, since then I've been elevated. I get \$300 a year. Plus I have an expense account which I try to keep down. Everybody knows how stingy I am with petty cash. That allows me to go to meetings and things like that and take my deputy.

TRENT: Right.

SUSAN: It isn't an expensive thing, but it isn't something that I would feel I could do out of my own pocket.

TRENT: Certainly.

SUSAN: Now that historians are really recognized as being professional people, and I think we are professional people, even though we don't have a degree in museum work or whatever, most of us have had special courses in history and related subjects, and ...

TRENT: I agree with you, and I think experience has to count.

SUSAN: Yes ... there's nothing that beats hands-on. We used to have a lot of training courses. I've been all over New York State, practically, to two to three day seminars where there would be training on displays, managing a museum, or raising money ... things like that. Seeking out people who would be good to serve on the board. Because I think it's important to have good board members. And the more you have, the bigger cheering

section you've got. The more you get involved with other people to ask them to come in and help when you have classes coming, the more they're apt to become interested and become active.

TRENT: Definitely. Definitely.

SUSAN: Public relations are very good...are very important... and also newspaper publicity.

Unfortunately we kind of ... here in Norwood, have slipped down on that a little bit. With the new man coming in, I just pointed out to him in the note I wrote him, how important I think it is. We should have something all the time—our open hours, or closed...

TRENT: Something about the museum?

SUSAN: Or something that we're projecting ... something we're planning, our goals. Now, Norwood is going to work more closely with the schools. Of course, I have always made myself available to the schools for second through seventh grade for history, but they haven't asked me to do anything for quite a number of years. So I don't know whether it's because the curriculum is full, or because I don't do a very good job. I don't know which. I'll flatter myself and say that the curriculum is full.

TRENT: Well, I think also as teachers change, sometimes they don't realize ...

SUSAN: They don't realize the resources that are available to them. But, it's a joy to work with the young people. They are so receptive and so interested.

TRENT: Oh, yeah.

SUSAN: One thing – I always have to smile if I talk about the circus train wreck in 1889 up here at the crossing between Potsdam and Norwood. Some kid said, "Oh, yeah – my father was there." That's the joy of working with children. I love it. I used to do a lot of writing. I didn't have enough to do. I had two jobs and an invalid husband. I moonlighted for the *Potsdam Courier Freeman*. Well, I found out that people liked history related to stories. Or pictures – old pictures with captions. So, most every week I had something. And, during that time, I wrote seven or eight installments on the Norwood ... different mills. We had a casket factory here.

TRENT: That's what I understand. Where was that at?

SUSAN: Just about two, three streets over. Yes, my uncle worked there as a watchman, and I remember sometimes we would go over. My mother and I would go over to see Uncle [Allie?] and he had this clock, and he would have to go around to the different parts of the place and wind it, and I would say, "Well, Uncle [Allie?], why don't you wind it enough, right, the first key?" That wasn't the purpose of that thing.

The story is there was a very well-known businessman in the village who, shall we say "tipped?" Well, when he was in his cups, somebody put him in one of the caskets and when he woke up he was in this very elaborate casket. I knew him in later years, and he was a very sober man. Whether that ... that's one of the funny little stories that come down to us.

I wrote quite a bit about the

Potsdam Sandstone. That was a very important business in Potsdam at the time, and of course there's always been things about school. In the town of Potsdam, education is our business.

We have, of course, the famous Crane School of Music which I attended; Clarkson University used to be College of Technology. I also went one summer and took three courses. Both my husband and son were Clarkson men, and I thought, well, its high time that I found out what was going on at Clarkson, so I had a marvelous, marvelous class in geology. I didn't know much about geology. Another professor taught a course on the American Indian; on Mohawks down at the Reservation, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I've always wanted to go back, but I was hoping I could take something in summer school. I couldn't work it out.

TRENT: You couldn't work out the scheduling?

SUSAN: Well, no ... although they were wonderful to me when I went. They even had a parking space almost to the door. A man would be there with the elevator door open to take me up to the classroom, and when I got out of the class, he was there.

TRENT: It's good they're making it accessible ...

SUSAN: See, I didn't expect it. I expected to walk in – and I found that the students, most of them were undergrads, they were so much different than they had been when I had attended class, oh, maybe ten years before. Each one kept to himself, there was no intermingling, no socializing, so

to get them together a little more, one day I took up a box of brownies. I made them after I got home from school, but it didn't bring them any closer. And I was kind of disappointed; I always felt that cohesiveness, that friendliness among the students was important – to hear them chattering about courses or the content of the courses. The lecturer was excellent. It was a course on the Civil War, but I guess people change, over the years and each student I guess keeps more to himself than they used to.

TRENT: And I guess it depends on the individuals themselves.

SUSAN: Yeah, now one woman came from Gouverneur. She said she left home, it was an 8:30 a.m. class, she left home the minute she put her children on the school bus. Another gal came, she had a ten-year-old, she came from Tupper Lake. She drove that distance every day for a class.

TRENT: That shows dedication.

SUSAN: It was, yes, the process of getting their degree.

TRENT: You've mentioned the circus train wreck. That's a popular thing with the kids. Could you tell us more about that?

SUSAN: Oh, yes. I had a letter from Theresa Sharpe, our dear historian in Massena, yesterday; (in fact, there's a letter in my mailbox, I mailed it this morning), saying she heard from a woman in Connecticut wanting to know about the circus train wreck. And I had written a lengthy story about the...I had the original pictures...for the *Courier Freeman*. Well, a little

magazine, called *Bigtops*, that's a circus magazine, picked that up and printed it. So that was a nice format to copy, so I had some copies made. I can give you one. And I sent one to Theresa.

The way I came by those pictures, of course, I was librarian and one day a man came in and introduced himself and said he was from Syracuse and he had come across the pictures of a circus train wreck and asked if I was interested, and thought I probably wasn't.

And I said, "Oh, yes I am!" and that's how I came by these rare, original pictures of that circus train wreck.

It was a Barnum and Bailey circus—they were crossing between ...it's about a mile or so north of Potsdam...when some part, some rod of something broke, and it tipped over some of the cars and some animals were killed. They got themselves pulled together and went on to the next showing of the circus at Montreal or something. Anyway, as they say, the show must go on, but some of the pictures show the Arabs in their long, flowing gowns with their elephants, camels, horses, you know ... different things.

The first tapings I ever did was of three elderly people ... Mrs. L. Powell, who lives up the street, a dear old lady, Mrs. Kit Hagan and Frank Jenkins. They were all in their 80s or more. And one of the questions I asked was, "Does anyone remember the circus train wreck?"

And Mrs. Powell said, "Oh, yes, Papa took us up to see it. He took the boys in the morning, and after dinner, he took us girls. When

we got there, they were burying them trained horses.” That was the term she used. She said, “Oh, it was so sad to see those beautiful horses,” that had been killed in this train wreck.

TRENT: Now, did they bury them by the track?

SUSAN: Yes, they buried them in the fields.

TRENT: Wow. Did any of the animals escape and roam around?

SUSAN: No, none did—because the animal caretakers were very much on the job—no, the animals that were all right, they just got herded back into other cars and they took them on. But it certainly stirred things up here for quite a while. Thank heavens some enterprising photographer from Potsdam got down there to take pictures. In horse and buggy days, that was quite a little accomplishment.

TRENT: Right.

SUSAN: You remind me before you go, and I’ll give you a copy of that.

TRENT: Good. Now, you’ve been historian since 1962?

SUSAN: Nineteen-sixty-two I was first appointed.

TRENT: Did you become historian for the Town of Potsdam and the Village of Norwood at the same time?

SUSAN: Just about the same time – I’m the only historian that Norwood has ever had. Potsdam has had historians for three or four before me. I was very disappointed, the historian, my pre-

decessor, had been a teacher of history at Potsdam State for many years, and in fact his classes, at least two a semester, and he always boasted about the amount of stuff he had.

When I became historian, he told me to come up and he’d give me what, you know. What I got was a copy of the map of the Union Cemetery, which I had done, my daughter and I had done... if you want fun, you take a college course with one of your children, I tell you. Our job was to take a census of the Union Cemetery. So we did, and my engineer son drew a map. Chuck gave me that, and he gave me a stamp which says “Town of Potsdam Historian.” And that ...

TRENT: And that was the extent?

SUSAN: That was the extent of the collection that was passed on to me. I was told, in this class that I sat in, that he had gotten bushel baskets from the Norwood Union, but I don’t know what ever became of all those things, but anyway ... I now have, the Town of Potsdam bought me a four-drawer file, and I have it well stocked. Its up in my office, we’ll go up later. The Village of Norwood files are in my storeroom downstairs and that is overflowing. I’ve got to buy another crate file over in Ames’s for my genealogy.

I don’t do much genealogy, only under pressure, because I don’t have the interest, really, and I don’t know what I’m doing, so I’m not very good at it. I do what I can.

TRENT: It’s a very involved process.

SUSAN: Yes, if someone writes

and asks some of their ancestors, and I look in my cemetery records – and I have Everetts, and Houghs, and Gates - and I look and see what I can find.

I also have my directories – I have my 1874 Childs – I use that a great deal. If I can find information – I make a point to answer them as quickly, within a week, oftentimes, sooner. But then, I live alone, I’m retired, and I know some of the historians have families, and they work, and that makes a difference. But I think it’s rare courtesy to answer them, even though they don’t send a stamped enveloped –the village will buy me some stamps.

TRENT: Well, it’s good that you’ve had such support from the village.

SUSAN: Oh, my village and my town board are just wonderful. My supervisors said I was writing my reports on an 1800 typewriter, so they bought me one.

TRENT: So they modernized you...

SUSAN: Yes, I still am not very good at it. This letter I just wrote to our incoming chair of the Norwood Historical Society, I wrote, “I never said I was a good typist.” I think I’m a pretty good historian, but I am NOT a good typist.

And, thank heavens, this has a correction key, whereas my old standard, I didn’t have that. I had to use whiteout.

TRENT: Sure. Sure. What projects are you currently working on. Do you have any?

SUSAN: Well, I’m getting things ready to enrich the cur-

riculum down at school. The museum has embarked on this process of putting in an exhibit every four months in the elementary school. School has made available locked cases, they will put in exhibits suitable to the age of the students.

TRENT: Oh, great!

SUSAN: And I'm getting stuff copied, such as I'm giving you that I can give to the teachers for their files. When we first started as a museum, another lady and I went down and talked to the seventh grade teacher. What they were using to teach seventh grade history were newspaper clippings so yellowed that you couldn't read ... so far behind time that we wanted to update that. I thought to liven things up, to make it a little more competitive.

People like competition. I gave an award, the Lyman Memorial Award, in memory of my son, who was a teacher. The last few years, there were ties, and it went to two students in each of the fourth grades. That was great. After the school moved from Norwood down to Norwood-Norfolk school, there's no Norwood Elementary School, so I can't do that, but I'd like to do the idea of some kind of award to stimulate the interest.

TRENT: Interest in history, yeah ...

SUSAN: Local history. We had a craft fair; we expected a dozen entries. We had over a hundred entries from students. That went on for a couple of years, and then the teachers said, "That's too much work." You know, that dropped it, so I moved it down to the fourth grade.

TRENT: Are they still doing the craft fair in the fourth grade?

SUSAN: No. They do local history just from a book. But I have gone to them with pictures - always something that they can handle, that I can pass around and they can have in their hands. I think that hands-on is important.

TRENT: I agree with that. I think it's very important as well. Do you have requests for certain types of information, as a historian?

SUSAN: Yes, some woman called and asked, "When was that store built in Potsdam; the one right near Mayfield?" I had no idea, so I told her somebody to call, I thought afterward I should have told her my deputy, Effa Sullivan, she's assessor and she would have all those records right there, but I thought of that about a day later.

TRENT: It's tough - it puts you on the spot.

SUSAN: I get a lot of telephone calls. Some man from Boston called me the other day, just about at lunch time, and he was going to have some of his people do a family tree, Parmeter, and he was looking for information. And I said, "Would you give me your name?" and I would send it out within a day. Well, he wanted me to do it right then. Which meant getting out my cemetery books, it would take an hour. I said, "Give me your name and address, and you'll get your information the first of the week." So, he did, it was two pages - can you imagine giving that to him over the telephone?

TRENT: Sure. Sure. People don't realize unless you tell

them. And what you have to do to get them the information.

SUSAN: I have the cemetery books for death listings - I have 12 books, and I usually look in my directories to see if the names, it would give the occupations, the directory would give, if it's a farmer, it would give the acreage, things like that. It's ... you don't have to know that to do a family tree, but I think it's fun to know those things.

TRENT: Well, it personalizes.

SUSAN: To me it does.

TRENT: Sure, sure. Do you get a lot of requests for things beside genealogy?

SUSAN: Well, yes, for general information on things. Somebody called me up one day and said, "I'm having an argument and I think I'm right" - about something, in fact it was the circus train wreck. Well, I had the information right there, and I said I had got the information from the *Courier Freeman* and it said the accident had happened the day before, and of course the newspaper was dated ... I knew that I was correct. Oh, yes, you get the strangest things, sometimes. One lady called me from California two times in one day about a family, Wood, and I had known some of them personally. It's easy when you know them personally, and I said, "Well, does that include so-and-so?" and she didn't think so. Well, she called me back the same day and wanted information on this other person that I had mentioned. But, probably ninety percent of the questions are genealogy.

Oh, we had one gal who was looking for me ... she's doing an

article on the Brass Firemen.

TRENT: Right.

SUSAN: I wouldn't attempt to say her last name ... she was at the museum last night. She was still there, going through the material when we left the meeting, and she asked me if she might come to see me, and I said, "Yes, just call me ahead – make sure I'm home, because I'm in and out," not gone for a long time, but if somebody comes and I'm gone, they don't know that I'm just gone for a quarter of milk ... that I'll be right back.

TRENT: Sure, sure.

SUSAN: The file on the Brass Fireman, and of course, I remember back, it wasn't the Brass Firemen then, it was the Norwood Fire Department Band, and they had a concert down in the park, and they had a concert every Wednesday night.

TRENT: Really?

SUSAN: Oh, yes, and that was a big thing ... that concert.

TRENT: How long ago was this?

SUSAN: Oh, this was when I was growing up. This is ... let's see, I'm 85 ... probably 70 years ago. If I behaved myself, I got a nickel to go over to Healey's store and get an ice cream cone. They sold books and stationery and jewelry and watches, and they had a beautiful soda fountain, marble-backed ... a marble soda fountain.

TRENT: Now, that was a store in Norwood?

SUSAN: Yes ... it's long-since

gone, of course. Our downtown has changed so much, I have to stop and think, you know, where stores used to be because some of them have bought part of an existing business next to them. Downtown Potsdam, I just love it – I think it's just beautiful, the way it's been restored. For example, in 1950, the Surprise Store bought out a business of Welles Company – they were retiring. They made that a very modern building, modern windows right from the top right down to the sidewalk. The door, an entirely glass door – the only one in Potsdam. Now, since this modernization, guess what, now it looks just like it did when it was the Welles Store.

TRENT: Really? They've gone back ...

SUSAN: They've gone back to the old windows and the regular doors, and I love it. I think that section of Potsdam is just beautiful.

TRENT: What are the biggest changes that you've seen in Potsdam or the Village of Norwood?

SUSAN: Well, one thing, since the war, and people my age, when we say the war, we mean World War I, now it's hard to tell where Norwood leaves off and Potsdam begins, because of all the buildings. Many of those buildings were built after the Seaway – some of those nicer camps were moved up here and made into year-round homes. Oh, I remember when there was, oh, maybe half a dozen, or maybe a dozen buildings on that six-mile road. It's almost all built-up. Of course, your increase in your population.

The big, big increases in the colleges – even when my daughter went to Potsdam State, she graduated in 1960, well, that was downtown right back of Lewis House, and of course now everything is up on campus. And Clarkson has moved from Old Main and Snell Hall up onto the Hill ... they call it the Hill campus. When my son was there, he graduated in 1957 from Clarkson, he's a chemical engineer, and a pioneer in computer. He became interested in computer, and he was director of the Computer Center when he died. The computer was, maybe the size of this room. And I wonder what he'd think now, to have a computer sitting on his lap.

But, all of these changes, and of course it's fun to see them – new – there used to be an Oval Wood Dish factory on the corner of Depot and Main. There's a restaurant on the corner, and in back of that was this Oval Wood Dish factory. They made the little wooden spoons that come with ice cream dixie cups. They hired quite a few women.

TRENT: Was that Norwood or Potsdam?

SUSAN: Potsdam. There's also an Oval Wood Dish in Tupper Lake. But, it eventually went out of business. So, there was an underwear factory, a shirt factory, over on Maple Street. I'm trying to think what business – just past Evans & White's Hardware store. Pants factory on Munson Street – of course, they employed a lot of women, more women than men. But now jobs for women are mainly service or teaching or professional type people.

TRENT: There was lots of that

industry that used to be around? Could you talk a few minutes about the Civil War Nurse?

SUSAN: Yes, I was talking to the caretaker for Calvary Cemetery this morning, and asked him if he had ever found her grave, and he said, "No, not yet." I know it's there, with a little marker, but I think she may be buried with her family. She was a McCormick, but I haven't been able to walk well enough to go up and see the cemetery. She lived just across the street. She died right next door in 1922. She was a big woman – apparently tall and big-boned. I've talked to nieces; she has nieces here. One of the nieces was ninety-something and she remembered her quite well, and she said she was quite a character. She loved to have verbal jousts with the young merchants. And every day she went down and did her shopping. Of course, you had to then. You didn't buy your meat ahead of time – you had to go down every day.

And, well now, we would call "kidding" each other. And this niece told me that she was a Democrat when it was not popular to be a Democrat. In other words, she had a mind of her own. When she heard that her husband had been injured in the attack on Petersburg – Burnside's famous – his Pennsylvania miner men trying to blow up the Confederate Fortifications, it didn't work that way. Well, Mr. Looby got hurt and that his shoulder was hurt in person-to-person combat – on a Confederate Soldier's rifle [bayonet?] When she heard that, she went, that was what they did then, she went down to take care of him.

She got there – he had been

moved to a hospital in New York. She went there, and he had been moved somewhere else, so she decided to be a nurse. And she worked there for the rest of the Civil War and a year or two after. She worked in this certain hospital, I can't remember the name of it. The guy I found out about this from was from New York, and so I asked him if he knew about it, he said, well yes, that's one of the best hospitals in New York City. It would be 100 years old then – they still had a very good reputation. Of course, I never met Mrs. Looby – she died before I came to Norwood. But I remember people speaking of her as "The Old Lady." They had completely forgotten that she had been a Civil War nurse. Battlefield Duty. She was a heroine, and they were calling her The Old Lady.

TRENT: She died in what year?

SUSAN: Nineteen-twenty-two. She died next door.

TRENT: And people had forgotten all about her service?

SUSAN: Uh-huh. Her son, when she became ill, he took her over to his house, and she passed away. When she died, he didn't have money enough to bury her; I have a list of her assets. Ruth Garner was down in Washington, D.C. several years ago and she went over to the National Archives. And she came home with an armful of different documents, mostly related to Mrs. Looby. There was a copy of her letter asking for a pension – and she told what she went through to be a nurse.

TRENT: That's great. The Norwood Museum, to visit, what would they see there?

SUSAN: Well, we have an exhibit on the schools. People are very interested in schools, and that is the main display as you go in. The railroad, Norwood was a railroad town, in fact, we're here because it was a railroad town. For the first railroad was the Northern Railroad and became the Rutland, and is now the OBPA, and then within a few years, the New York Central came in here – a line from Ottawa, one to Waddington – and this was a junction, very busy. They had turntables, and all that sort of thing, and that was how this really became established, because of the railroad.

They arbitrarily set the date of the first railroad as 1850 because that's the date that the first train went through here. At that time, there were a few shacks, a couple farmers, and of course workmen lived at the hotel. We've always had, until the last few years, a very busy, nice hotel. We've become a mobile society and people don't stay in hotels any more. Salesmen, they used to call 'em drummers, would come in by train, stay at the hotel, go around to the merchants, peddle merchandise, of course now they come by car, go in with their little satchels and that's it – an entirely different thing.

You know, I've noticed that after every major war there are a lot of social changes as well. If you stop and think of what changes after World War I – of course you (Trent) wouldn't remember those.

TRENT: [Laughter] No, but I've heard of it.

SUSAN: There are always a lot of social changes. After the end of that war, cars became more

plentiful. More cars for pleasure, not just for business. But when I was a child, if you drove a car downtown to get a loaf of bread or a sack of groceries, you were considered, the word my family used was "slack." You used that car on Sundays to go for a ride after you finished your Sunday dinner, which you ate after Church. See, it's a whole different ball game.

TRENT: Sure, sure ...

Any other social changes compared to when you were growing up?

SUSAN: One thing, and I'm sorry to see it happen, these social organizations, say the Grange, that was a very important organization, and Norwood had Grange Number 3. That has declined so that even the last active one in Norfolk has folded. Some of the other social organizations have dwindled. It seems that people are now – they don't depend on going to something local for fellowship, entertainment. Now we sit home and watch TV. About that time, too, the movies became much nicer. I remember when the talkies began. Before that, we went to the movies on Saturday afternoon. It was something like a nickel, I think. If we couldn't read, there was somebody around who could. And that was a big social thing – everybody went to the movies once or twice a week.

TRENT: Where were these movies at?

SUSAN: Well, we had a movie theatre here in Norwood. And Potsdam had two. There was the Star on Raymond. There was the Rialto on Market Street, which now is a furniture store, and later on, after they went out of busi-

ness, they had a fire, I think, there came the Roxy over on Main Street. But the movies were a big thing. And, as I say, these organizations like the Grange and such. The Oddfellows, the Foresters, and Maccabees, you don't even hear of those any more, but they were very important.

TRENT: These organizations, like the Grange for instance, why would people go to the Grange?

SUSAN: Well, it was mainly for farm – for agricultural things. But they had a very active social life. They always had a party after the meeting, but they would have refreshments and entertainment, they would play games.

TRENT: Oh, really?

SUSAN: At home, before radio and TV, we played games. Now I played thousands of games and I can't remember the rules. At a yard sale a couple of years ago, somebody had a package of Flinch cards and I can't remember the rules. It's a card game.

Of course people used to go and spend the evening with a neighbor. You just arrived on the doorstep at, say, seven o'clock and you went in and you visited, you played games and sometime during the evening the hostess, willing or not, would get out and have a hot beverage. You'd spend the evening... now, you wouldn't dream of... I wouldn't go unless I asked her if it was convenient if I came at such and such a time. Just a social change.

TRENT: Sure, sure. Now in addition to seeing things on education in the Norwood Museum, what else would we see?

SUSAN: What we call the "master bedroom" with clothing of different styles in women's clothing, and we have set up a children's room with games and clothing, such as that. We have the Fire Department minute books from the very beginning in 1876. Their silver horns, the chief would have a silver horn, use it like a megaphone, you know. Norwood always had a great fire department. They had what they used to call Fire Races. When I was writing for the paper, one of them came to me and said, "Don't call them that – for our fire insurance, they're Firematic Drills." Oh, yes. And our boys have even gone down as far as New York City to compete in these things.

TRENT: Wow.

SUSAN: They had a winning team for quite a while back. I just don't hear much about them any more. I don't know whether they're active in their line or not. The wives of some of these men were... of course July 4th was a big day in Norwood... it still is, but it's been toned down considerably. The young wives of these men were ... one of them came to me one day and said, "Can't you write something to stop this?" They had a stripped-down squad car and they'd run that as fast as they could and the men would jump out, grab this hose, go up this ladder, and get water. Of course that was the point, whichever team got the water first, they were the winner. The wives were so afraid. I've seen those men go up missing three or four steps, they would reach up so far to get that water, the first that they possibly could.

TRENT: This was all during the races?

SUSAN: Oh, yes. The firemen's races. There were different races that they had to complete. There were dangers to compete. These were young men with families, and I can understand why the wives were concerned. They could get injured. I don't recall anyone ever getting injured badly, but I'm sure there were a lot of bruises and black-and-blue marks, you know... it was competitive.

And, of course, our fireworks at dusk, at the end of July 4th – they had an enormous parade.

In 1972 when Norwood had our centennial, it topped it all. It was an enormous parade, it was over an hour, in a village like this, it was our centennial, and everybody outdid themselves. Many of the organizations had floats. I remember I was concerned with, involved in, three organizations that had floats. One of them had a pump, the Chamber of Commerce, they had an old-fashioned pump, somebody was pumping it, and the water was coming out into a tub. That was the Methodist Church - they had a little organ on the float. They had the choir members and they were singing and... oh, yes, the Senior Citizens, the Golden Agers, had a covered wagon. Well, they had contacted a man who had oxen, and he was supposed to be there. The day before the parade, he called and said he was pretty tired, he'd been in two to three parades, and he thought his oxen were tired, so they weren't coming. So these men, the Free Methodist Church, the minister was a young man, they got together, and they pulled the wagon. They had a sign "No oxen, but with the help of God, we'll make it."

And they had some women riding in the covered wagon dressed as pioneers would have made. And then men made a good showing – dark trousers, white shirt – I don't recall who won the prizes. The prizes were just small amounts of money, but it was the prestige of winning the award.

TRENT: As a historian, were you very involved in the planning of the celebration?

SUSAN: Oh, yes. We had a committee. I went to the Village Board, and I said I don't know what I can do, I've got a sick husband, and one of the members said, well, if you want me to, I'll be general chairman. He worked for the telephone company and he was on strike, so he had it. He could, as they say, charm birds out of the trees. He really could. We got advertising enough, in our book, that it paid for the book. And he had his finger in every single situation. Everybody cooperated, and we asked each church and organization to appoint a general representative to attend meetings. Well, there were 44 representatives, and one Sunday afternoon, we had 40 people there.

TRENT: Wow! That is phenomenal. We don't get that at meetings.

SUSAN: No, but everybody was so cooperative, and so anxious to have Norwood make a good showing, and I think we did. BOCES built a beautiful birthday cake made out of wood. It was round and painted to look like a cake, white frosting with blue decorations, and they brought it down the hill from BOCES about 6 a.m. one morning on a trailer and set it up right

by the municipal building in that park. It revolved. We didn't have it turning 24-hours a day, but it revolved.

You know, I think we did well. And all of the stores had special window displays.

Antique furniture – somebody had a display with a morning glory horn - and different things of antique or interest that went along with the Centennial. I was writing for the paper – I was thinking, that if I had a column a century ago, and each week I put something about what would have happened a century ago. You know, Yellowstone National Park was founded in 1872, the same year Norwood was.

So, I have a century ago dealing with the Centennial. We had an opening dinner, in January of 1972, that coincided with the first board meeting in 1872. We had a king and queen, a lovely elderly man and woman. Shall I say, dating? They were both in their seventies, but were friendly. They both loved to go to dances a lot. They were just great as King & Queen. Somebody in Madrid had an old Model T Ford, and anytime they had to go somewhere, he would come and take them in that old Model T. They presided at anything they were asked to during the Centennial. Things went on during the year – there was a box social, block dances, the young people love a block dance you know. Then we had a closing dinner, but unfortunately I got pneumonia, I couldn't go to the closing dinner.

But, we had that in January of 1973 to close out the Centennial Year. It was a busy year. We had special exhibits at the library and at the museum. As I say, the co-

operation was 100 percent. I asked hundreds of people to hundreds of things, and they were glad to do it. Everything that I asked ...

TRENT: That's nice to see.

SUSAN: I think a lot of people wait. They hate to volunteer for fear that their talents aren't what might be acceptable. But they're pleased to be asked.

TRENT: Is there any project or research that you look back on that you're particularly proud of, or particularly enthusiastic about?

SUSAN: Yes, my railroad book. That's been out of print – we only had 300 copies done. I got a \$300 grant from America the Beautiful Fund, so we only could get 300 copies. I worked on that for about two years. I'm sorry that's out of print. But, of course, I had borrowed photos for the illustrations.

And Louise Fletcher Chase, my mentor, and I did the first Centennial Book for 1971-72. And we spent about three summers over in the County Clerk's Office doing land history, so the land history is in that first book, it's not in the second one for 1995 because it would be redundancy. But I'm pleased that those have been done.

TRENT: You talked about the railroads in Norwood?

SUSAN: Yes, "Rails into Racquetteville." I think I have two copies here.

I'm having a little trouble getting up.

TRENT: Need some help?

SUSAN: Yes ... I'm like Carol Burnett when she and Harvey Korman play that old couple getting the rocking chairs started.

SUSAN: See, I have we had a hard time keeping a copy in the museum – see that slips into a pocket.

TRENT: It's unfortunate that those things happen, and this even has a map in it of the railroads. Wonderful.

SUSAN: Yes, the husband of one our committee people drew that map – he wasn't especially interested in history, but he drew the map. The printing company made it more professional.

TRENT: You even have a list of the short lines in back to let people know what lines they were.

SUSAN: I enjoyed doing that – I did that all by myself – I enjoyed doing it – I have the script for it.

TRENT: You did this book when?

SUSAN: Nineteen-seventy-six. That was my gift to the Bicentennial, but I had been collecting information for two to three years before. For such a small book, that seems a lot of time to invest in a project, but that's the way I do things.

TRENT: And research takes time ... it doesn't happen overnight.

SUSAN: I was working - I was writing for the newspaper.

TRENT: You had several things going on.

SUSAN: Yes, I was wearing a lot of different hats.

TRENT: What are the Norwood Museum hours?

SUSAN: Tuesday and Thursday, 2 to 4 p.m. and by appointment.

Now, with the new man, his name is Richard Doyle, I'd have to look up his telephone number.

TRENT: But people can contact you as well?

SUSAN: Yes, you can contact me and he'll go down, or I will myself.

TRENT: Can you talk a little bit about the St. Lawrence County Historians Group? How that came about?

SUSAN: Well, yes. We didn't have an active county historian then the way we do now. We felt that historians were adrift. New historians would say to us older ones, "I don't know what I'm supposed to do. Nobody every told me. My supervisor didn't tell me. Nobody seems to know." Well, why not get together.

So, we had a sort of luncheon meeting. And Elwood Simons, then, he was a great organizer, and I love to organize things – we were a good pair. We had it at the Lobster House, it was the Sunset then, we had it there, and we had a good turnout from all over the county. We discussed this: do you want to have an informal club, no dues, but just a central source for information. Well, that's what they thought they would like to do. Elwood and I were, I don't know why I get these good jobs, none of them pay anything, Elwood and I were appointed co-chairpersons, and

Elizabeth Winn Secretary, and Mildred Jenkins did the publicity. And we decided to have two meetings a year – a spring one and a fall meeting. Maybe April and early October, and we've been doing it since 1991.

We try to make it educational, social, and a fun thing to do. And I think we've been moderately successful. And right now, after Elwood's unfortunate death, we were lucky enough to get Carl Stickney to say that he would be co-chair and he and I have to get together for a program for the fall – and he and I are both thinking along the same lines of something involving the schools. Historians and teachers working together - how historians can help the schools. The schools don't seem to ask us anymore. Patricia Sharpe, yesterday, said she would go anytime but no one has ever asked her, and no one's asked me in quite a few years.

Most museums don't have enough artifacts to send teacher boxes for that length of time. They don't have duplicates of enough things that would fit in with social studies, so the best thing, the only thing we can do is for the historian or a representative to speak to classes. I always ask the teacher what topic in history are you studying - what period? We bring things, take things, that would be pertinent to that period.

TRENT: So the St. Lawrence County Historians Group is a group for the county's historians?

SUSAN: The County Historians and Friends. Carl, I think is the only person not a historian. We have a lot of just interested people who come, or former historians who attend. They like

what we're doing and they like to see their old friends.

TRENT: It's a good chance to catch up and if you don't make time to get together, you really don't.

SUSAN: And I would like to see it continue, but for me it's getting ... I think it's time for someone younger to step in because I'm not going to be going on forever. The job description closes me out when I get to be 90. Carl will be great to work with – he's knowledgeable, he's enthusiastic, he has the time and so I'm hoping we can find someone who will be willing to work with him.

TRENT: Sure.

SUSAN: I'd like to sit back for a while and just enjoy it, not have the last meeting. I was having trouble with my voice and I couldn't talk. So, what would you like to have us emphasize in our next group meeting? That's coming up in October.

TRENT: It's gonna be upon us quick, and I think the idea of how historians can work with schools is a good one. It sounds like a very good topic to me, so I think if you do a program on that ...

SUSAN: Now, my supervisor, he's a jewel – he teaches social studies at Potsdam. I'll have to talk to Carl, maybe we could get someone like that. Our new chairperson for the museum was a prior teacher, but I don't know what his field was.

TRENT: I think it would be good to invite some educators and get them to talk about what they can use in the schools, and talk about some of what we have to offer.

SUSAN: Yes, absolutely. It's a two-way street. Because I think any of the historians would be tickled to death to go into the schools and do ...

TRENT: Well, that's all part of our outreach ...

SUSAN: Because these students are our future historians.

TRENT: You're exactly right.

SUSAN: One historian told me the other day her granddaughter, who is 10 or 12, was up helping her put flags up in the cemetery. She says she thinks she's helping Grandma. And I said, "You're raising a historian!" With simple little things like that.

And now, I wish ... while I was growing up, we didn't have TV, and radios were just coming in, very scarce ... they visited, they reminisced ... I wish I had had brains enough to listen instead of playing Flinch, because look what I missed. See, I grew up with older people and they would talk about what happened in schools, what happened years ago.

TRENT: I am sure you hear this from a lot of people too, we always hear at the Historical Association from people doing their family history research and they always lament that they should have listened to parents and grandparents, written this stuff down, and asked questions.

SUSAN: See, I'm going to do in October, I'm going to do a program for LIFT (for widows and widowers) and that's a reminiscent type program. In fact, I've got a sheet there in my desk drawer that I write down when I

think of it ... like Chatauqua. Everybody my age remembers Chatauqua. They would come for a week – my mother would always get me a season ticket, which meant that every evening there was a program, and every morning there were things for younger children, Junior Chatauqua ... different things that are now just a memory to older people.

TRENT: Can you tell us what Chatauqua is??

SUSAN: It was an organization, in fact I think there's a Chatauqua, NY – is it out by Buffalo? They put on programs, they had an enormous tent, very nice – it might be music, musical program. I remember a magician, an especially good magician, or little one- or two-act plays ... enough to take up the evening. Oh, yes, everybody went to Chatauqua.

TRENT: They would travel from town to town?

SUSAN: Yes, let me get my sheet out here. Yes, music. Every town had dance. Norwood, of course, always had a good dance. My father-in-law played in the band; he played French horn. He played in the band in Ogdensburg when they dedicated that statue to Luther Curtis. The Chatauqua program – home talent – that was big in Norwood – these home talent plays. It usually would be at least two nights in the music hall. That was a beautiful little brick building where the municipal hall is now. And the floor slanted, and it was always packed. And dances, of course, we had a very well known dance pavilion about a mile out of Norwood. Oh my, Hillview. They had big bands –

that was the big band era.

Food, of course your Victory Gardens, that was later. Sick cures. Did you ever, I'm sure when you had a sore throat, you never had to take "Sloan's Liniment" on sugar ... oh, my, that was what happened to me any-time I had a sore throat. And we had a man that made medicines down here at a little factory. My mother worked there when she was a girl ... made liniment, horse liniments and things like that. Doctors made house calls. Oh, yes, the stores always had delivery. I can remember one store, a very prosperous store, the delivery man was a horse-and-wagon. He'd come up through here about 11 o'clock in the morning.

Gas before World War II was about 12 to 13 cents a gallon. I can remember when hostilities were getting worse in Europe there was a rumor that gas might go to 25 cents a gallon. We said, "If that's the case, I'll put my car up!" People used to, to explain that term, to put the car on blocks, so that the tires didn't sit on the ground, but of course I think I paid \$1.21 per gal yesterday, and it was a good price.

Use it up, make it up, or go without. We'd used the backs of men's shirts to make aprons, some children's things ... we had to, that was the way of life. It was common when sheets got thin in the center - of course they were 100 percent cotton sheets, then - they got thin in the center, you cut them down the middle and put the two selvage edges together and sewed the selvages so you had a sheet with a seam in the center. And then, of course, you'd hem the outsides roughly.

Of course, we all sewed our children's clothes – made quilts from scraps. We used chicken-feed bags. Chicken feed came in cloth bags, and some of them were very nice patterns – my daughter says she can remember going with her father and picking out bags of chicken feed with a pattern that she wanted something made from. I don't remember that, but she does.

We'd use those for dresses, panties, pillowcases ... money was short, we had to do the best we could with what we had. But I don't remember anybody feeling sorry for themselves. This was a way of life. Everything was made from scratch – cakes, pie crusts – everything was made like that...you made it.

TRENT: This was while you were growing up?

SUSAN: Yes. And when I was married. I was married in 1931. Oh, yes. I used to make most of my daughter's clothes. It was hard to make for a boy. I did make my son's sport shirts once or twice, but it was hard to make. I wasn't that good a seamstress. I made most of my daughter's clothes, and I made their pajamas, things like that. You know, you did it, and loved doing it.

TRENT: Do you have any favorite stories of Potsdam or Norwood? Favorite parts of the history that you find interesting?

SUSAN: I find it all interesting.

TRENT: Spoken like a true historian.

SUSAN: I find the entertainment and the music programs ... I'm partial to those. And of course, at Crane there's some-

thing always going on. And plays –they’re doing “Hello Dolly” –right now or have been recently –my favorite play.

I’ve seen it on television, but I’ve never seen it one stage. Another thing, the County Historical Society used to have day bus trips –that would be very difficult to do now, I’m sure—but it was a highlight. We went to the Reservation one time; we went to Ottawa, where my husband and daughter got deathly sick of food poisoning; toured the colleges one time; went up to Colton when the new hydroelectric system was first done – they would be places like that, you know, we went. When I stop and think now what work it must have been for Doris Planty the historian to do these trips – because I’m doing them for the Golden Agers – now, I know what a lot of work it was. Of course, she had history for all over the county. I have local people, more or less. It was a lot for her, and she put on beautiful trips.

TRENT: Well, you never really realize what goes into it until you have to do it yourself.

SUSAN: That’s right. That is for sure. But, I love living in a small town, and I think my son was a small town boy. When he graduated from Clarkson, he got a wonderful job offer from Connecticut, Hartford, well, he stayed there over a year because he didn’t want it on his resume that he didn’t last long, but he wanted something closer to home. He went to IBM in Poughkeepsie, and then Clarkson offered him a job teaching. He took it so fast, he was so glad to come home. Of course, he loved to teach – he was teaching in college when he was 24 – he was a

chemical engineer. I like a small town. Small towns now are different. Your population is stable, yes, we’re still about 2,000 people, but I don’t know who lives across the street from me. People moved in three weeks ago – I have no idea who they are.

My mother would be aghast to think that a neighbor moved in and the other ladies didn’t go and call. You’d take maybe a half-dozen cookies – you’d take something – and call on that lady, the new lady. But, people don’t do that anymore. Everybody works – they come home, it’s supertime – they don’t have time! I know, because I worked. When I got home in time to get supper for a family, and in the library I had a job, so I didn’t have time to call on people or to have people call on me. See, this is another social aspect that’s “gone with the wind.”

TRENT: Sure, sure.

SUSAN: But, I like the atmosphere of a small town. When I go into the bank, they know who I am.

TRENT: Now, you mentioned that you had moved to Norwood.

SUSAN: Yes, in 1922. No, I wasn’t born in Norwood. I was born in the Town of Lawrence.

TRENT: And then you moved from Lawrence to Norwood?

SUSAN: Yeah. Well, I was orphaned at a very early age, and I came to Norwood to live with cousins ... well, they were an aunt and uncle.

TRENT: Well, Susan, is there anything that we haven’t talked about that you’d like to talk

about?

SUSAN: I think I’ve bent your ear enough. I would like to take you up into my office and show you some of the things I’ve done. I’ve got the originals of these things that I’m giving you. I’ve read these things and I’ve put them into notebooks.

TRENT: Well, why don’t we do that? I’ll just turn this (recorder) off ...

Newton Falls In 1925

By Kenneth R. Ross

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Newton Falls Paper Mill mentioned in this article and the one following were closed in the autumn of 2000.

James L. Newton created a company to build a sawmill, a paper mill and a village on a greenfield site in the middle of virgin forest. He chose a location in a 15,000 acre tract he owned by a falls on the Oswegatchie River in the Town of Clifton, St. Lawrence County, New York.

The Adirondack and Carthage Railroad extended a rail line three miles to the site from Benson Mines. Construction began with the sawmill in 1894. The first paper machine started up in early 1896. The mills and the village were all owned by the company. Newton named the company and the village Newton Falls.

This was a time when the original forest was being cut as it became accessible from the railroads. Saw mills were built, including housing for workers, but they were temporary, usually lasting just a few years, and abandoned when the prime timber, within reach, was exhausted. Buildings from the sawmill days still remain in places like Wanakena, but evidence of their existence are completely gone in others like Newbridge.

Pulp and paper mills were built on many river sites in the

Western Adirondack drainage area in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The mills depended on the rivers for power and the transportation of floating softwood, spruce and fir, to the mills. The pulp and paper mills soon suffered from the competition of larger, more efficient mills, especially in Canada, and insufficient long-term wood supply. Most of the mills have closed, but a very few remain. Newton Falls is one of the survivors, the paper mill still running more than a hundred years later using purchased pulp for fiber. The pulp mill stopped operating around 1930. Residences in the village were built at different times over the years by the company until 1956, when they sold nearly all of the homes to the occupants. Since 1956, several individuals have bought lots from the company and built homes on them.

Thirty years after the village was founded, when the 1925 Census was taken, older people tell me itinerant paper makers came to the mill door unannounced looking for work and left just as casually. The main travel mode was still the train but that was changing. Route 3, a paved concrete highway into the area, reached Star Lake that year, making automobile travel more practical.

Two publishers, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company of New York and Chilton Company of Philadelphia, bought the mill, town and timber lands in 1920.

They were motivated by experiences with paper shortages during WWI. The new owners hired the Lacey Company to inventory the timber resources on the lands in 1925. My father, Alexander M. Ross, Jr. was one of the Lacey team and this exposure to Newton Falls led to his joining the company as a forester later in 1925. (He must have come after June 1, since he is not in the 1925 Census.)

This review of the 1925 Census for Newton Falls is the first of a planned series of articles, based on the census records, about the village. Just going through the listing and putting it in a form to be published has been an emotional experience for me. Many of the people in the census are friends, acquaintances, co-workers or part of the local folklore during my growing up years.

I was born in 1929, just four years after the census, not at home in Newton Falls as many of my contemporaries were, but in the hospital in Ogdensburg, NY. My parents brought me home to the company owned bungalow at 109 Grove Street, where I lived for all of my growing up years with my parents and my brother Don, who was born in 1931. The house at 109 Grove is one of several pre-cut houses the company bought from Sears and Roebuck. Don and I attended school across and up the street within sight of our house. After high school, in 1947, I left

Newton Falls for college, studied engineering and worked in the paper industry for over forty years. Nineteen of those years were spent working at the Newton Falls Mill and living in the village during my children's growing up years. My perspective then is that of a child, a teenager, an adult village resident and a paper engineer with working experience both in Newton Falls and at several other locations.

The census is for any person living in the location on June 1, 1925. The place is Town of Clifton, County of St. Lawrence, State of New York, Election District No. 3, and Assembly District No. 2. The enumerator is Frank B. Towman (who is listed as age 66, attorney at law and living in the Newton Falls Hotel). The census lists all residents by name (first, last and middle initial), relationship to the head of family when they reside, sex, age, country of birth, year immigrated to the US (calculated from number of years in the US in the census), occupation, and residence location. The 796 people in Newton Falls are sixty percent of the 1,317 enumerated in the Town of Clifton (two other election districts are in Benson Mines and Cranberry Lake). (See the notes for more detail on the source information.)

The population of the village was young and diverse. Only fourteen were over 64 and ten of these were employed men. The oldest people in the record are two 76-year-old mothers of heads of family. Eleven countries of origin are represented among the 161 (twenty percent) born outside the US. The eleven countries are Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia,

Scotland and Syria. Of 147 heads of families (two were women), thirty percent or forty-four individuals were born outside the US.

Twenty-eight were Canadian born and twenty-two of those were French Canadian. The Canadian born are recorded as Fr for French, Eng for English, I/E for Irish England, S/E for Scot English and so on. Poland, with twelve heads of family, was the country of origin for the second largest group from outside the US. Notable by their absence, no one born in Italy lived in Newton Falls at this census, although we know from earlier census that Italian immigrants had worked and lived in Newton Falls before 1925. The immigrants' time in the US ranged from just a few months to seventy years for Joseph La Plant, Sr., 74, who arrived as a child in 1855.

Children are listed under occupation as "school," or "child" for those too young for school. One hundred seventy-eight are in the school category and 160 are "child," ages one day through five years (a few are six). Twenty-nine are babies less than a year old. The youngest child was a yet un-named, one day old girl, daughter of Walter and Nettie Narrow. Many of the men who went off to World War II from Newton Falls are in the child age group. Among them is Merwin Eno (census spelling) who died while serving with the army in Hawaii. The local Mervin Eno American Legion Post is named for him.

Only two teachers and a principal are in the census; not enough it would seem for 178 students. There are three teachers for fewer students in Benson

Mines. Perhaps one or more commuted from there to Newton Falls.

"Lodger" is the relationship category for 106 people in the census. These are roomers in homes and residents in the Newton Falls Hotel, the Club House and boarding houses. The lodgers are mostly young men. Eight females are in the lodger category.

Turning to the occupations and the mill operations. The mill had two papers machines in 1925, a sulphite pulp mill and wood handling facilities. Groundwood pulping no longer operated. The saw mill was running. The company owned the entire village and that required maintenance, especially carpentry and painting. Mill management had a strong Scottish influence.

General Manager William Gregor, Paper Mill Superintendent John Gregor, and Paper Makers Lewis Grant and Angus Wilson were all Scottish born. The future, long-time president of the Newton Falls Company, Ron (Ronald W.) Hunes, age 23, is in the census, lodged in the Club House with four other young men. He is a paper maker. His future wife, Esther C. Kemzura, age 26, cashier, is a boarder in the Newton Falls Hotel. It is surprising to find a foreman and three people in de-inking. This was well before the sulphite mill shut down and it must be one of the early de-inking operations in the country.

The search was on for fiber to supplement the dwindling supply of softwood pulpwood. I counted 230 people in the paper mill operations including carpen-

ters, house carpenters and teamsters, but not county sawmill workers. Management and staff—eighteen, foremen—twelve, papermakers—thirty-three, maintenance—thirty-two, laborers—forty-one, calendaring and finishing—twenty-nine, pulping and beaters—thirty-nine, boiler and operating engineers—eight, carpenters—thirteen, and yard and teamsters—five.

About seventy people were employed outside the paper mill. Fifteen of those worked in the sawmill. Five are chauffeurs. In those days before every household had an automobile, chauffeur, apparently, was a more common profession. Four people are river drivers. Their skills were important then, when much of the soft wood was cut in the winter and floated down the river to the mill in the spring. One wonders what the river drivers did during the time when there were no log drives. The other occupations were services for the village and mill; one physician, two barbers, two postal employees, three railroad people, four farmers, three cooks, three hotel and boarding house managers, ten waiters and waitresses, five domestic workers, five lumbermen in the camps, a merchant and a sales lady, the school principal and two teachers, five retired, an attorney, one auto mechanic, an A&P salesman.

Of the 796 Newton Falls residents in 1925, I count six who were living in the village in 1996.

Newton Falls in 1900

By Kenneth R. Ross

Newton Falls in 1900, albeit still a raw place - just four years after the paper mill started operations - should have been settling into a normal life. The village, sawmill and paper mill were built on the virgin site starting in 1894. Overall, the area was bustling with activity.

The iron ore mine at Benson Mines was about ten years old. Lumbering was going on to feed local sawmills and the newer market for pulp wood. Railroads into the region were necessary to establish the industries. The Adirondack & Carthage Railroad starting from Carthage in 1883, reached Jayville in 1886, Benson Mines in 1889 and Newton Falls in 1894. The railroad also created an opportunity for vacationing families to reach the lakes, forests, hunting and fishing of the Western Adirondacks in relative ease that before this were enjoyed only by a few rugged sportsmen. Several hotels were built in the area in 1892 to accommodate the visitors.

This was the setting for the Twelfth Census of the United States in 1900, the beginning of the new century, for New York State, St. Lawrence County, Clifton Town - the first US Census since Newton Falls Village was built. The whole Town of Clifton was identified as one district recorded by Wm. W. Thompson, enumerator, who compiled the census in June 1900. He counted 1,385 people in the

Town of Clifton. Only seventy-one were in the 1880 census before the railroad, the sawmills, the mines and the paper mill. (The 1880 census is the most recent available before 1900. The 1890 US Census was destroyed by fire.) This is the second study of census information for Newton Falls. The first was for the 1925 state census.

I have transcribed part of the 1900 census to a readable form from microfilm. First, I guessed from the occupations listed, where Newton Falls begins and ends in the census. If my assumptions are correct, the total population for the village is 385, including three on the Lewis Koster place which is close by but not connected with a road to Newton Falls, according to an 1896 map of St. Lawrence County by Blankman. The names are my best attempt to decipher the faint copies of not-always-clear handwriting. Some are surely wrong. The remaining 1,000 people in the Town of Clifton are in Benson Mines (an estimated 750), Cranberry Lake, Cook's Corners or woods camps.

The 1896 map shows the railroad from Carthage ending at Newton Falls. The Higbie Lumber Co. formed the Newton Falls & Northern Railroad to extend the track north to Newbridge in 1908. The Old Albany Road is shown intact from Skate Creek, a short distance north of the Oswegatchie River, crossing the

river at about where Browns Falls Reservoir is now, then passing by Koster's where a spur leads westward to Browns Falls, across Benson Mines, ending at Sternburg's Hotel at the Inlet on the river going into Cranberry Lake.

Roads are linking Newton Falls with Benson Mines and Cook's Corners, but not to Oswegatchie. The road from Benson Mines by Muskrute Pond to Old Forge and Cranberry Lake is on the map. It apparently was used only a few years in the 1890s. All of these roads were unpaved, of course, before automobiles. Another interesting feature on the map is Park Island in the river just below the Newton Falls Mill. No reservoir is shown above the mill. The original dam was lower than the dam structure that was built when hydroelectric generators were installed.

Of the 385 people that I think are in Newton Falls, 213 are born in New York State, forty-four are natives of other states and 128 (one third) are born in other countries. Nearly half of the latter, fifty-seven, are from French Canada. The countries represented are Ireland, England, Scotland, English Canada and Germany. There are sixty heads of family. A few other heads of family are designed as boarders. The boarders (121) are over thirty percent of the population and most are single young men.

They are living in the hotel, boarding houses and in private ones. Only eight are females; wives and children and two women boarders who are paper counters. Children make up nearly twenty-five percent of the total population. There are forty-two children between 5 and 17 at school and six of these are 14 or over. Another fifty-one are youngsters at home. At least one 14-year-old is a laborer in the mill.

Studying the occupations, 153 qualify as mill workers but it is not clear which area some are working in because so many (fifty-four) are called laborers. Paper machines have eighteen listed, including machine tenders and back tenders, the same jobs titles we use today, but no one called themselves third or fourth hands, etc. Perhaps those terms were not in use yet. Another eighteen are clearly pulp mill workers and only nine seem to fit maintenance.

Did operators do some of their own maintenance? Nine are teamsters in the yard at a time when true horsepower was the motive force. There are eleven firemen, eleven carpenters (they probably worked both in the village and the mill), ten finishing, four engineers, two bookkeepers and one stenographer, a male. Five more people are marked as paper and pulp laborers and paper counters but are on pages of the census I deemed were not in Newton Falls from the other occupations on those pages.

The count above does not include eighteen sawmill workers who lived in the village. Four people seemed to be management, as we would call them today. They are twenty-seven-

year-old Harry Newton, manager of the Paper Mill, who is there with his wife and 3-year-old son. It seems likely that he is a relative of James Newton, the mill's founder. The other three are called supt. paper mill, boss paper mill and boss, pulp.

The remaining occupations in the village are wood chopper – four, boarding house proprietor – two, hotel manager, servant – twelve, chore boy, hotel clerk – two, chef, store manager, salesmen – three, stage driver, barber, butcher, school teacher, miners, railroad agent, a farmer and three farm laborers. All except two are living in rented quarters. The company owned the entire village. Two individual owners were Lewis Koster, west of the village, and Fred Loop, stage driver.

Few names are familiar in the 1900 list. Only Lewis Koster and the Currier family are in Newton Falls both 1900 and 1925. Koster is a hotel proprietor in 1900 with a servant and her children in his household and in 1925 he is a farmer living alone. The Paul Currier family in 1900 is Paul, 35, Oiler with wife Georgine, 36, one daughter Birtha, 6, and two sons, Jeremiah, 5, and Ubard (sp), 4. By 1925, Paul and daughter Birtha are not in the household, which has mother Georgiana, sons Hubert, 29, Restaurant, Jerry, 30, Louis, 22 and Max, 24, waiters.

A doctor, James Wiltse, is in Benson Mines but none is shown in Newton Falls. The person listed as minister is James Cody, forty-two, single, from Canada. Eng. Samuel (Sam) Spain is the proprietor of the Newton Falls Hotel in 1900. He later owned

the Sunny Lake Hotel and the Ellsworth Hotel in Benson Mines.

I copied and studied the census records for all of the Town of Clifton in 1900. Many throughout the town are wood choppers. This was the peak of the virgin spruce harvest in the region. Trees were cut down with axes (chopped), and cut into lengths with crosscut saws, at this time, according to the Fox Reference. McMartin (see references), states that the crosscut saw was introduced to the Adirondacks from Wisconsin in 1891. Bucksaws were also used for cutting lengths. Several guides and hotel proprietors are in Cranberry Lake and Cook's Corners ready to serve the fishermen, hunters and vacationers who came along. Benson Mines was the home of workers at the Magnetic Iron Ore Company.

Although few residents from 1900 still lived in Newton Falls in 1925, several are recognized in other parts of the town who later lived in Newton Falls. Three future Newton Falls Hotel proprietors are in this census. Hubert (Bert) Currier, 4 years old in 1900, served that role in the 1940s and 50s. Albert Burrell, 16 in 1900, preceded him in the 1930s and 1940s. Wm. (Bill) Nolan, 23 in 1900 and a carpenter then, was the Newton Falls Hotel proprietor in the 1920s. Nolan and Burrell lived in Benson Mines in 1900. Bill Nolan's older brother Ned, 33, boss in iron mine, boarded in the same household with Bill.

Annie Jamieson, 16, is in Benson Mines with her family. She and Bill Noland married in 1903. Zeke Allen, his wife Minnie and daughter Eva, who

later lived in Newton Falls, are in Benson Mines in 1900. Zeke works in iron ore mill by occupation. The Collis Deshanno (sp) family appears to be in Benson Mines although his occupation is "works in pulp wood mill." He has a son Fred, 3, who I presume is the same Fred Duchanno who later lived with his family and worked in Newton Falls for many years.

Other familiar names not directly associated with Newton Falls in the township are Wm. McAleese, 32, farmer, and his wife Eliza, both born in Ireland, and their three sons. They were on the farm near Cook's Corners at the time. Wm. Bill McAleese later became a well-known hotel keeper, guide and storyteller in Cranberry Lake. Another local name is Fred Tears, 39, store keeper in Benson Mines. He was out of a job in 1901 when the iron ore operation shut down. (Two Towns, Two Centuries, see references). Tears bought a store in Star Lake in 1909 that carried on into the 1960s and known as Tears store, long after Tears was gone. I am sure others from the area would recognize names that are not familiar to me. The records are available on microfilm through libraries and archives. This study did not include the Town of Fine, adjacent to Clifton, where about 1,700 people lived in 1900. It is interesting to note that the Standard Pulp Co. operated in Fine at Brown's Falls starting in 1893. I don't know how long it ran. I assume it was a small ground wood mill.

REFERENCES:

The transcribed census information and the other census references came from copies

printed from microfilm of the Twelfth Census of the United States of New York State, County of St. Lawrence, Township of Clifton, Supervisor's District No. 6, Enumeration District No. 81, Enumerated by Wm. W. Thompson in June 1900. The records are on 28 sheets marked 1A, 1B ... up to 14B. There are 50 lines on each page and 1385 total lines complete. I decided that Newton Falls started in the middle of page 6B and continued into page 10A. Using occupations as a guide, the other entries appeared to be in Cranberry Lake, Cook's Corners, Benson Mines or woods camps.

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BOOK REVIEW

Images of America – St. Lawrence County, by Susan Wood and Christopher Angus, is currently on sale at the St. Lawrence County Historical Association's Gift Shop.

A number of local county historians are acknowledged for their assistance in providing material for this publication. They are:

Carl Goodrich, Town of Brasher

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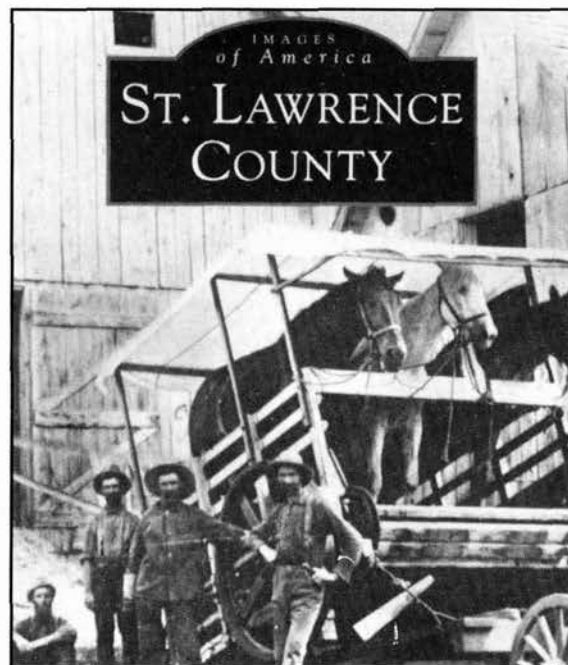
The introduction to the 128-page photographic display book states, "St. Lawrence County is sometimes called the largest county east of the Mississippi River.

"It is our intention to focus on the rich history of St. Lawrence

County, showing the movement of various population groups into the area, beginning in pioneer times. Logging, mining, farming, tourism, recreation, and education have all brought differing groups to the region, with each leaving its imprint," the introduction reported.

"Images of America – St. Lawrence County" may be purchased at the SLCHA located at 3 East Main St., Canton. The cost of the book is \$19.00 and contains 200 photos.

If anyone is interested in writing a review on this publication, please read the book and submit your written review to: SLCHA, Quarterly Editor, PO Box 8, Canton, NY 13617; or contact Trent Trulock at 315-386-8133.



**St. Lawrence County Historical Association
54th Annual Meeting November 3, 2001
St. Mary's Parish Hall, Waddington, NY**



*SLCHA Nomination Committee
Chairman Peter Van de Water
Presents Pat Patton with the
Volunteer of the Year Award for her
work in the archives. (Photo
courtesy of SLCHA)*

*SLCHA Board President Dick Foster
(right) presents SLCHA Director Trent
Trulock with an award to recognize
him for his work on the Red Barn
addition. (Photo courtesy of SLCHA)*



*SLCHA Nominating Committee
Chairman Peter Van de Water (left)
presents Robert Wells with an award
for Service on the Board as he
retires from his post (Photo courtesy
of SLCHA)*

**St. Lawrence County Historical Association
54th Annual Meeting November 3, 2001
St. Mary's Parish Hall, Waddington, NY**



President of the Wanakena Ranger School Chris Westbrooke was the speaker at the SLCHA Annual Meeting. (Photo courtesy of Pamela Ouimet)



A large crowd gathered to listen to Chris Westbrooke at the Annual meeting. (Photo courtesy of Pamela Ouimet)



A display on St. Lawrence County and Lumber. (Photo courtesy of Pamela Ouimet)



Town of Brasher Historian Carl Goodrich had a display of the Brasher State Forest. (Photo courtesy of Pamela Ouimet)

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