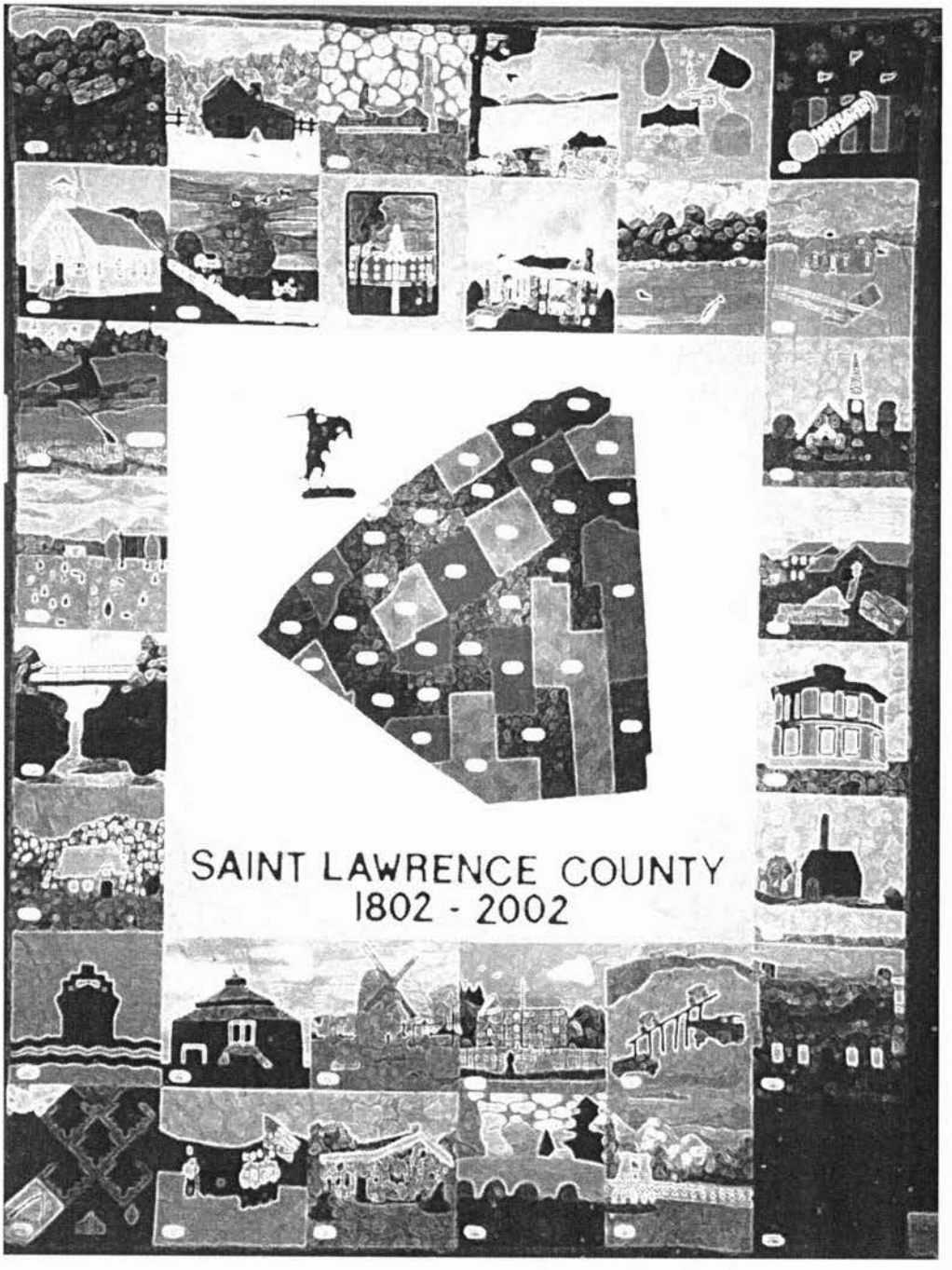
The St. Lawrence County Historical Association

QUARTERLY

Volume XLVI I- Number 3-4 - Summer/Fall 2002



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 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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Our Mission

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.

SLCHA Membership

Membership in the St. Lawrence County Historical Association is open to all interested parties. Annual membership dues are: Individual $30; Senior/Student $25; Family $40; Contributor $55; Supporter, $100; Patron $250. Members receive the SLCHA Quarterly, the Historical Association's bi-monthly newsletter, and various discounts on publications, programs and events.

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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 $2.00 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.

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Quarterly

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Cathleen O'Horo, Susan Omohundro & John Omohundro

Cover Illustration

The St. Lawrence County bicentennial quilt was created by members of the Borderline Quilters, Inc. quilt guild. It took almost a year from planning the concept to presenting the finished quilt in June of 2002. The center panel represents St. Lawrence County as a whole, while each of the 32 outside blocks stands for one of the county's towns and embodies a theme appropriate to that town. This quilt is a permanent part of the museum collection and is displayed in the Red Barn entryway hall.

From the Executive Director

I am proud to introduce this special issue of *The Quarterly* combining issues # 3 and #4 for 2002 to close out the St. Lawrence County Historical Association's celebration of St. Lawrence County's Bicentennial year. The year 2002 was an opportunity for all of us to reflect upon the county's past. I wonder what hopes and dreams the 156 people who signed the petition to the Senate and Assembly of the State of New York in 1802 calling for the establishment of a "county set off, upon the river St. Lawrence" had for this region. I think they would be pleased and amazed by what has transpired over the last 200 years in a region that, as late as the 1790's, was not even shown on some maps of New York State. The article by Sue Longshore on the "Shaping of St. Lawrence County" and the photographs that follow illustrate just how rich St. Lawrence County is in history and culture.

During 2002 the SLCHA celebrated the St. Lawrence County Bicentennial with numerous activities including: the publication of *Images of America St. Lawrence County*, a play by Mrs. Bastien's 3rd grade class from Canton Elementary School on the founding of Canton; the exhibit "The Shaping of St. Lawrence County," which included two table-top exhibits that traveled around the county; a celebration on July 11 which included a presentation on the "Highlights of St. Lawrence County History," historical music by R. Merrie Song, the dedication of the Bicentennial Time Capsule, a book signing, the display of the Bicentennial Quilt, Bicentennial T-shirts, and a float in the County's Bicentennial Parade; the Bicentennial Quilt Show; the sealing of the Bicentennial Time Capsule on December 20th, which will be opened in 50 years; and this Bicentennial issue of *The Quarterly*.

With this issue of *The Quarterly* you will notice a few changes. The SLCHA's Publications Committee has chosen to begin editing *The Quarterly.* I want to thank Pam Ouimet for serving as editor for the last 13 issues. Other changes include the paper stock and layout. We hope these changes will give *The Quarterly* a look reminiscent of its earlier days.

The SLCHA is eagerly looking for articles of all sizes on topics related to St. Lawrence County history. Please do not feel that you have to be a professional writer to send in a story. Our county's history is made up of the stories of the people who have lived here. These stories are all around us, and they tell us not only who lived here, but how they lived and what impacts they had on local, regional, state, national, and international history. I look forward to hearing your stories.

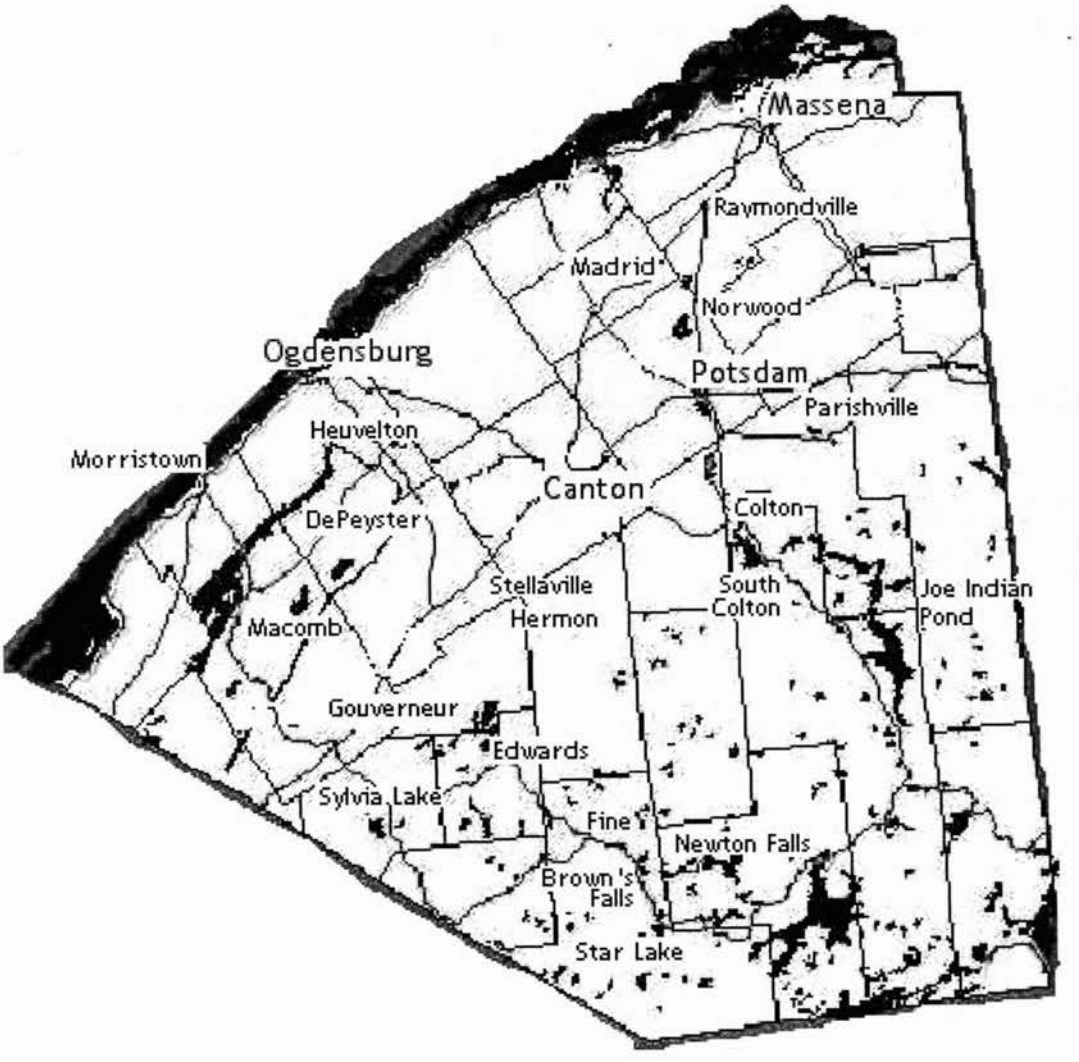
Trent Trulock
St. Lawrence County Historian
Executive Director, St. Lawrence County Historical Association

Museum Executive Director Trent Trulock conducted a short ceremony in the Red Barn on December 20, 2002 to dedicate the Bicentennial Time Capsule. The box contains a wide variety of donated items relating to the life and times of residents in St. Lawrence County. It is scheduled to be opened in 50 years. What will the people of 2050 think when they look over the contents? Will they smile? Joke at our expense? Wax nostalgic?

The Shaping of St. Lawrence County

text from the exhibit at the Red Barn
Suzanne Longshore
Curator

with images selected by
Cathleen O'Horo
Susan Omohundro
John Omohundro

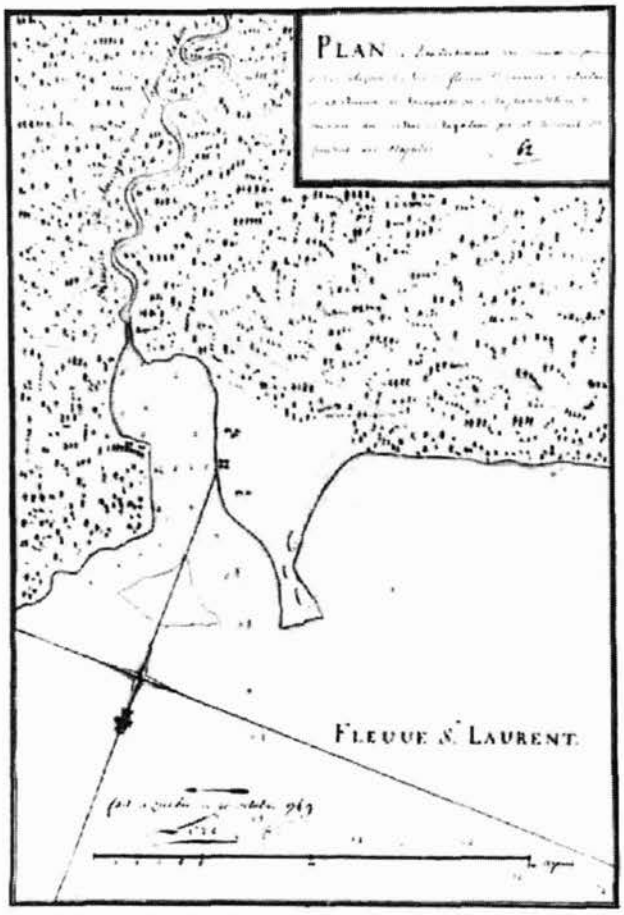


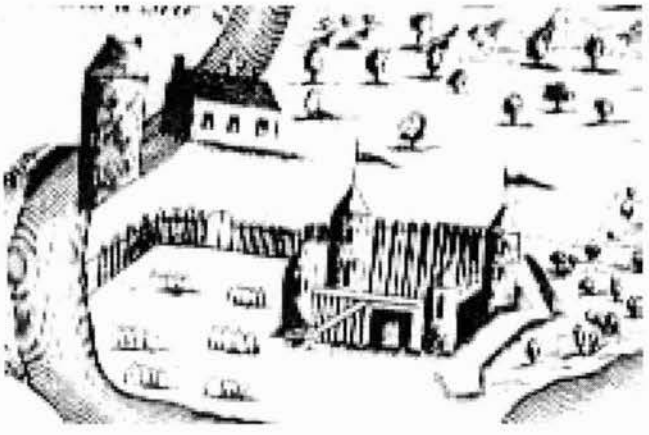
St. Lawrence County, showing locations mentioned in text.

Early Inhabitants

Prior to the 1600s, the area that later became northern New York served as common hunting and fishing grounds for Native Americans. Europeans began exploring the St. Lawrence River and adjacent lands as early as 1535, when the Frenchman Jacques Cartier discovered the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Cartier reached the gulf on the festival day of Saint Lawrence and thus named it after this saint. Nearly 75 years later another French explorer by the name of Samuel de Champlain (for whom Lake Champlain is named) was travelling in the St. Lawrence region. In 1608, Champlain founded the city of Quebec, which was the first permanent settlement in Canada and only the third in the Atlantic region of North America. A few years later, he established a trading post at what is now Montreal. And in 1615, Champlain introduced the first Catholic missionaries to New France, as the French North American settlement was called.

French Catholic priests and missionaries began to penetrate the lands of New France in the early 1600s. However, the first permanent European settlement in present-day St. Lawrence County was not established until Abbe François Picquet built Fort La Presentation in 1749. La Presentation was a mission and fort located at the mouth of the Oswegatchie River at the St. Lawrence River, where the City of Ogdensburg lies today.



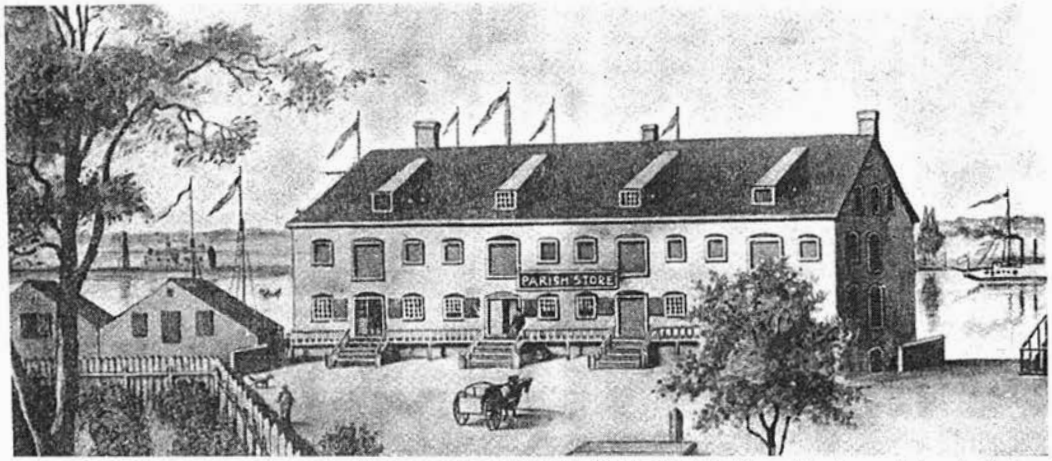


The mouth of the Oswegatchie as it appeared in 1749, drawn by a French cartographer. The companion drawing shows Fort La Presentation. [images provided by David Martin]

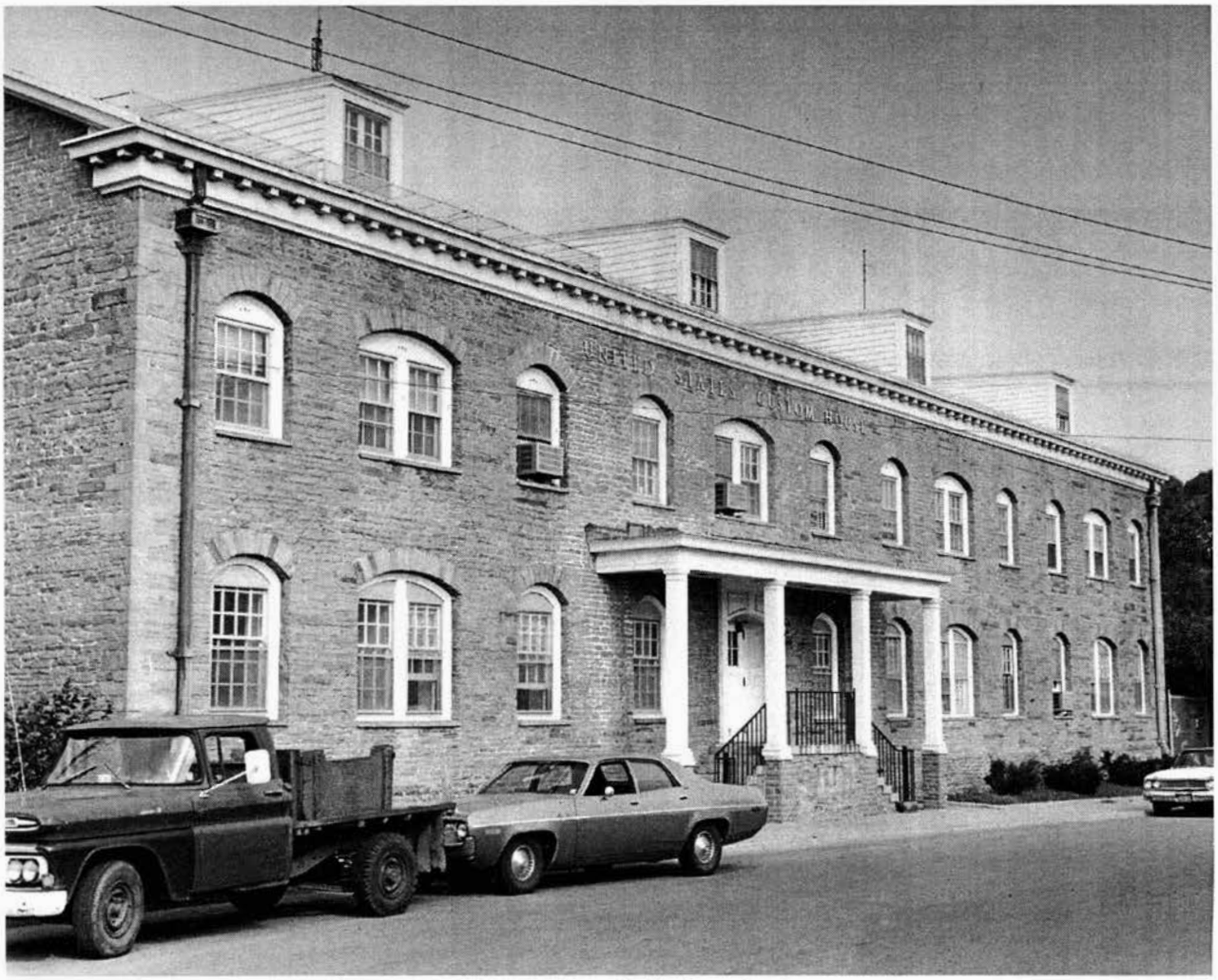
Macomb's Purchase

With the exception of Fort La Presentation, northern New York State was largely an unsettled wilderness. Following the Revolutionary War, the State of New York decided to sell off parcels of land in its northern regions in order to make some money to repay war debts and to encourage settlement of these remote areas. In 1786, the state laid out ten townships of ten mile square lots along the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, a total of 640,000 acres. In an auction the following year at the Merchant's Coffee House in New York City, Alexander Macomb, a New York businessman and former Detroit fur trader, successfully bid on most of these towns which were named as follows: Louisville, Stockholm, Potsdam, Madrid, Lisbon, Canton, DeKalb, Oswegatchie, Cambray and Hague. Cambray and Hague were later renamed Gouverneur and Morristown respectively. A few years later, in 1791, Alexander Macomb was able to purchase an additional 3,670,715 acres of land in northern New York; this was approximately 12% of the total area of the state. Macomb's Great Purchase, as it is known, included most of present-day St. Lawrence, Franklin, and Jefferson Counties, all of Lewis County, and part of Oswego County.

The Parish tavern, a large building in Parishville designed by architect Jean-Jaques Ramee, was located on the main road near the St. Regis River. David Parish intended Parishville to provide agricultural products (including whisky) for Ogdensburg. Ultimately, cold climate and poor soils meant that Parishville did not prove to be an agricultural breadbasket, but the hamlet became a minor industrial center. [1000-1075]



An early depiction of David Parish's store in Ogdensburg. Built in 1809-10, it is the oldest surviving building in the city. David Parish sent goods valued at $40,000 to the settlement in 1808 and instructed Joseph Rosseel to build a commodious and sturdy warehouse of stone and brick in order to store goods safely. The result was a plain but handsome stone building in Federal style, situated at the mouth of the Oswegatchie River. [SLCHA Quarterly, Jan. 1972, p. 19]



David Parish's store as it has appeared in more recent times, little altered. It has served as headquarters of the Ogdensburg Custom District since 1928. In 1964 it was designated the oldest federal government building in the United States. [1000-1344]

Settlement

The settlement of northern New York began in earnest after 1791. Many of the early settlers of St. Lawrence County came from Vermont and other New England states. Others came from New Jersey, previously settled parts of New York, and Canada. The two main routes used by the earliest settlers to reach St. Lawrence County were: a mostly water route along the Mohawk River and up the Black River Valley to southern and western portions of the county; and an overland route, the Chateaugay Trail, which extended from the New England states across Lake Champlain and through the wilderness of what is now Clinton and Franklin Counties.

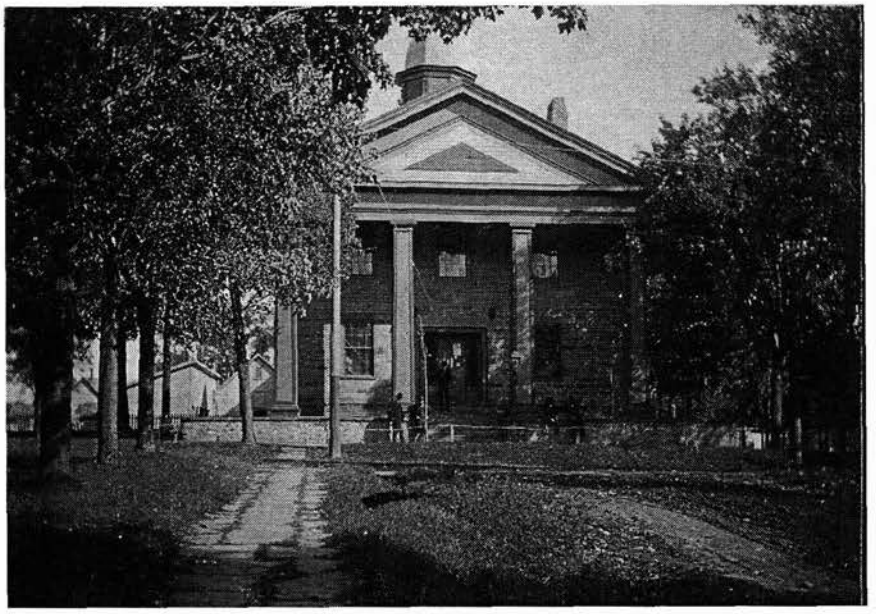
Early settlers often travelled inland through the county on the numerous rivers. In addition to providing a means of transportation, St. Lawrence County's many rivers descend rapidly from the Adirondack highlands toward the St. Lawrence River creating numerous falls and rapids which furnish ample water power. This power source was taken advantage of by early county settlers and continues to be utilized today. The earliest towns and villages sprang up along the rivers, starting with Madrid in 1793, Ogdensburg in 1796, and Massena in 1798. Even today, the St. Lawrence County map reflects this settlement pattern, as almost all of its towns and villages are located along one of the county's waterways - the St. Lawrence, St. Regis, Racquette, Grasse, Oswegatchie and Indian Rivers.

This log cabin located between Sterling Pond and Joe Indian Pond in the Town of Parishville is dated 1903, but is representative of the first dwellings erected by the pioneer settlers, using local materials. Almost all of these small, crude early structures were replaced in time by more permanent frame houses.[1000-1136]

St. Lawrence County is Established

In 1801, the ten towns along the St. Lawrence River were formed into a town called Lisbon and annexed to Clinton County, whose county seat was Plattsburgh. Serving as plaintiff, defendant, juror or witness in county court was extremely inconvenient for people living in the ten towns as Plattsburgh was more than 100 miles distant with no road for most of the way in between. Thus, in early 1802, the residents of the ten towns petitioned the New York State Legislature to form a new county with its county seat at Old Oswegatchie Fort (formerly Fort La Presentation in present-day Ogdensburg). The legislature agreed and formally established St. Lawrence County on March 3, 1802.

After several years, many residents of St. Lawrence County were unhappy with Ogdensburg as the county seat. They felt that Ogdensburg was too close to the border and was quite vulnerable to attack in the event of war. Also, central and southern residents wished for a more centrally located county courthouse. Finally in 1830, a new county courthouse, jail and clerk's office were built in Canton at a cost of approximately $3100.



When the seat of county government moved from Ogdensburg to Canton, a courthouse was constructed in 1830 of Potsdam sandstone. This building was destroyed by fire in 1893.[1000-2984]

The current courthouse, as it appeared soon after construction in 1896. It was much larger and more elaborate than the first one. The masonry combines use of red Potsdam sandstone with gray Gouverneur marble.[1000-2998]

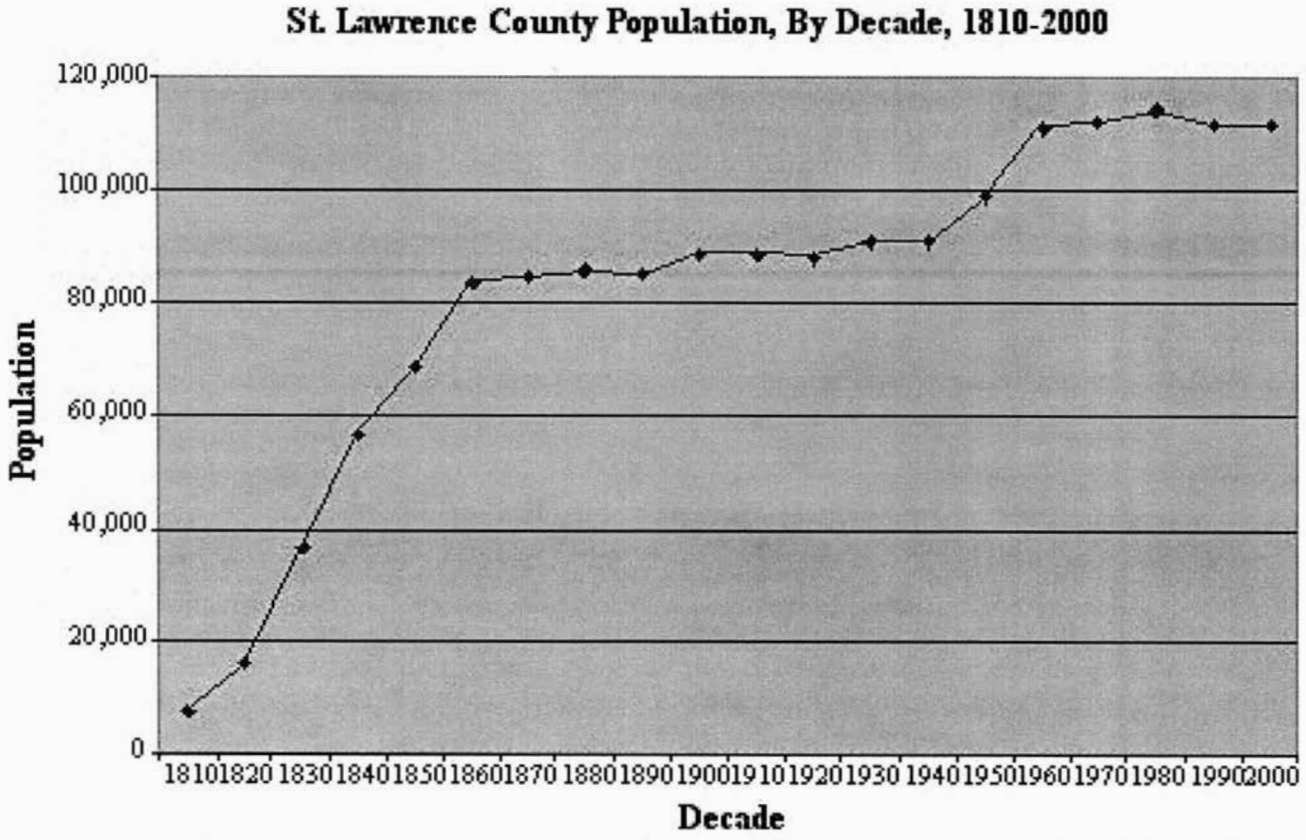
A view of the old jail in Canton as it appeared in the 1870s, photographed by Benjamin Kip. [1990-4.95].

The Towns of St. Lawrence County

Lisbon, including the ten towns - 1801
Oswegatchie, from Lisbon - 1802
Madrid, from Lisbon - 1802
Massena, from territory attached to Lisbon - 1802
Canton, from Lisbon - 1805
Hopkinton, from Massena - 1805
DeKalb, from Oswegatchie - 1806
Potsdam, from Madrid - 1806
Stockholm, from Massena - 1806
Russell, from Hopkinton - 1807
Gouverneur, from Oswegatchie - 1810
Louisville, from Massena - 1810
Rossie, from Russell - 1813
Parishville, from, Hopkinton - 1814
Fowler, from Rossie and Russell - 1816
Pierrepont, from Russell and Potsdam - 1818
Morristown, from Oswegatchie - 1821
Norfolk, from Louisville - 1823
Brasher, from Massena - 1825
DePeyster, from Oswegatchie and DeKalb - 1825
Edwards, from Fowler - 1827
Hammond, from Rossie and Morristown - 1827
Lawrence, from Hopkinton and Brasher - 1828
Depeau, from Edwards and DeKalb - 1830
(Depeau renamed Hermon - 1834)
Pitcairn, from Fowler - 1836
Macomb, from Gouverneur and Morristown - 1841
Colton, from Parishville - 1843
Fine, from Russell and Pierrepont - 1844
Waddington, from Madrid - 1859
Clifton, from Pierrepont - 1868
Clare, from Pierrepont - 1880
Piercefield, from Hopkinton - 1900

The Villages of St. Lawrence County

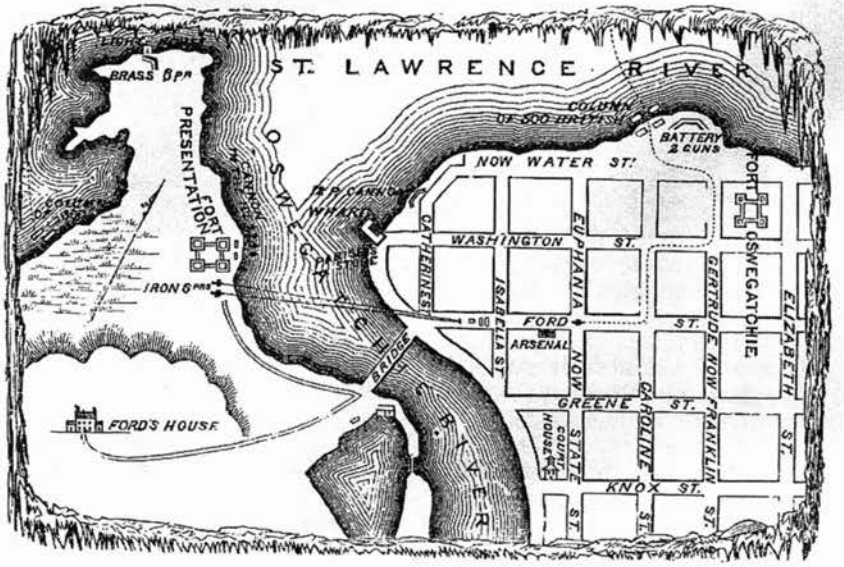
City of Ogdensburg, first incorporated as village - 1817
Waddington village first incorporated - 1839
Potsdam village first incorporated - 1831
Canton village first incorporated - 1845
Gouverneur village first incorporated - 1850
City of Ogdensburg (three wards) - 1868
Norwood village (as Potsdam Junction) first incorporated - 1872
City of Ogdensburg (fourth ward) - 1873
Richville village first incorporated - 1880
Morristown village first incorporated - 1884
Massena village first incorporated - 1886
Hermon village first incorporated - 1887
Edwards village first incorporated - 1893
Hammond village first incorporated - 1901
Heuvelton village first incorporated - 1912
Rensselaer Falls village first incorporated - 1912



St. Lawrence County grew rapidly until the Civil War. It then grew slowly until the post-World War Two era of national economic expansion. The county population size has been stable since 1960. Data from U.S. Census.

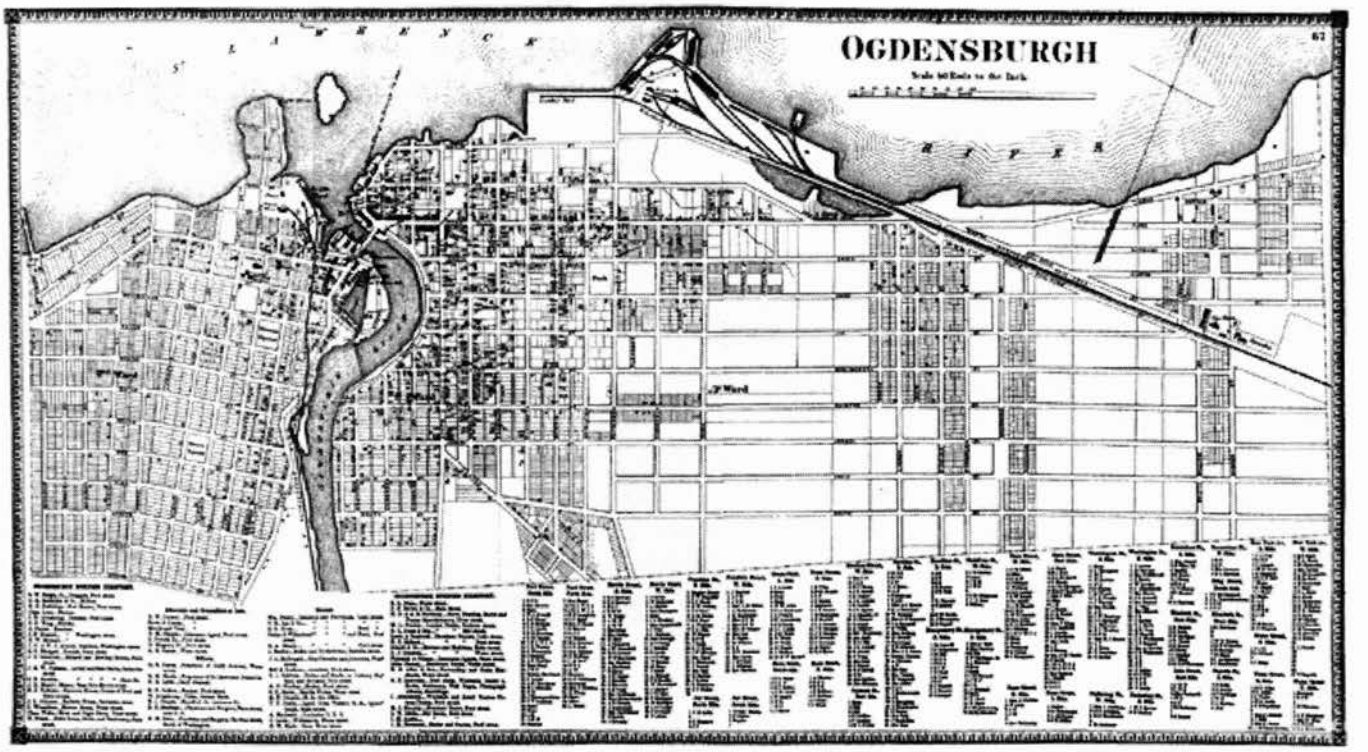
Ogdensburg

Fort La Presentation, founded in 1749, evolved into Fort Oswegatchie, then into Ogdensburg. This location at the mouth of the Oswegatchie River supported a settlement which proved to be the most significant in St. Lawrence County well into the 20th century. Ogdensburg's military significance was gradually superseded by commerce and industry. Ogdensburg was a transportation hub for St. Lawrence River vessels from its earliest days, and for the railroad, after the mid-19th century. Ogdensburg thus attracted a variety of manufacturing firms and retail establishments. Although its relative status in the county has faded a bit in recent decades, Ogdensburg remains our only city.

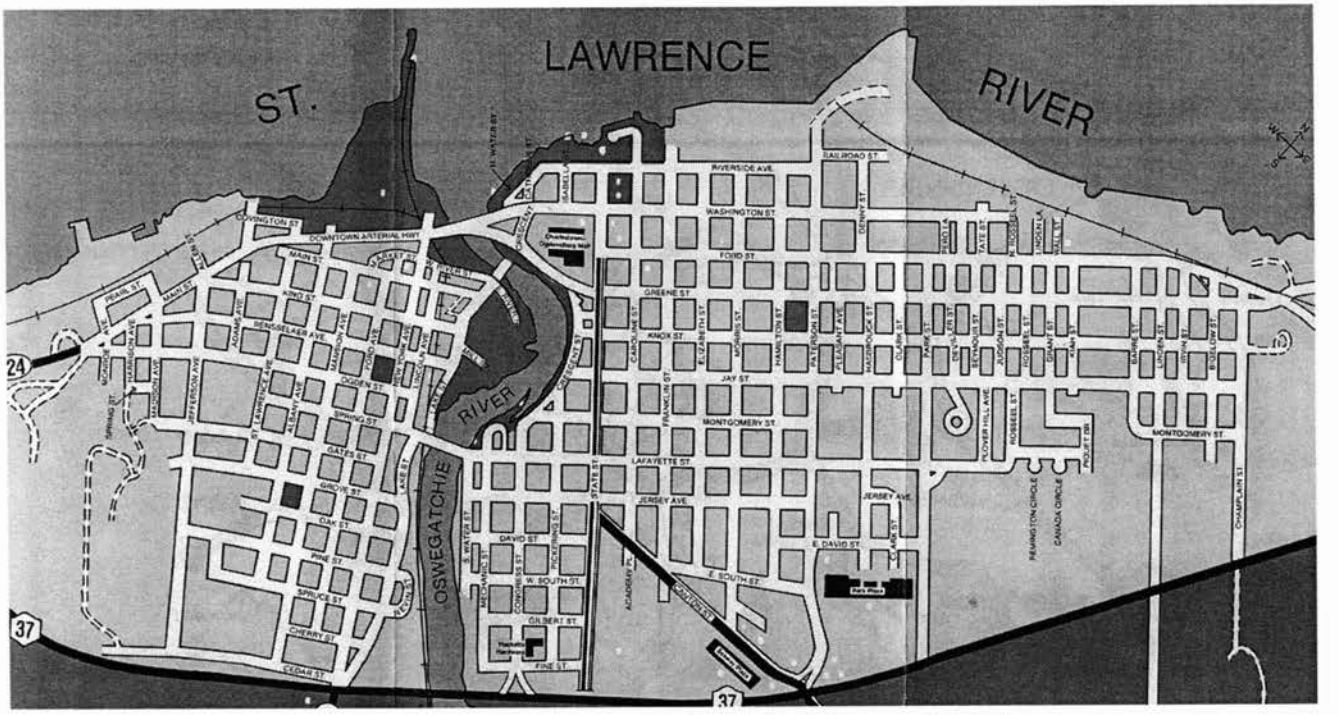


Ogdensburg in 1813. [derived from Lossing map in Spring '91 Quarterly]

Ogdensburg in 1838. [1000-1532]



Ogdensburg in 1865 [from Beers atlas, image provided by David Martin]

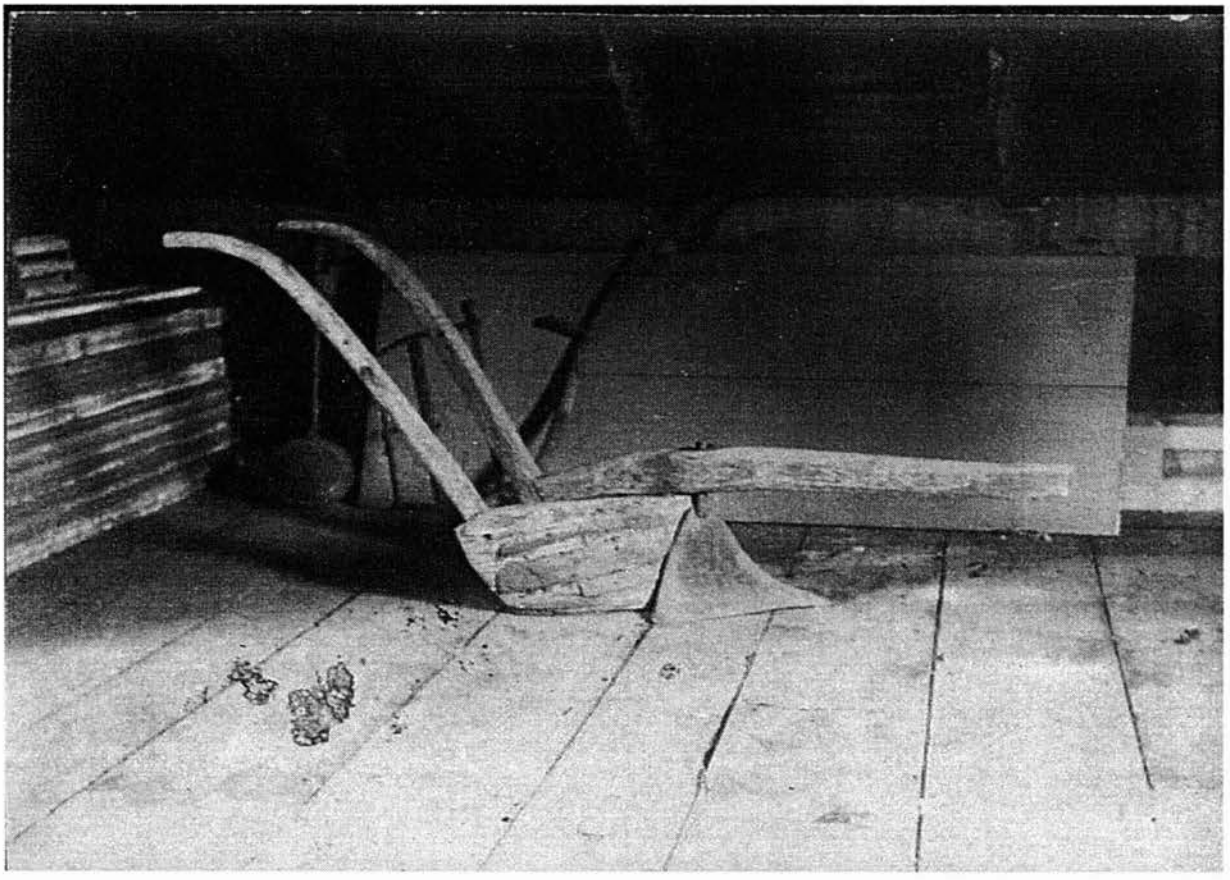


A modern tourist map of Ogdensburg [SLCHA map collection]

Agriculture

The earliest form of agriculture practiced in St. Lawrence County, in the late 1700s, was the production of potash. As the early settlers cleared their lands for planting crops, they were left with numerous giant logs and stumps. These masses of wood were burned, and the resulting ashes were boiled down to form potash. Used for making fertilizer, soap, and bleaching, potash was a profitable trade item and brought as much as $100 a ton in the Montreal market. The potash industry came to an end in St. Lawrence County shortly after the War of 1812 when a much easier and cheaper process for obtaining potash was developed in Germany.

During the first half of the 19th century, St. Lawrence County farmers were self-sufficient. They grew vegetables and grains to feed their families and livestock. They cut the logs which would be used to build homes and barns. And they raised various animals - cows for milk, butter, and cheese; oxen as beasts of burden; hogs for meat and lard; turkeys and chickens for meat and eggs; and sheep for their wool. In fact, sheep were the most common domestic animal at the time the county was founded in 1802. Sheep farming continued to dominate the county's agricultural scene until the Civil War, peaking in 1845 when there were 168,314 sheep in the county as opposed to only 33,676 milk cows.



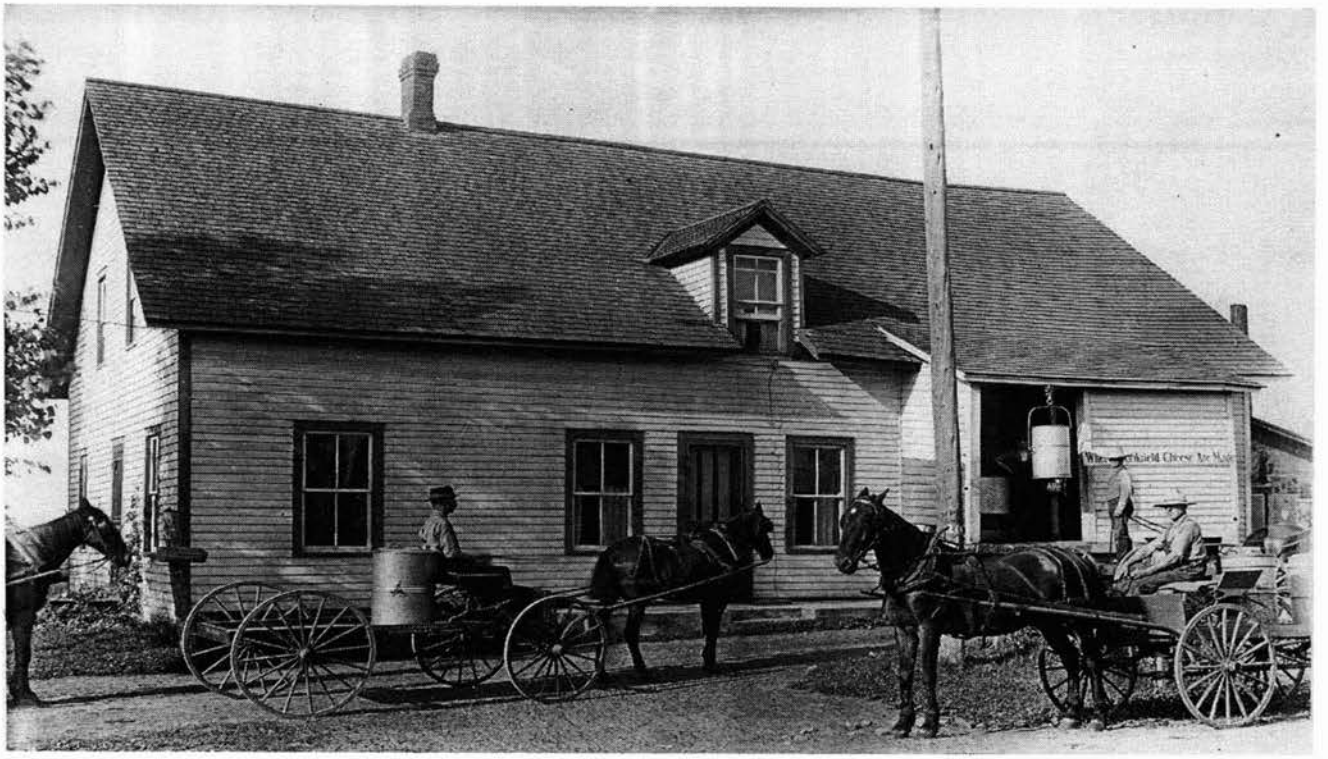
An early 19th century plow, whose ownership is attributed to Sewall Raymond, one of the founders of Potsdam. The moldboard has been replaced. [Potsdam Museum P.1921]

This scene of sheep at a hay byre evokes pioneer-era farms, even though it was photographed by Harry Smith near Ogdensburg later in the century. [1000-1619]

The Snyder Homestead in the Town of Macomb as it appeared in the late 19th century. The Snyder family and in-laws are posing with a reaper in front of their house. [84-159]

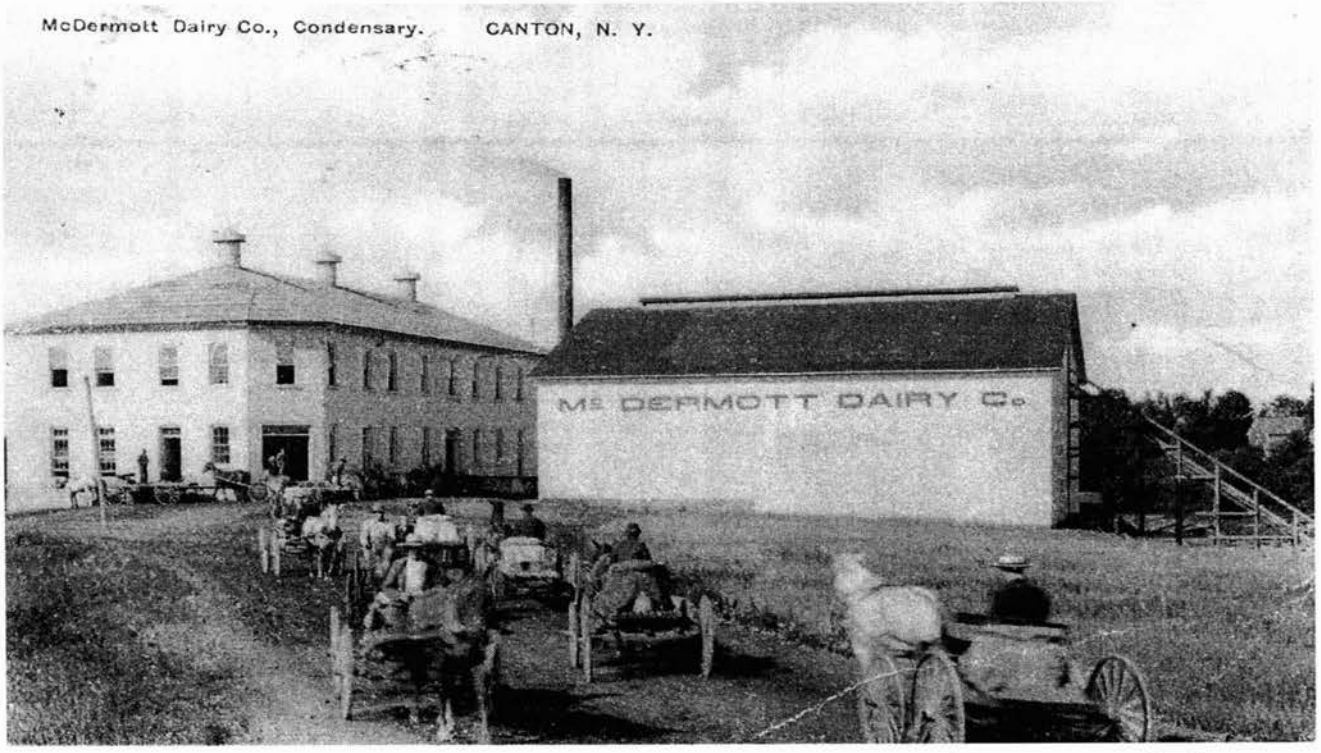
During the 1850s, farmers realized that by pooling their milk they could produce much more cheese and butter for resale. The first cheese factory in the U.S. was established in Rome, New York, in 1851, and by 1863, St. Lawrence County had opened its first cheese factory in Richville. In the years to follow, creameries and factories were established throughout the county and produced cheese and butter which were shipped to markets in Boston, England and France. By 1900, there were 99 cheese factories, 67 butter factories, and 20 factories producing both butter and cheese in St. Lawrence County.

Around 1910, dairy farmers began shifting from cheese and butter production towards the production of liquid milk. For much of the 20th century, St. Lawrence County was the largest milk producing county in New York State. At one time, the Sheffield company milk plant in Canton was considered the largest in the world. During the Depression of the 1930s, St. Lawrence County was at the center of a statewide dairy farmers movement to obtain a better price for their milk. The 1950s and 1960s brought change to the dairy industry with the advent of the bulk tank milk trucks, causing many small dairy farms to be abandoned. And dairy farmers continue to struggle today as milk prices are not much more than they were 20 years ago, while production costs have increased significantly.



The Brookfield cheese factory was located in Heuvelton. It was one of many cheese factories which flourished in the small towns of St. Lawrence County in the latter part of the 19th century. [SLCHA Archives]

The finished product at the Brookfield cheese factory. These family-size 13-pound rounds sat in the curing room for a week before they were boxed and shipped. [SLCHA Archives]



The McDermott condensary produced condensed milk in Canton. This c. 1911 postcard shows a stream of milk carts coming and going. The message written on the back, signed by Patty, says: "Ray is working in the condensary for a few days." [Potsdam Museum Postcard Collection].

Other types of agriculture have been practiced in the county as well, including maple syrup production, raising flax (used to produce linen), raising turkeys, and growing potatoes (used in starch factories). Agriculture continues to be a central part of St. Lawrence County's economy at the turn of the 21st century, partly in the form of tourism. Agri-tours promoted in the county in 2001 included trips to sheep, dairy, elk, llama, ostrich and buffalo farms; organic gardens and herb farms; and maple syrup producers.

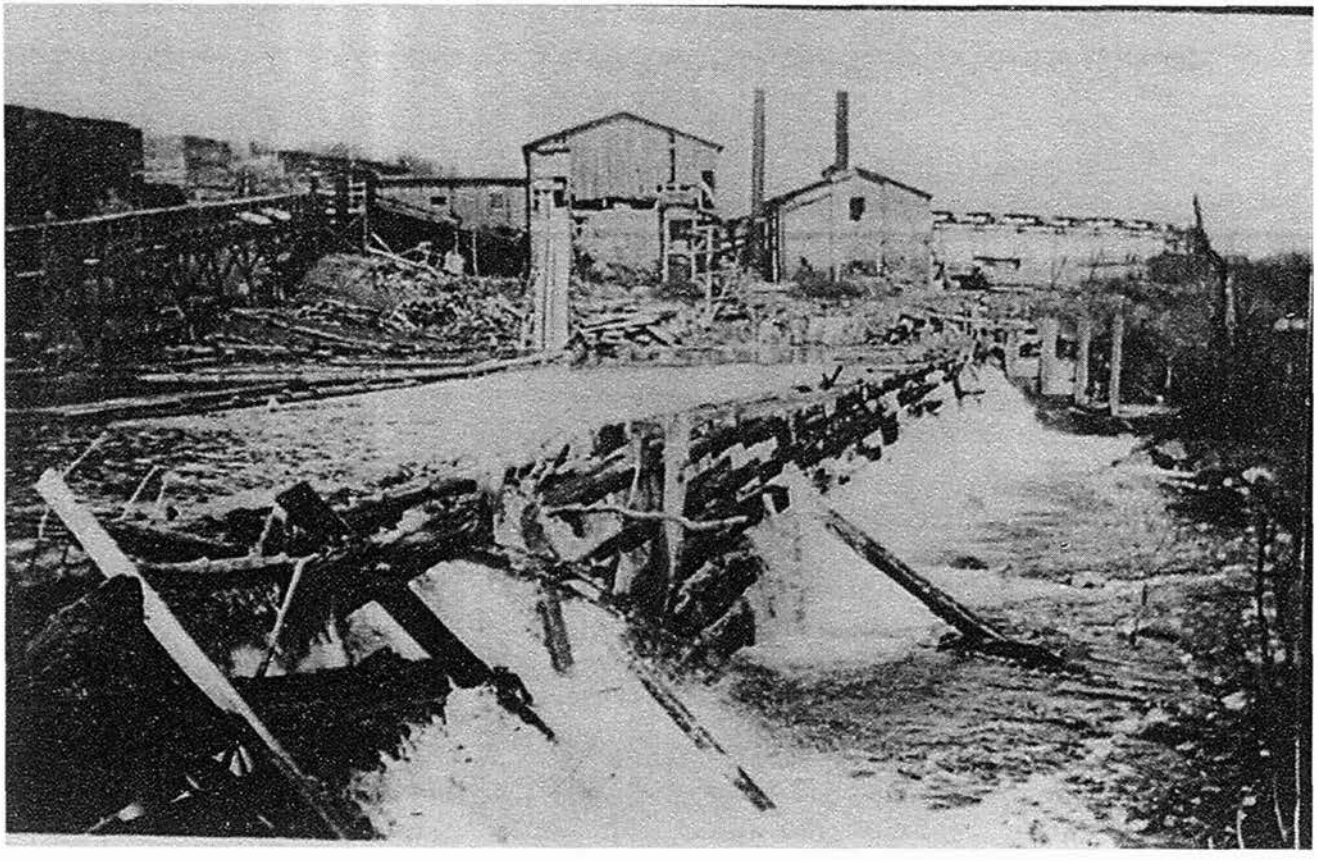
W. E. Church's hennery, Canton, in 1911. He was a breeder of Rhode Island Reds. [1981-390.186]

Lumbering

The lumber industry began in St. Lawrence County in the 19th century and continues today. Initially settlers had to clear the trees from the land to build shelters and plant crops for survival. Some of the earliest structures built in the county were sawmills which often doubled as homes for settlers until houses could be built. Many tall trees were cut in St. Lawrence County and the long logs transported to Montreal by barge to be used as masts for sailing ships.

The period from 1870-1900 was the heyday of the lumber industry in St. Lawrence County. Early lumberjacks spent the whole winter at lumber camps located in the Adirondack forests of what are now the towns of Clare, Clifton, Colton, Fine, Hopkinton and Piercefield. Here they felled trees which were either loaded onto sleds for direct transport to sawmills or they were left until spring when they could be pushed into the river and floated down to the mills. At the sawmill, the logs were cut into lumber and used for building.

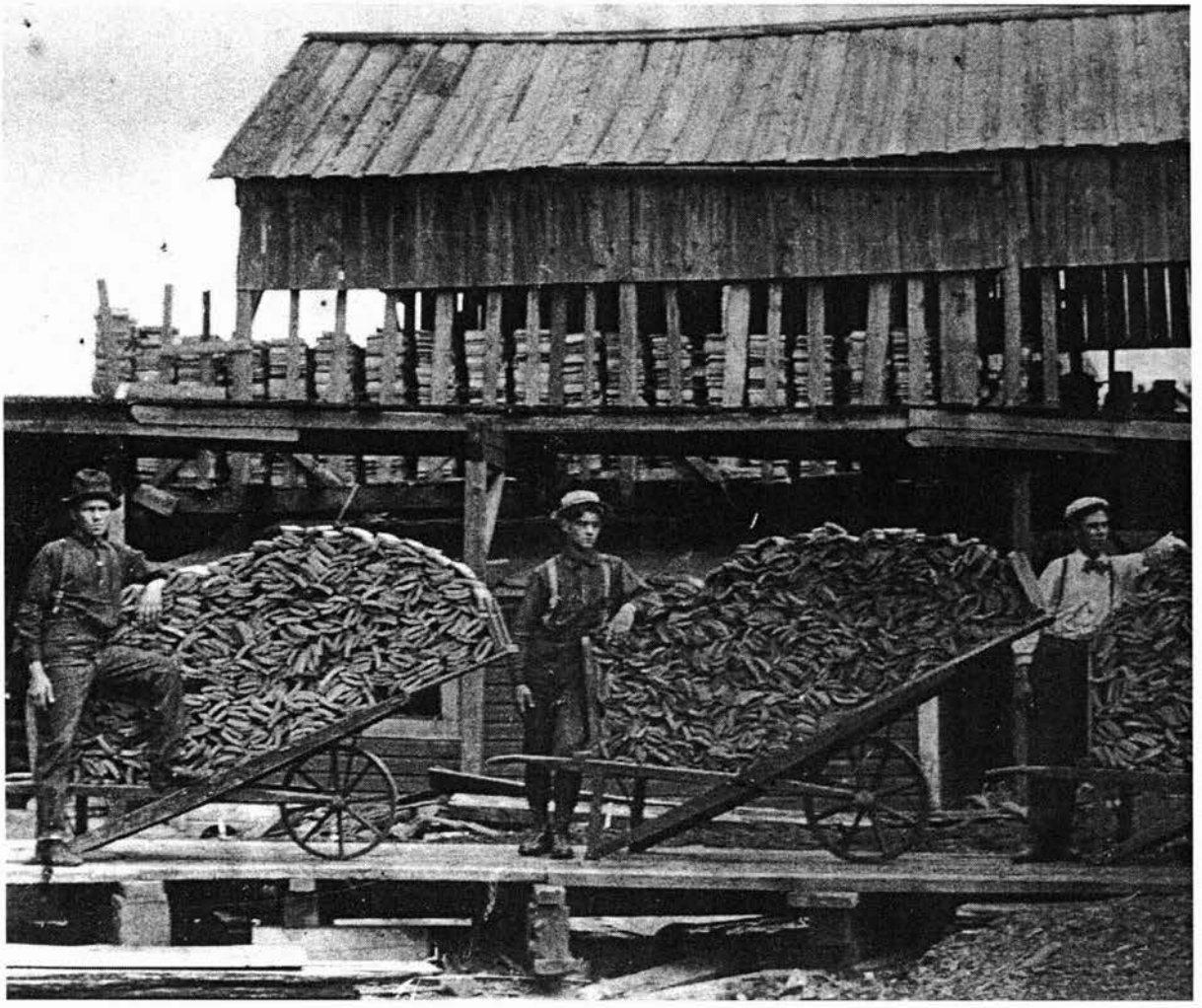
Logs were also needed as a raw material for the many pulp and paper mills. The earliest paper mill in St. Lawrence County was erected in Waddington in 1826. By the turn of the 20th century, the papermaking industry had blossomed and there were paper or pulp mills located in numerous communities around the county including Emeryville, Gouverneur, Natural Dam, Newton Falls, Norfolk, Norwood, Ogdensburg, Piercefield, Potsdam, Pyrites, and Raymondville.



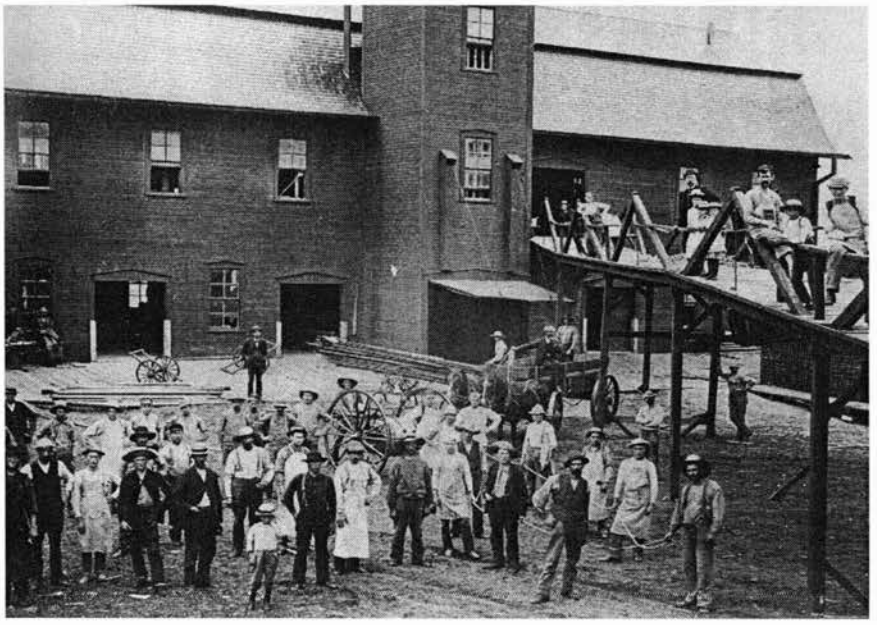
Though this log dam was built in 1920 for a pulp mill at Aldrich, its simple construction is like that of the earliest pioneer mill dams.[1000-2582A]

A horse team pulls a load of large, heavy logs at a winter lumber camp near Fine. [1000-2664]

Bert Frank's logging camp, Colton, 1904. [1000-202]

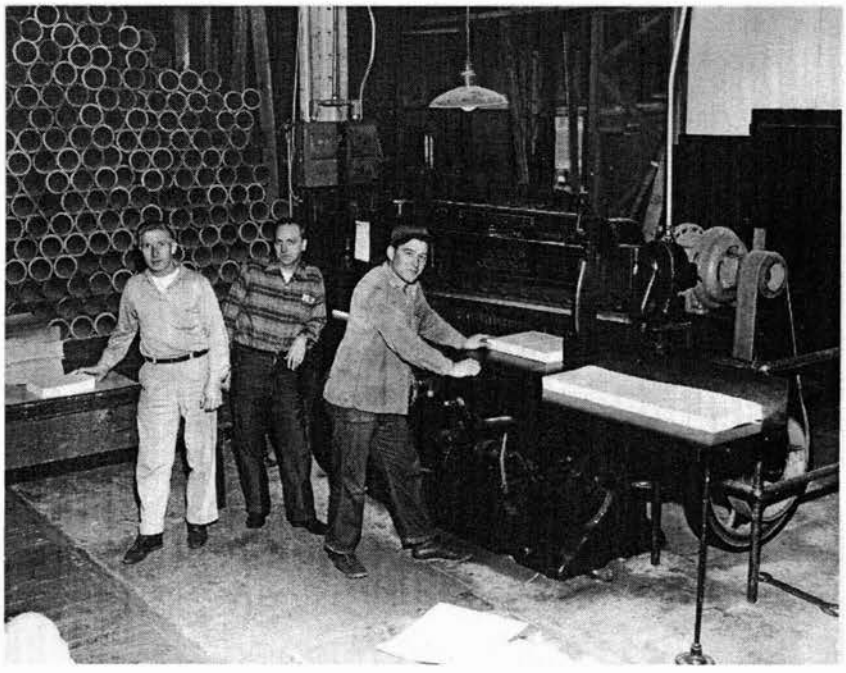


Drying tub staves in Parishville, late 19th century. [1000-1074]



The cooperage in Parishville, also late 19th century. [1000-1070]

Raymondville paper plant, aerial view by Dwight Church. [81-390.136]



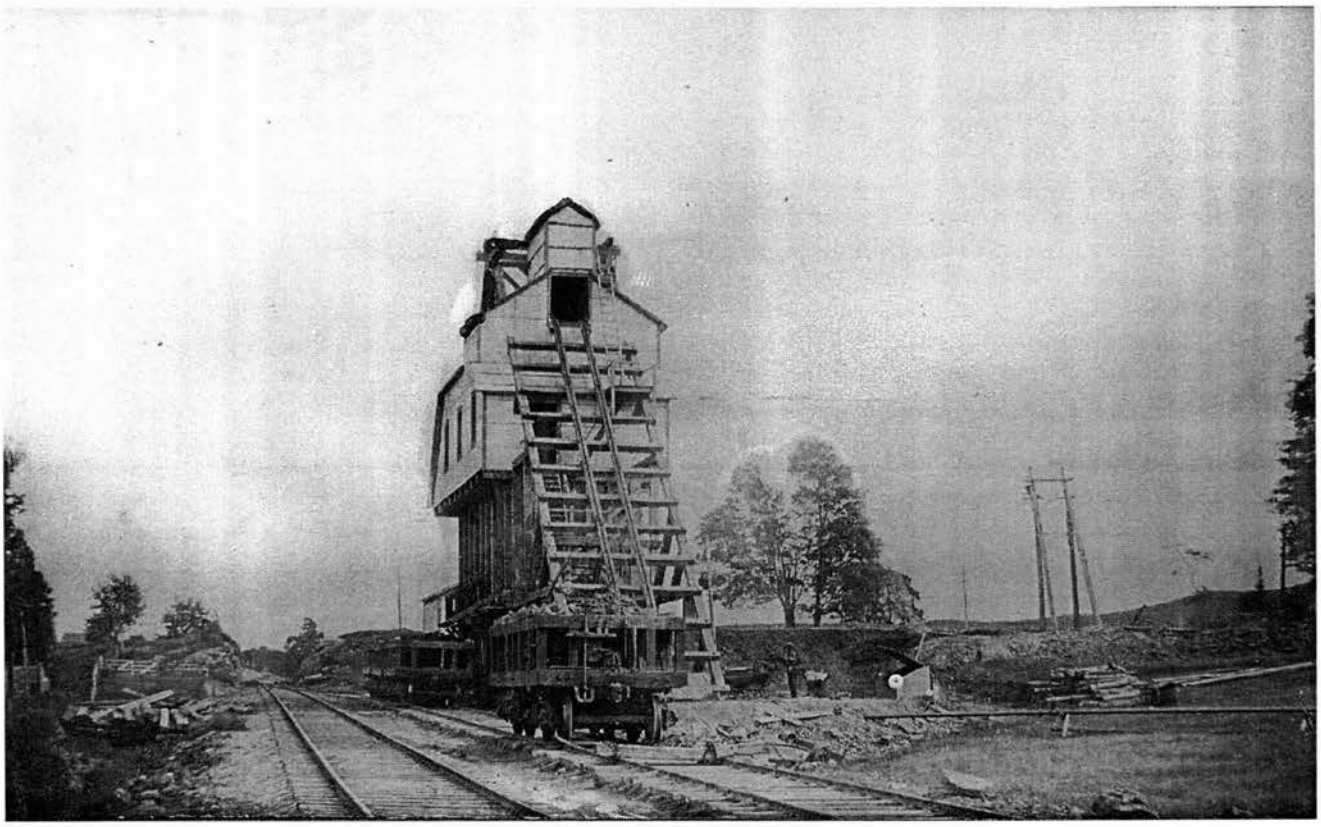
On the inside of the Raymondville paper plant, cutting paper into tablet form, are Walter Sheets, operator, Bill Mattison, super of the finishing room, and Hollis Snyder, cutter. [1000-1683]

Mining

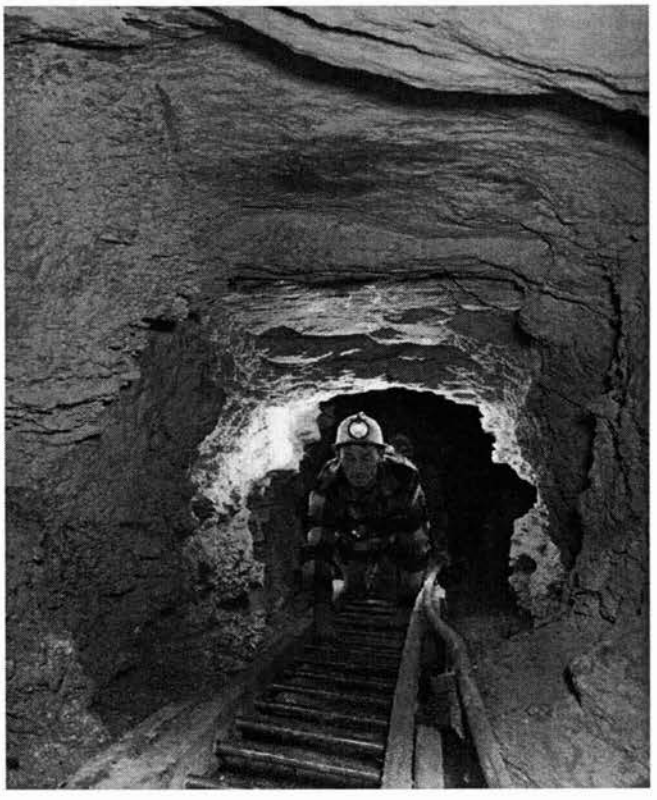
St. Lawrence County boasts deposits of a variety of minerals, many of which have been mined commercially throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Underground mines are clustered largely in the southwestern portion of the county in the Towns of Edwards, Fowler, Gouverneur, and Rossie. Among the minerals that are or have been mined underground are iron at Jayville, Clifton, and Rossie; feldspar at the Green Hill Mines in DeKalb; pyrite at Stellaville, Pyrites, and Rossie; zinc in Edwards, Fowler and Pierrepont; and talc in Edwards and Fowler.

The majority of mining to take place in St. Lawrence County, in terms of the resources used and the volume of mineral obtained, has been surface mining. Surface mining ventures in the county include talc and zinc at both Edwards and Fowler, graphite at Pope Mills, lead at Rossie and Macomb, limestone at Ogdensburg and Norwood; marble at Gouverneur; and of course, Potsdam sandstone in the Potsdam area. Iron was also surface mined at Clifton Mines, as well as at Benson Mines in the Town of Fine, which at one time was the largest open pit mine in New York State. However, the largest percentage of surface mining has been of construction materials. Sand, gravel, and crushed stone have been mined in virtually every town in the county. Clay and topsoil have also been mined in certain parts of St. Lawrence County.

A view of a Gouverneur marble mine owned by St. Lawrence Marble Co. Gouverneur marble is most often seen in late 19th century buildings. [Potsdam Museum P.151]



The #4 mine for St. Lawrence Pyrites Co. at Stellaville, near Hermon, c. 1905. Loaded ore buckets were pulled up the incline from the mine. The ore was then transferred into railroad cars and sent to the mill. This photograph was used on a postcard and sold at Conant Drugstore in Hermon. [1000-1190]

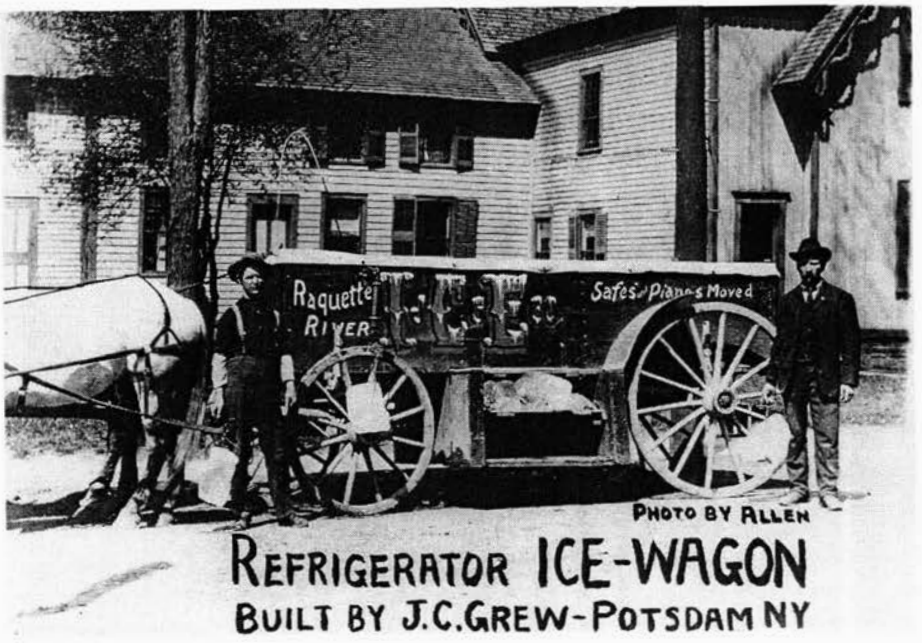


A miner burrows through a talc mine near Edwards in 1956.[File 1201]

Business and Industry

Businesses often located along the county's waterways to take advantage of the abundantly available water power and the means of transporting products to market. Many communities had tanneries for processing animal hides and woolen mills for producing wool cloth. Gouverneur even had a lace mill and a silk mill. Brasher is known for the Iron Works and for P.E. Kennehan's Agricultural Works, manufacturers of farm implements and other goods. Some of the main 20th century industries in St. Lawrence County have included Corning Glass Works in Canton; Alcoa, General Motors, and Reynolds in Massena, Newell Manufacturing Co. and Standard Shade Roller in Ogdensburg. The harnessing of hydroelectric power has also been an important endeavor in St. Lawrence County in the last century. The massive Moses-Saunders Power Dam on the St. Lawrence River at Massena was completed in the 1950s. And numerous dams are located on county rivers, including a whole series of hydro dams along the Racquette River, mainly in the Town of Colton.

Cornell & Son Company cutting ice on the Racquette River, south of Fall Island, around 1880, with the ice house behind the cutters. [Potsdam Museum P.3878]



The ice was conveyed to customers in ice wagons like this one, photographed in 1903, belonging to Raquette River Ice Co. Note that this wagoneer also offered to move pianos and safes. William Sullivan on the left, Joe Grew on the right. [Potsdam Museum P.3064]

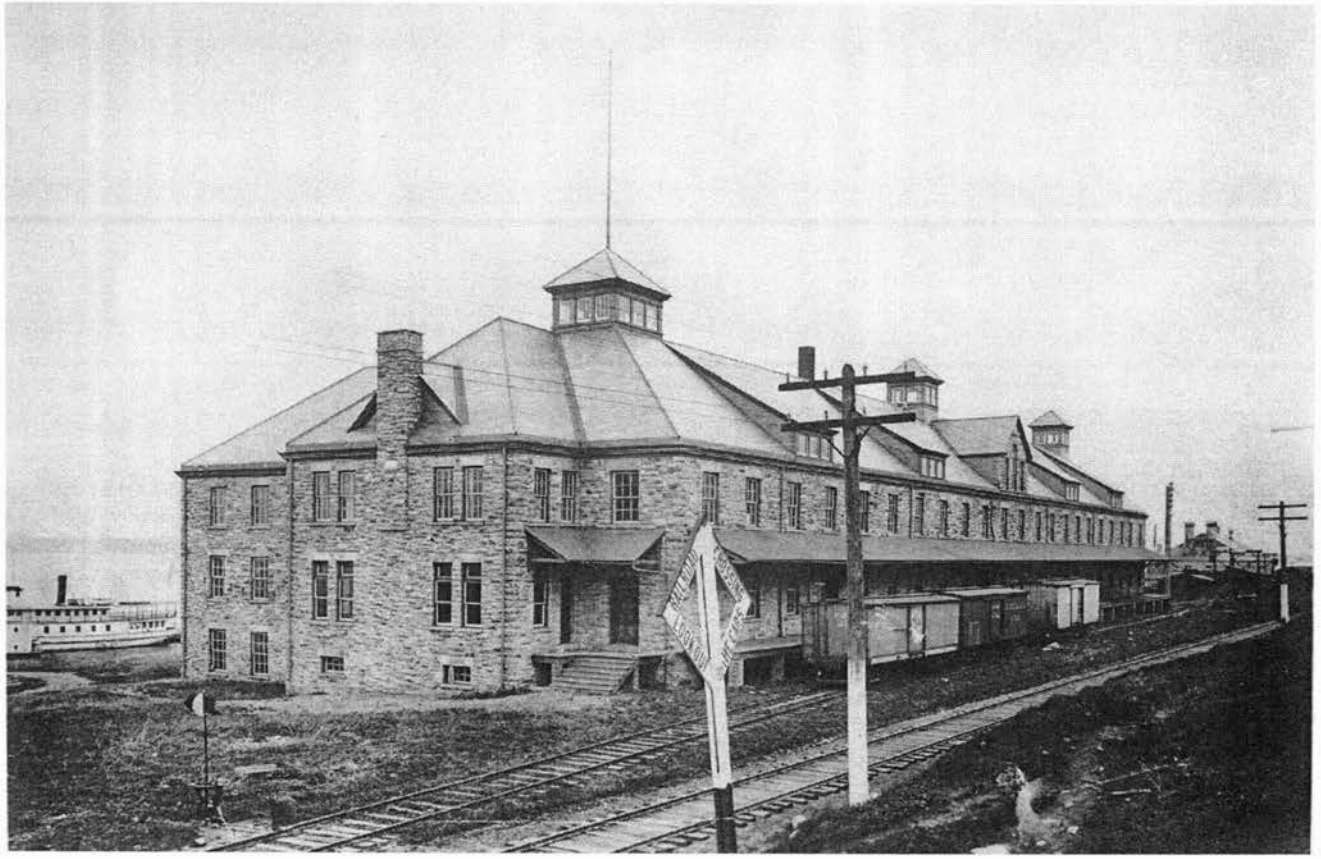
The Madrid Pants factory c. 1898. It employed many people, most of them women. [Potsdam Museum P.158]

Half a century later, these two men, Lloyd Logan on the left and George Lane at the typewriter, are in a utility office in Madrid in a former woolen mill near the Grasse River. [1000-2294]

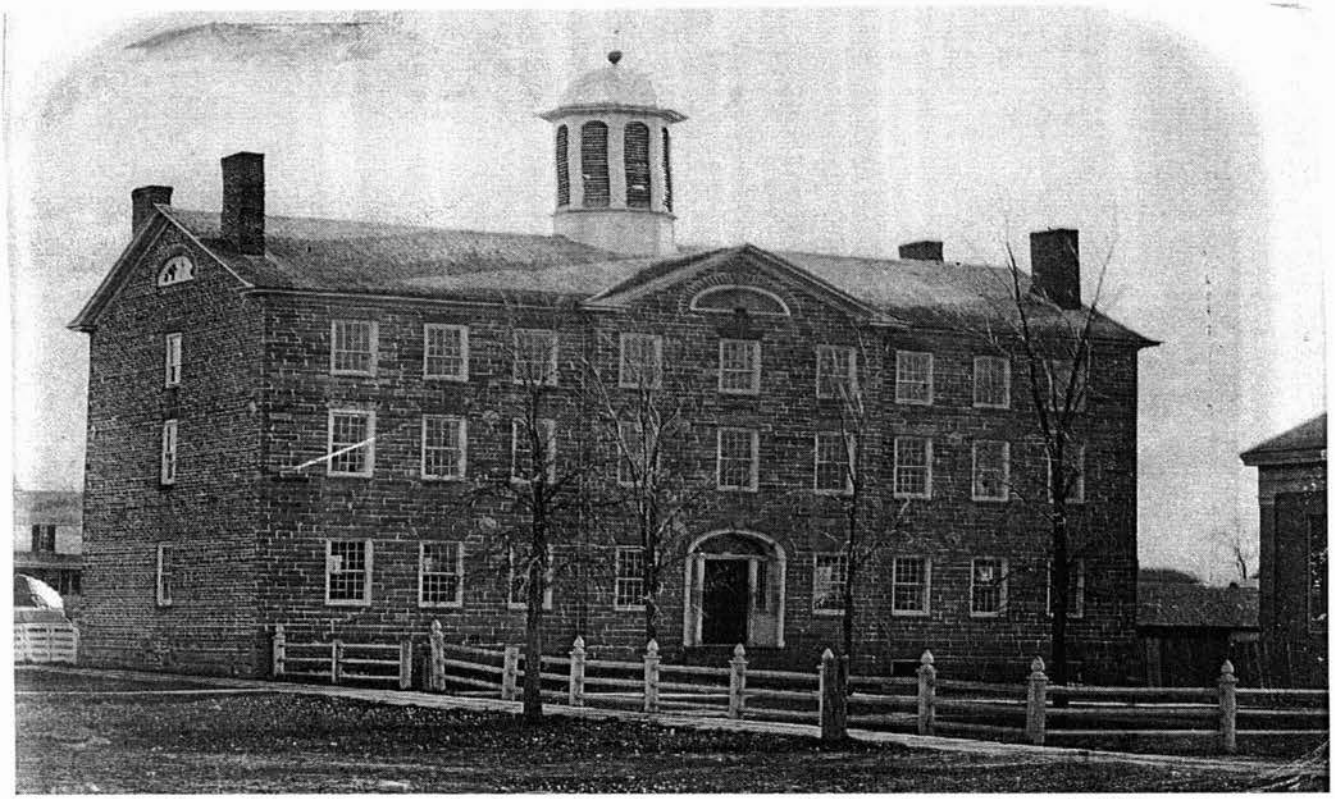
William Littlejohn stands in his shop in South Colton in the early 20th century. [1000-274]

The Leete foundry on Fall Island in Potsdam in 1921. Founded in 1820, it served a useful purpose for over a century, but this sandstone building no longer exists. [Potsdam Museum P.3010]

McGraw's Rolling Cash Grocery delivered goods to customers for the Dairymen's League (later known simply as Dairylea) in 1923. Their claim for ice cream - "it's food" – suggests that advertising was already well advanced as an art form. [Potsdam Museum. P.173]



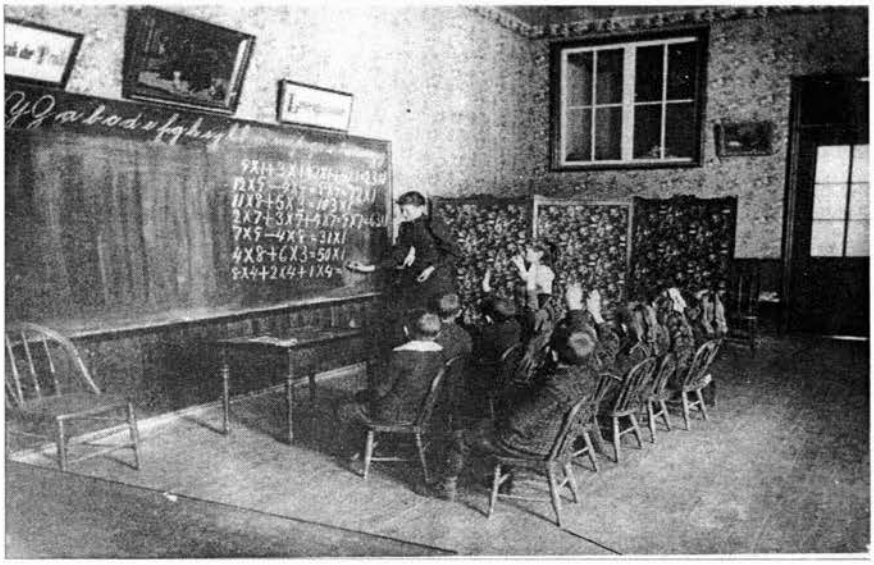
The Diamond match factory in Ogdensburg in 1959. Note the railroad tracks on the right, the St. Lawrence River vessel on the left. Previously, it was Augsbury's paper mill, and before that a milk plant. [1000-1252]



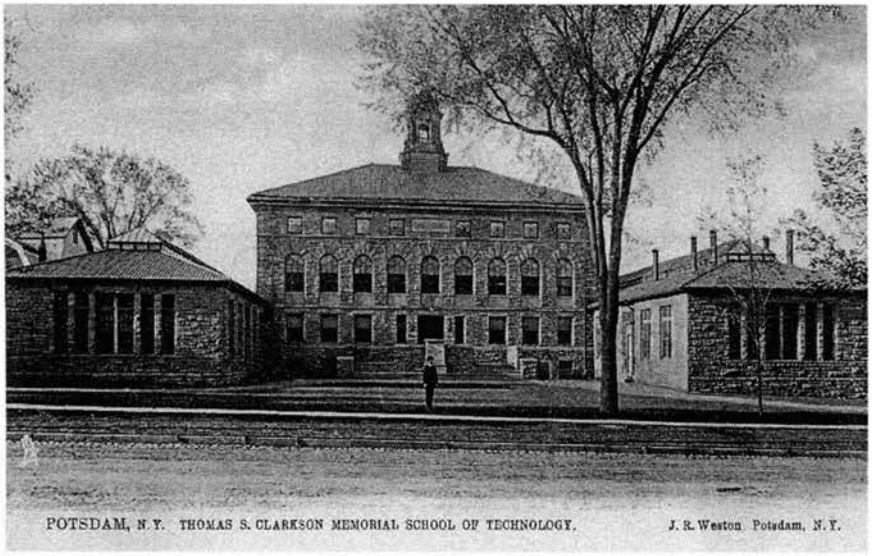
The north building of the St. Lawrence Academy in Potsdam, constructed of Potsdam sandstone in 1825 on the town square. The site was later occupied by the Normal School erected in 1868, then by the Normal School building now known as Snell Hall, erected in 1917, also of Potsdam sandstone. [Potsdam Museum P.848]

Education

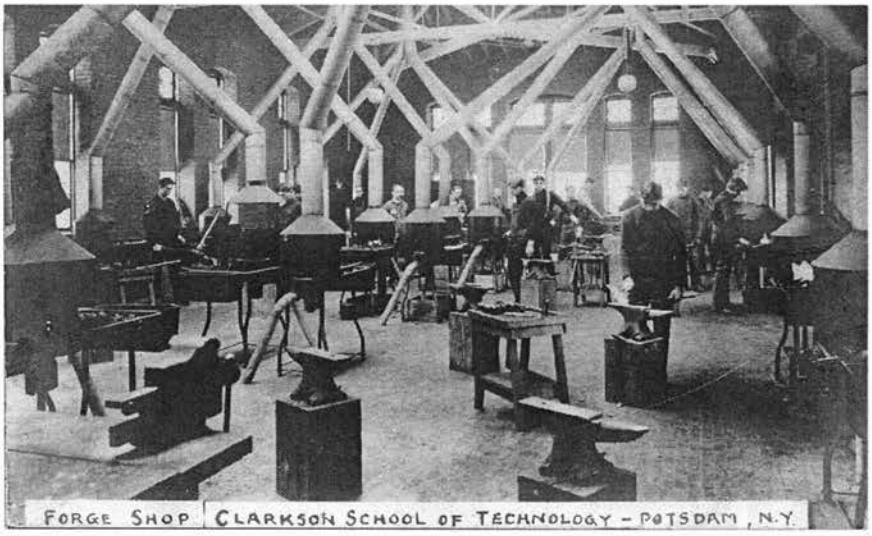
Education has been one of the county's major industries since the mid-nineteenth century. St. Lawrence County currently boasts five colleges: Clarkson University and SUNY Potsdam in Potsdam, St. Lawrence University and SUNY Canton in Canton, and the SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry Ranger School in Wanakena. Many other educational institutions have called St. Lawrence County home over the years including Wadhams Hall Seminary (1924-2002), Mater Dei College (c.1960-1999), A. Barton Hepburn School of Nursing (1902-1968), and the St. Lawrence State Hospital School of Nursing (1890-1981). There were also numerous business schools and teacher training schools around the county.



A classroom math exercise in District School #17 in Potsdam in 1889 with Betsy Hopkins at the blackboard [Potsdam Museum P.341]



Old Main, built in 1896, was the first building for the Thomas S. Clarkson Memorial School of Technology. The architect's state-of-the-art design also featured lavish use of Potsdam sandstone from the Clarkson family quarry.
[SLCHA Postcard Collection]



The forge shop of Clarkson College, photographed in 1906, occupied one of the wings of Old Main. [SLCHA Postcard Collection].

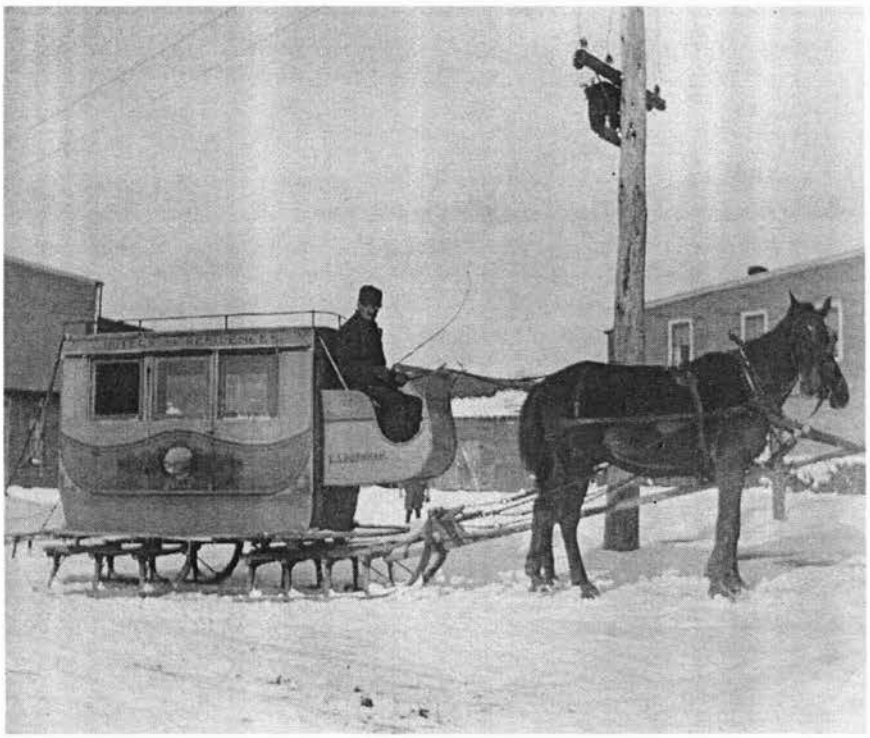
Brown's Falls school, District #10, a typical small public school of the 19th century. The teacher for this one, photographed about 1893, was Julia Griffin. [1000-2589]

The nursing staff at the Psychiatric Center in Ogdensburg relaxes over a meal in the dining room of the Center Building, probably in the late 1890s. The Psychiatric Center and its nursing school opened in 1891 and put into practice the most advanced thinking of the day. [1000-1350]

Transportation

Settlers to St. Lawrence County came in horse- or oxen-drawn wagons. The rivers were also critical for transportation. Various steamers and ferries plied the waters of the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries. The development of water transportation culminated with the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, creating a navigable corridor for deep water ships all the way from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. Land travel in St. Lawrence County improved significantly in the 1850s with the arrival of the railroad. The first to operate in the county was the Northern Railroad which, by 1857, provided continuous rail service between Ogdensburg and Boston. The Northern Railroad was also the first in the nation to use refrigerated boxcars - to keep St. Lawrence County butter cold on its way to Boston.

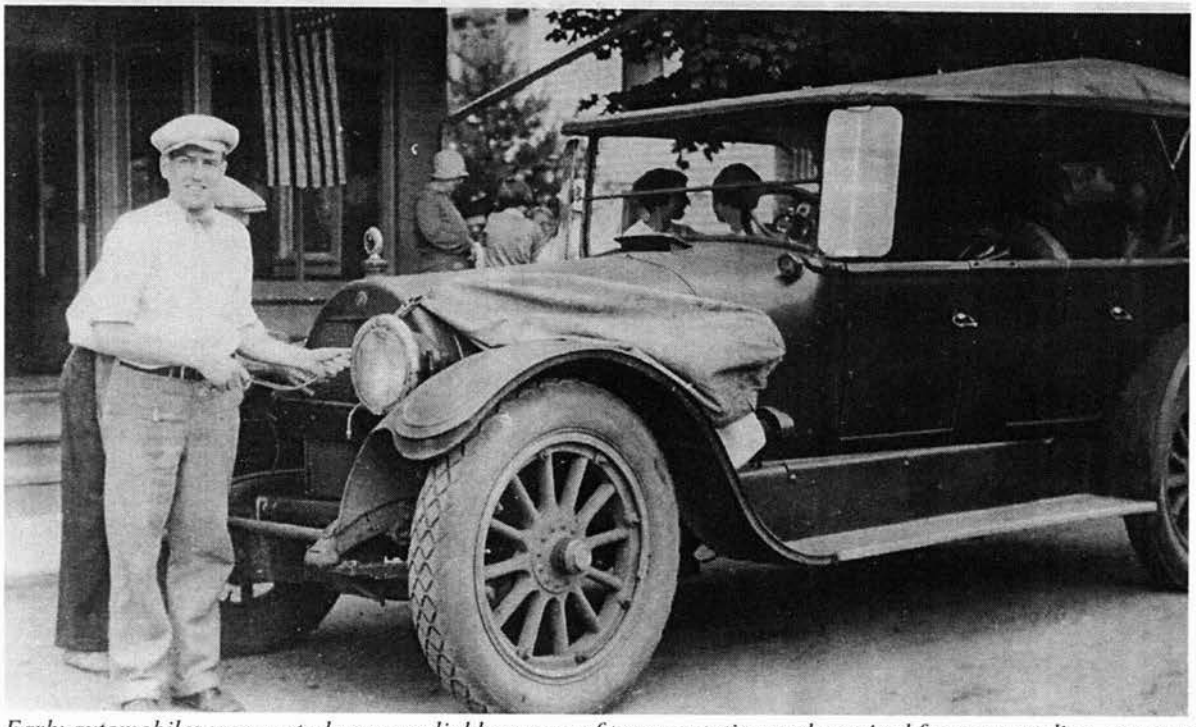
The early settlers relied on horse-drawn conveyances for basic personal transport. Here we see Mr. and Mrs. Rob McClean out for a spin in 1897 near Ogdensburg. Note the children playing beside Curbeau's Creek under the bridge. [1000-1221]



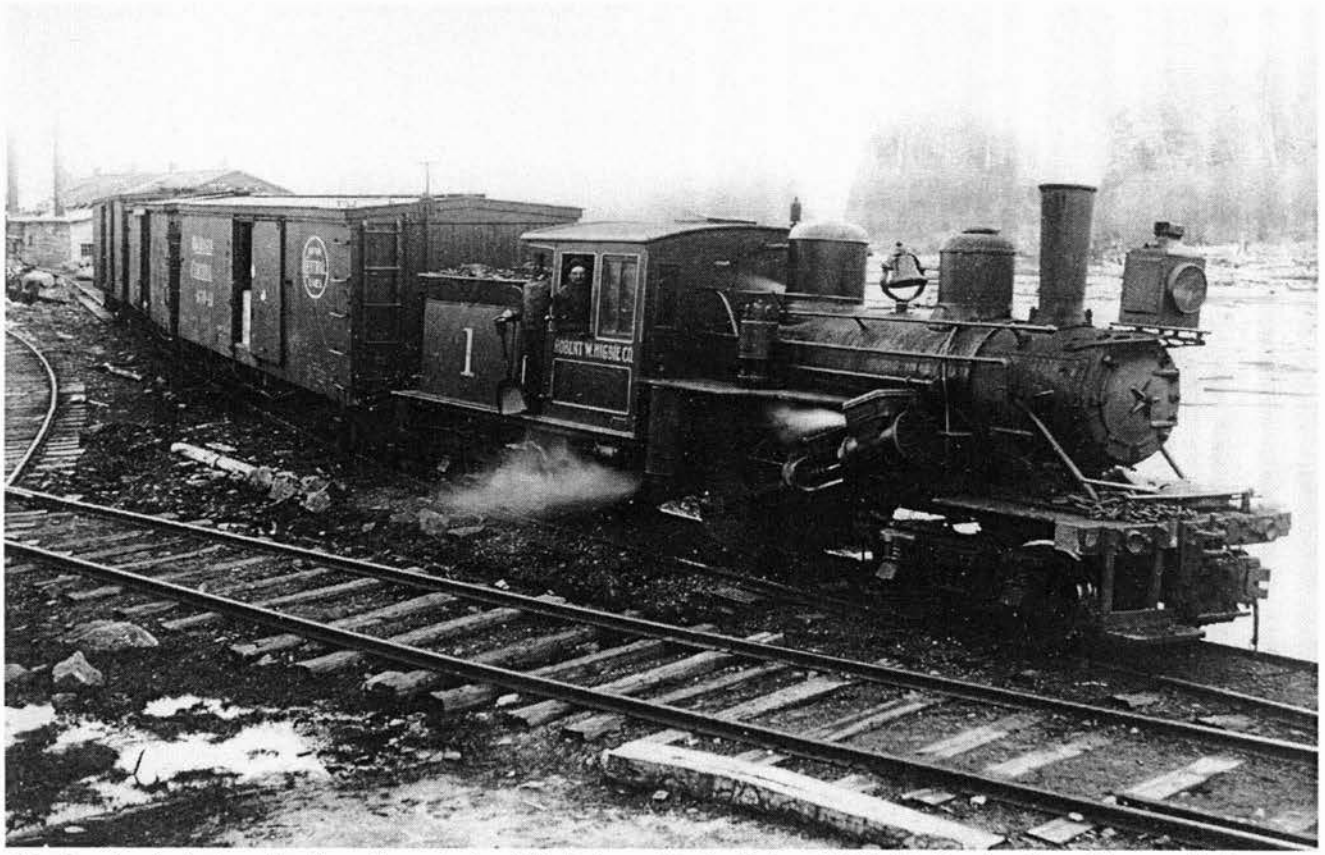
In winter, wheels were replaced by runners. Here we see Jim Hotaling driving a taxi-sleigh in Hermon in 1901. [1000-1952]

Trains were another major form of transportation for people and goods. This 1914 postcard shows people leaving the train station in Norwood. Norwood was founded in 1853 to serve the Northern Railroad and was originally known as Potsdam Junction. At the time, the civic leaders in Potsdam were not pleased that Potsdam was bypassed. [SLCHA Postcard Collection]

A family is out for a pleasure drive in their automobile, c. 1931. The technology is different, but the purpose of travel much the same as in the view of the McCleans in their horse-drawn buggy. [SLCHA glass negatives, Miller folder]



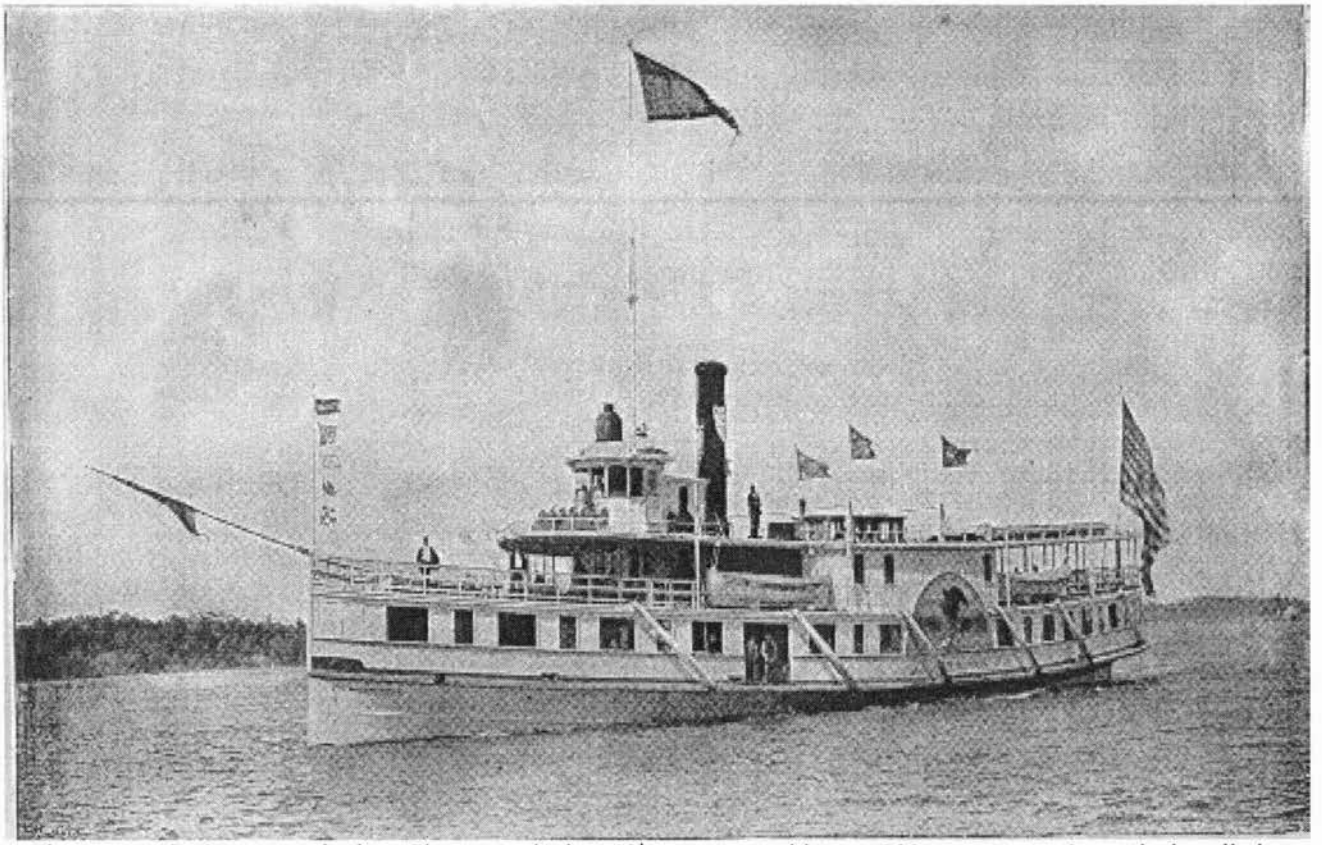
Early automobiles were not always a reliable source of transportation and required frequent tending, as we see taking place in this photograph from Fine. The popularity and reliability of cars rapidly increased through the century, however, so that reliance upon them is now taken for granted. [1000-2605]



The logging industry relied heavily on trains. This belonged to the Robert W. Higbie Lumber Co. of Newton Falls. [1000-176]

On the St. Lawrence River, transportation in the 19th century relied on a vast armada of wooden ships. This is a shipyard in Ogdensburg. [image courtesy of David Martin]

Here an artist shows the "winter ferry" in Morristown, in actuality a shallow boat hauled over the ice. This surely was a tedious and at times hazardous way to cross the river in early days. [image courtesy of David Martin]



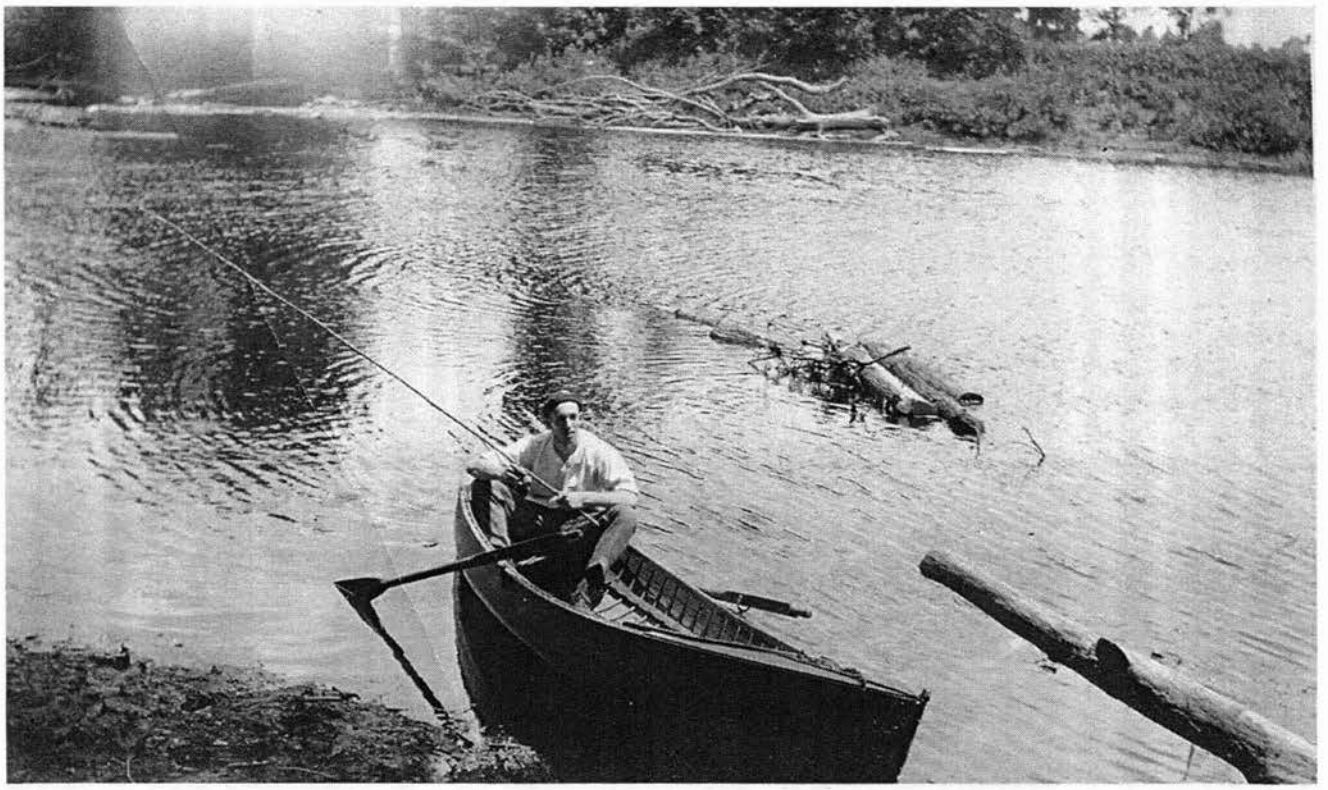
The steamer St. Lawrence, built in Clayton in the late 19th century, could carry 900 passengers. It regularly called at Ogdensburg and the Thousand Islands.. [image courtesy of David Martin]

Tourism and Recreation

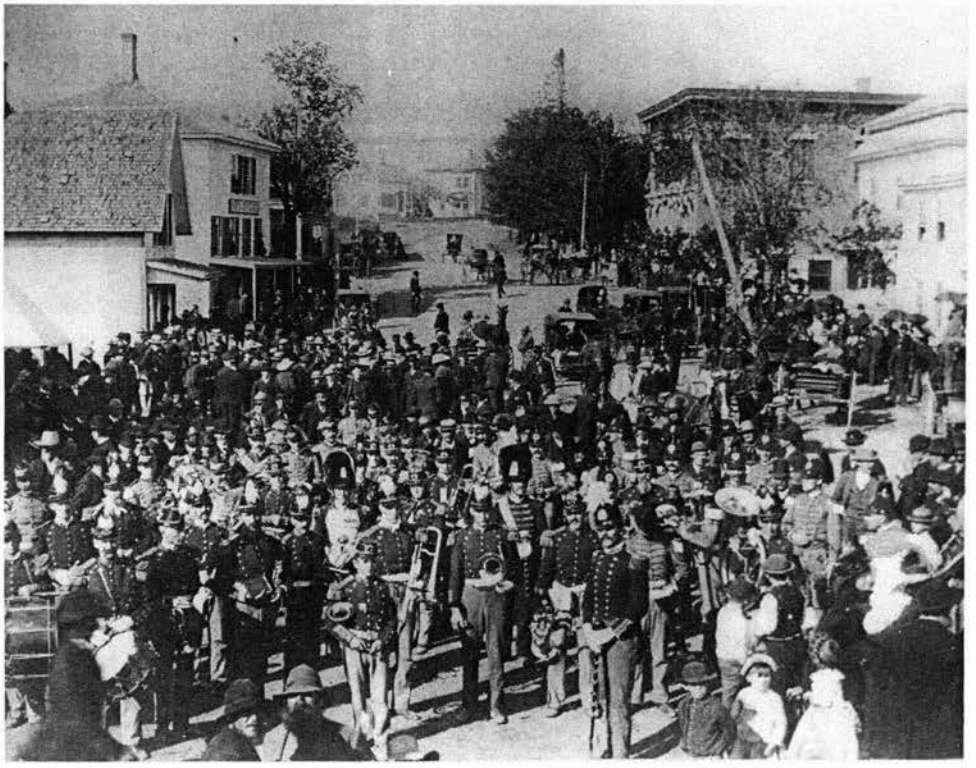
The earliest tourists to St. Lawrence County probably came to partake of the restorative spring waters of Massena Springs in the 1820s. By the mid 19th century, the idea of vacations became popular and many Americans left their homes and jobs in the city and headed to cooler and less crowded country resorts each summer. Americans from the East coast often chose to vacation in the Adirondack Mountains or along the St. Lawrence River in northern New York State. Tourists and residents alike have enjoyed the many natural wonders of the county - mountains and forests for hunting and hiking; lakes and rivers for canoeing, boating, fishing and swimming; and more recently the beautiful colors of fall foliage. In addition, cultural and historic heritage sites and man-made wonders like the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project continue to attract visitors into the 21st century.

A group of 19th century hunters in the Town of Fine. Note the canvas tent and pack basket. [1000-1678]

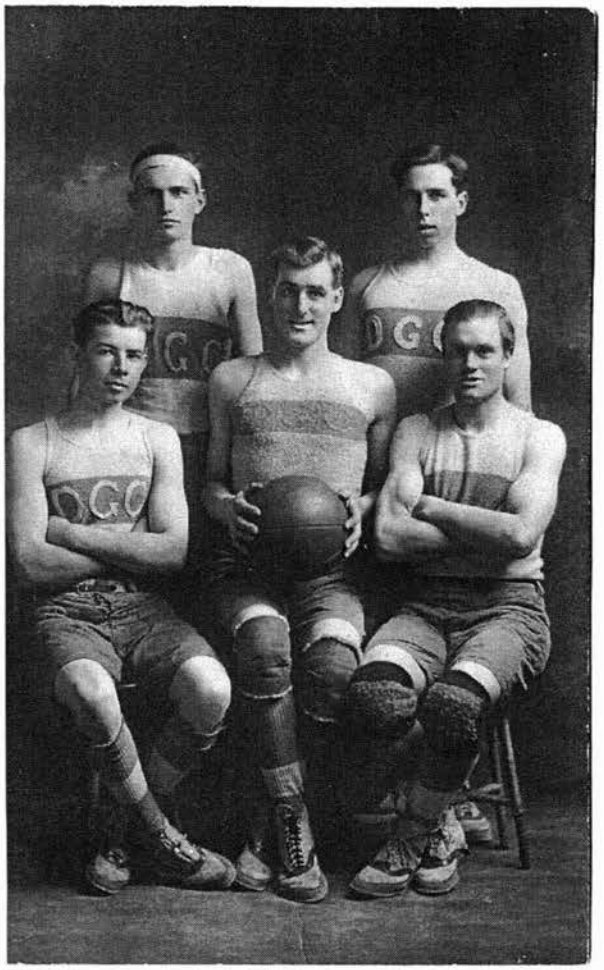
A family group camps in a little more comfort. [SLCHA Kip glass negatives, box 9]



Ivan Kramer, in 1914, fishing on the Oswegatchie River and looking relaxed. [1990-4.318]



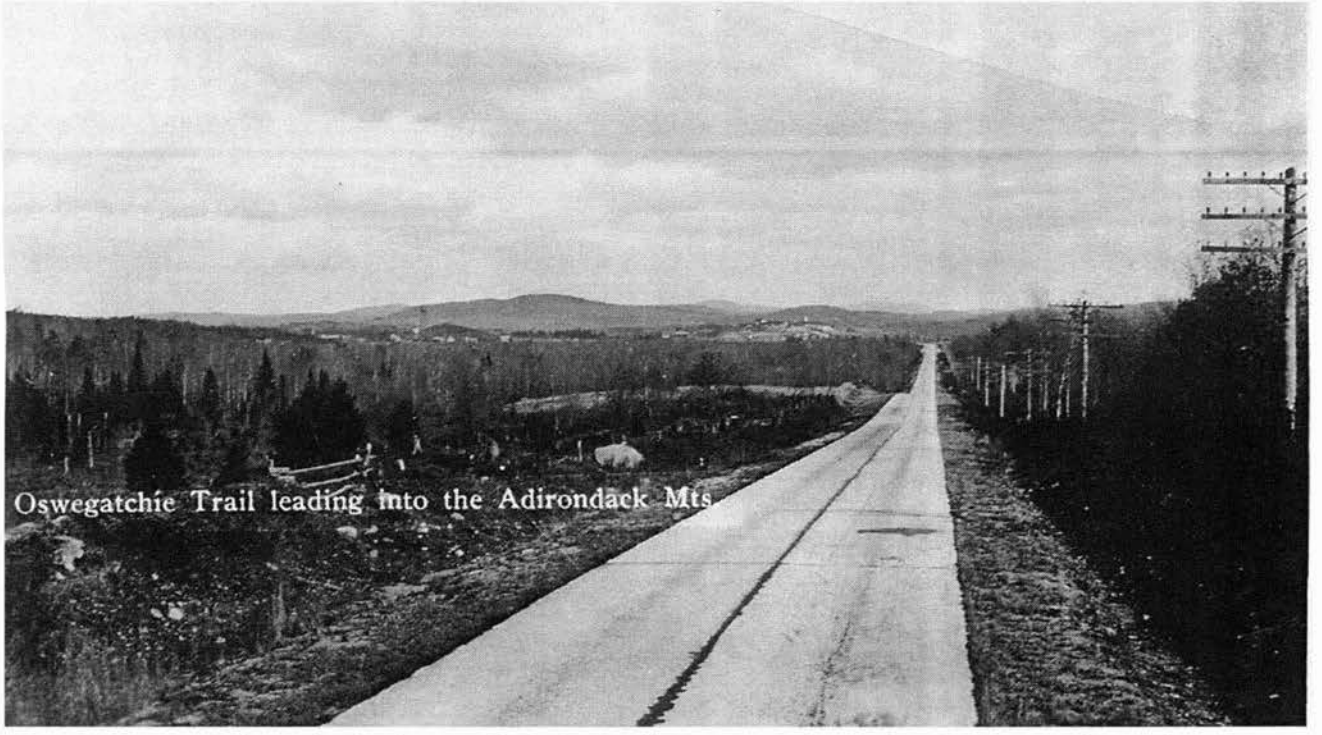
The Parishville and Stockholm Firemen's bands celebrate the 4th of July in Parishville in the late 19th century with a crowd in attendance. [1000-1083]



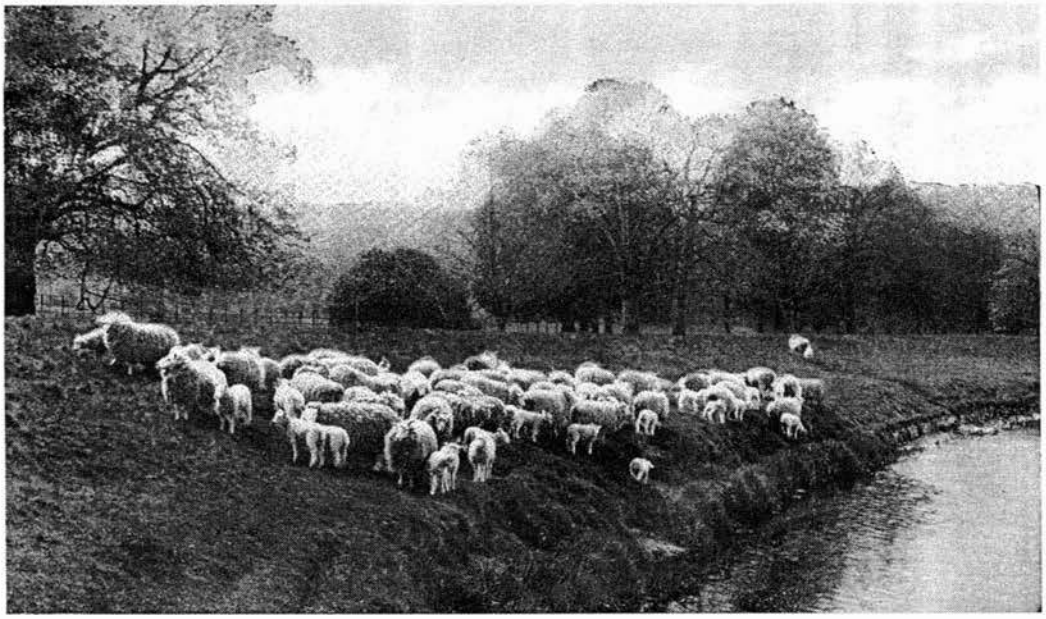
The DePeyster Grange basketball team c. 1915-17. Left to right in front are Ralph Steele, Harve Badger, and Almond Smithers; standing are Emery Smithers and Ralph Fishbeck. [SLCHA Postcard collection]

Children with tricycles, Canton, late 19th century. [SLCHA Kip glass negatives, box 9]

The toboggan water slide at Sylvia Lake, photographed by Atherton. The bathers appear to be wearing 1920's costumes. [1000-2706]

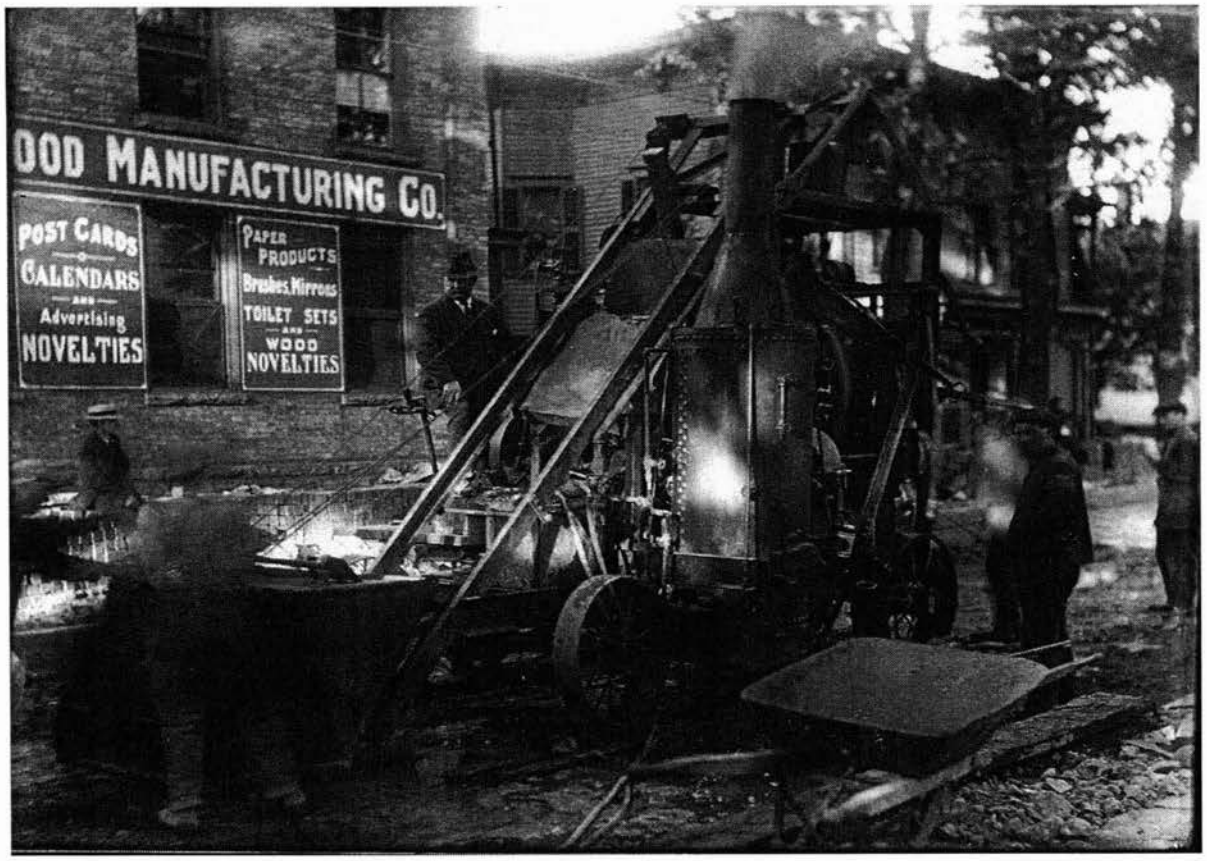


Route 3 near Star Lake, probably photographed after World War Two, and touted as the Oswegatchie Trail to the Adirondacks. The paved road drew tourists, and tourism has steadily grown in importance to the economy of the southern part of St. Lawrence County. [1000-2672]



A c.1916 postcard of a rural landscape near Potsdam shows the importance of both agriculture and tourism. The message on the back says: "A great many cattle and sheep in this section. We left Henderson Harbor this morning, coming through Watertown, Antwerp, Potsdam to Malone for the night. Are at the "Flanagan," a fine place. Drove 140 miles today . . ." [Potsdam Museum Postcard Collection]

Mystery Photo



Mystery photo: This photograph was taken in front of Northwood Manufacturing Co., probably in Potsdam.. What are these men doing with this steam engine? If you think you know, please contact the museum. The best answers will be revealed in the next issue of The Quarterly. [Potsdam Museum P.140]

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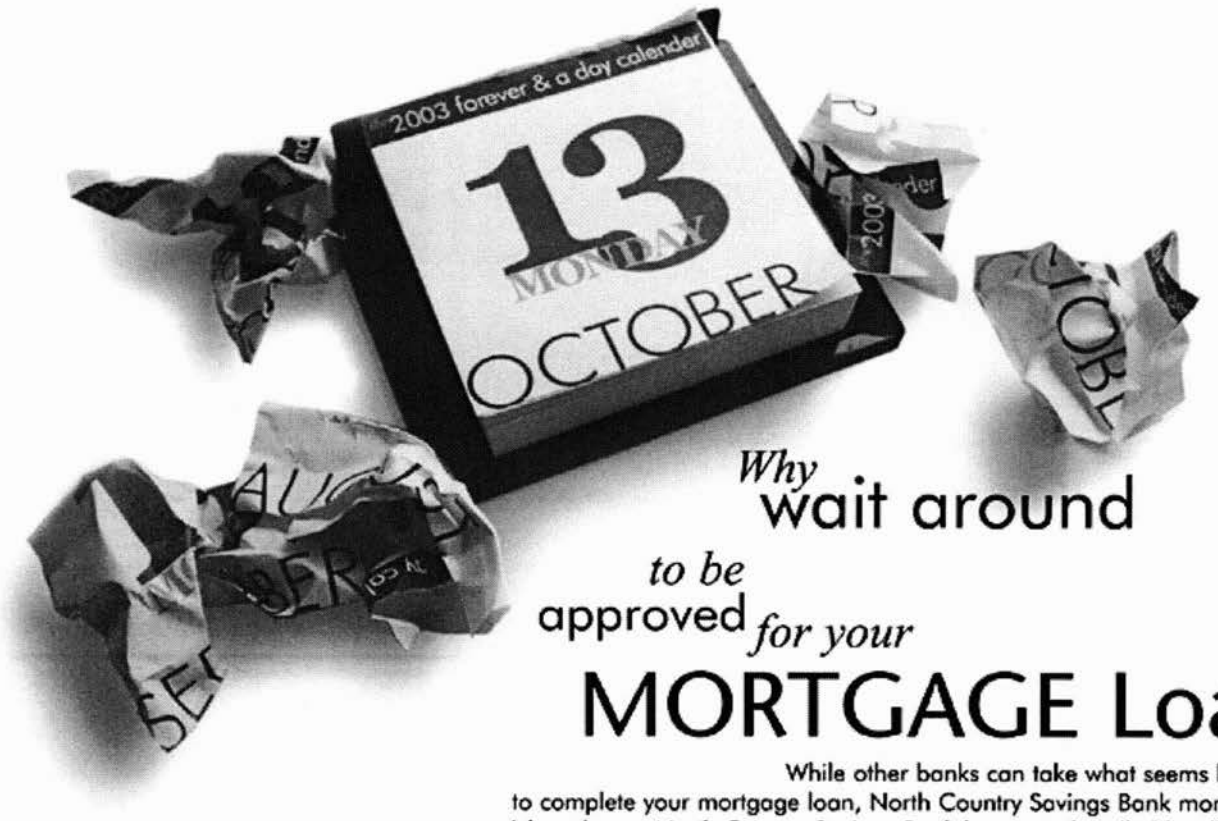

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