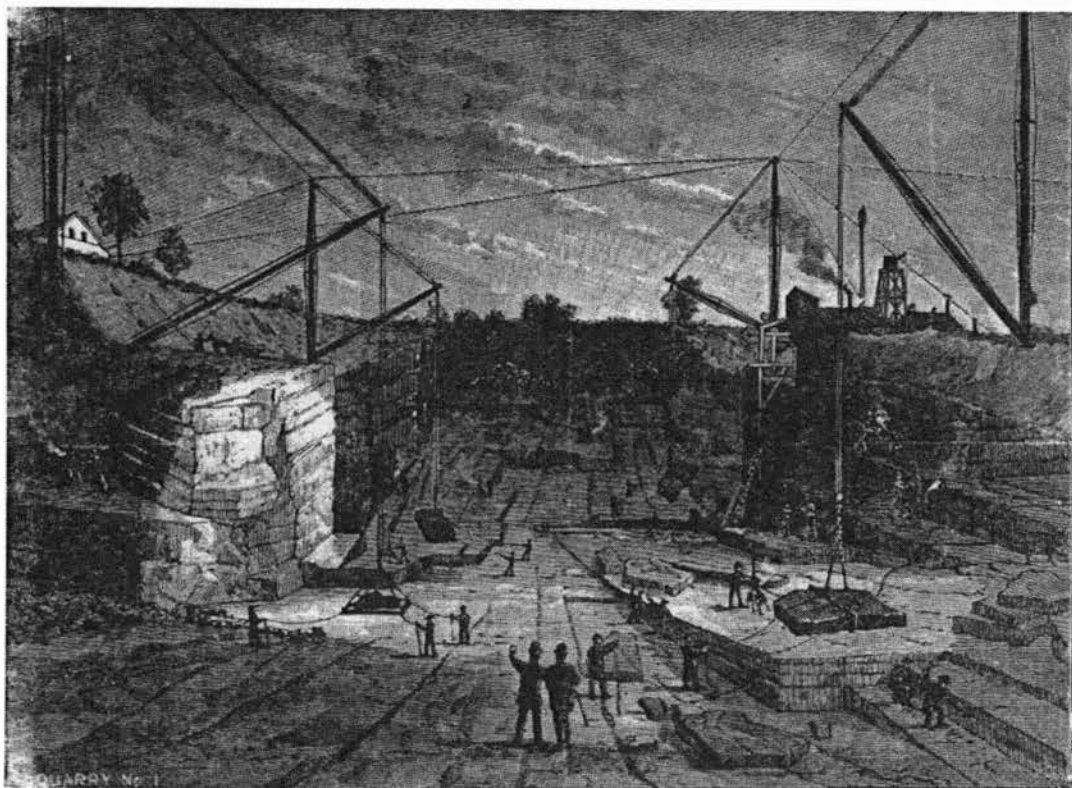
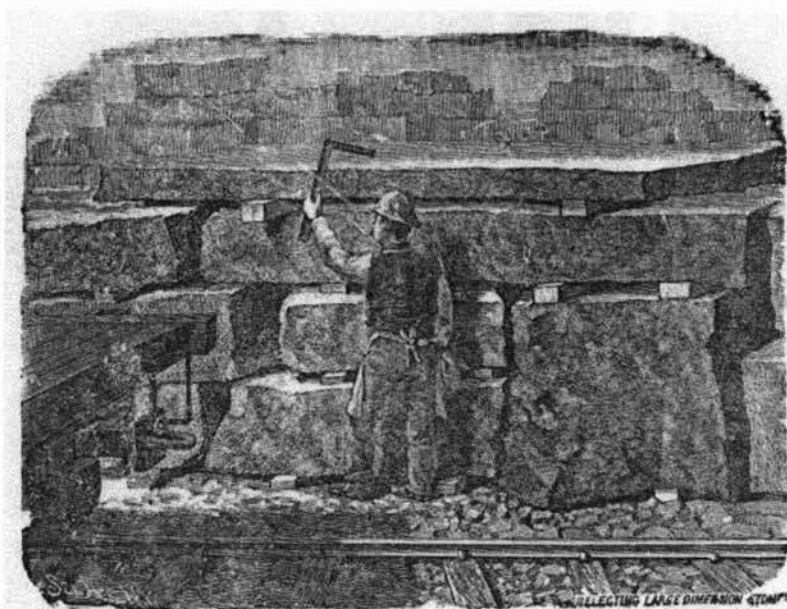


The St. Lawrence County Historical Association
QUARTERLY

Number 2

Spring 2005

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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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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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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Issue Editor:

Susan Omohundro

On the Cover

Two illustrations from the January 7, 1893 Scientific American article, "The Potsdam Red Sandstone Quarries." In the first, a mason is "selecting large dimension stone" to be put on a rail car. The second is a view of "quarry no. 1," probably the Parmeter quarry on the west bank of the Racquette River near the Potsdam-Pierrepont town line, owned in the late 19th century by the Potsdam Red Sandstone Company.

From the County Historian

By Trent Trulock

I was saddened to read in the *Watertown Daily Times* of the death of Persis Boyesen on May 22, 2005. Any of you who have done research in the City Of Ogdensburg, Town of Oswegatchie, and Village of Heuvelton may recognize her name. If not, you may have come across some of her work on the history of these municipalities without realizing it. Persis was the historian for all three of these locations at the same time for a number of years. She also served as the Deputy County Historian in 1966 under then County Historian Mary Biondi (Smallman).

Persis Yates was born in St. Albans, Vermont on June 26, 1924. She graduated from the University of Vermont, Burlington, in 1945. Also in 1945 she married Lt. James William Boyesen of the Army Air Forces. They had four children, a son and three daughters. Persis was a teacher and began her career teaching at Winooski High School in Vermont. She also taught in Chaumont, Lisbon, and Ogdensburg. She was appointed the Oswegatchie Town Historian and the Heuvelton Village Historian in 1964, and the Ogdensburg City Historian in 1986. The North Country Local Historians Zone 1 presented Persis with the Bessie Walldorf Award in 1992 for all of her hard work in the field of local history.

Persis was an extremely active historian. She helped numerous people in their quest to find information on their families. I was amazed by how much information Persis had stored in her head. I always have to look up dates and names, but she seemed to be able to instantly recall whatever date and name she needed. She also worked long and hard with others in her community to make a reconstruction of Fort Oswegatchie a reality in the City of Ogdensburg. From all indications it looks like her faithfulness to this project will be rewarded in several years, as



The Silas Wright House, home of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association.

there is a very active group working to bring about this reconstruction.

It has been said that all history is local. It is the local connection for the most part that makes history relevant to the general public. After all, most of us do not have famous military, educational, scientific, or political figures in our family history. But we all do have family history (for good or bad!). And it is this family history that makes that personal connection to the larger levels of history. Without a doubt Persis championed the importance of family history to local history.

Persis was the historian emeritus for Ogdensburg, Oswegatchie, and Heuvelton. She retired from her historian career several years ago and had been a resident of St. Joseph's Nursing Home in Ogdensburg for the last few years. When she retired from her long career in local history her place was taken by Linda Marshall, Oswegatchie Town and Village of Heuvelton Historian, and James Boyle, Ogdensburg City Historian. And while these fine historians have taken Persis' place they have in no way replaced her, for no one can. Persis did a tremendous amount of work for our local history and her legacy lives on with the articles and research she leaves behind. She will be missed greatly, but as long as the legacy of her work remains she will never be forgotten.

Potsdam Sandstone Buildings In St. Lawrence County: 1868-1934

By Susan Omohundro

Red Potsdam sandstone from the quarries along the Racquette River first gained notice soon after pioneer settlement began. The Parmeter family opened the first quarry in the 1810s and their example was soon followed by others. The pioneer era saw the construction of many structures, mostly houses, most located near a source of stone. The masonry was plain courses or the regionally distinctive slab and binder style of alternating bed-cut and cross-cut courses. (See "Building with Potsdam Red Sandstone: The Early Years," *The Quarterly* Vol. 44, no. 1, Winter 1999 for further information.)

This early period of utilization of Potsdam sandstone faded out in the 1850s. However, after the Civil War, the industry revived, albeit in a quite different character. The revival was facilitated by the growth of the railroad network, which permitted transportation of heavy blocks of stone over large distances. Also, the use of steam-powered machinery developed during this period, which made extraction and shaping of stone much easier.

Furthermore, the stone was used in a different manner. The industrial era buildings are almost all large public buildings, not private homes. In the post-Civil War period the masonry featured the widely popular ashlar style, in which the blocks are rectangular, have a rough-cut surface, vary in size, and are placed irregularly, not in even courses.

In the industrial era the quarries were large-scale commercial businesses, not small private endeavors. There were only two major companies on the Racquette River. The Red Sandstone Company owned the Parmeter quarry and other sites just north

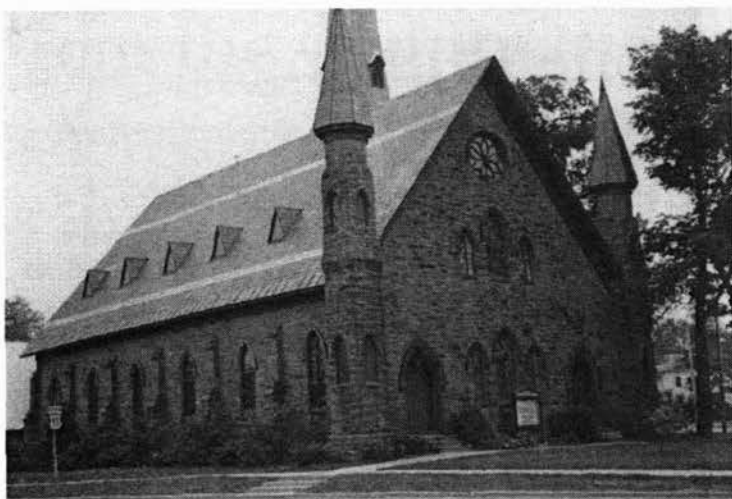
of Hannawa Falls. It was a consortium of local businessmen, including the politician-philanthropist of Civil War fame, General Edwin Merritt. The Clarkson family owned quarries closer to Potsdam, one which opened in the 1820s on the west side of the river near the present Sugar Island dam, and one which opened in 1877 on the east side.

At the peak of the industry's prosperity, in 1893, *Scientific American* published an article extolling the virtues of Potsdam sandstone, in particular its hardness and durability, a feature lacking in most sandstone. The author went so far as to say "This is the best of all building materials..." This claim was supported by scientific data from various pressure and acid tests executed at Columbia College as well as endorsements by several technical authorities.

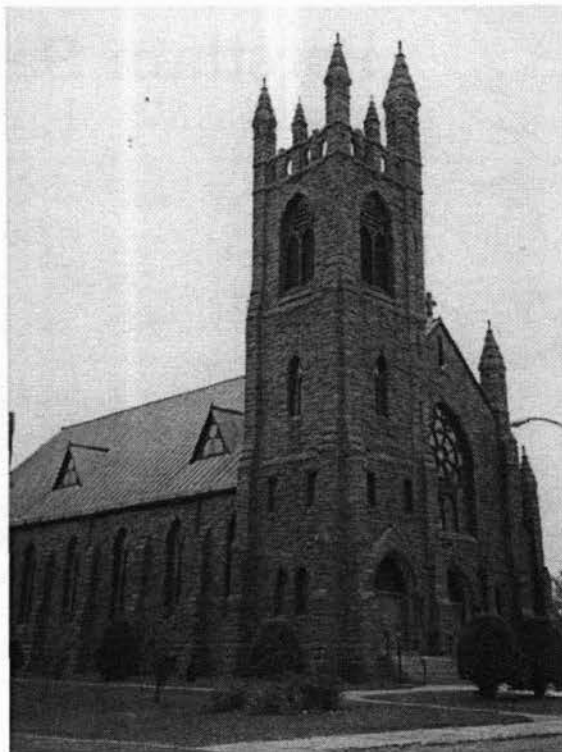
The Potsdam Red Sandstone Company liberally quoted these reports in its advertising brochure. The brochure was illustrated with well-known public buildings such as the Canadian Parliament as well as mansions located as far away as St. Louis, Missouri. The implication was that Potsdam sandstone was a prestigious as well as practical building material.

However, in only a few more years, the sandstone industry was well on the way to extinction. Only a few buildings were constructed entirely of Potsdam sandstone after 1900, although the material continues even now to occasionally be used for decorative accents.

Why did construction in Potsdam sandstone cease? One factor was the changing fashion in masonry. The elaborately carved Victorian ornament lost its appeal, and the pink and red color of Potsdam sandstone went



Side-by-side front-left views of Potsdam's Presbyterian Church, built in 1868, and St. Mary's Catholic Church, built in 1900. Although both churches share many stylistic elements, the overall effect achieved is quite different.



out of style. A second factor was the high cost of stone compared with inexpensive new materials such as concrete, and the high cost of labor connected with preparing and laying stone compared to pouring concrete. Additionally, the Potsdam-Hannawa Falls railroad track was taken up in World War One, putting an end to efficient, economical access to the quarries. The last straw was the construction of the Sugar Island hydroelectric dam in 1922, which permanently flooded the main quarry of the Clarkson Company and the original pit at the Parmeter quarry.

With that brief survey of the industrial-era sandstone industry as an introduction, we will now look at the St. Lawrence County buildings that resulted from that industry. We should note at the outset that many significant Potsdam sandstone buildings exist outside our county, in Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and elsewhere, but they will not be described here. There are also many important buildings inside our county that combine Potsdam sandstone with other materials, including the County Courthouse in Canton, the Armory and Psychiatric Center in Ogdensburg, and others, but they also will not be described here. That leaves fifteen in-

dustrial-era buildings in St. Lawrence County constructed entirely of red Potsdam sandstone from the Racquette River quarries.

The earliest of these is the Presbyterian Church in Potsdam, which was built in 1868 replacing an earlier building. There are a couple of hints that this is a new, unfamiliar style of masonry. The blocks of stone are on the small side, compared to those used in later churches. Also, quite a few stones, especially on the front façade, show drill marks. The stone varies in color and likely came from the Red Sandstone Company quarries.

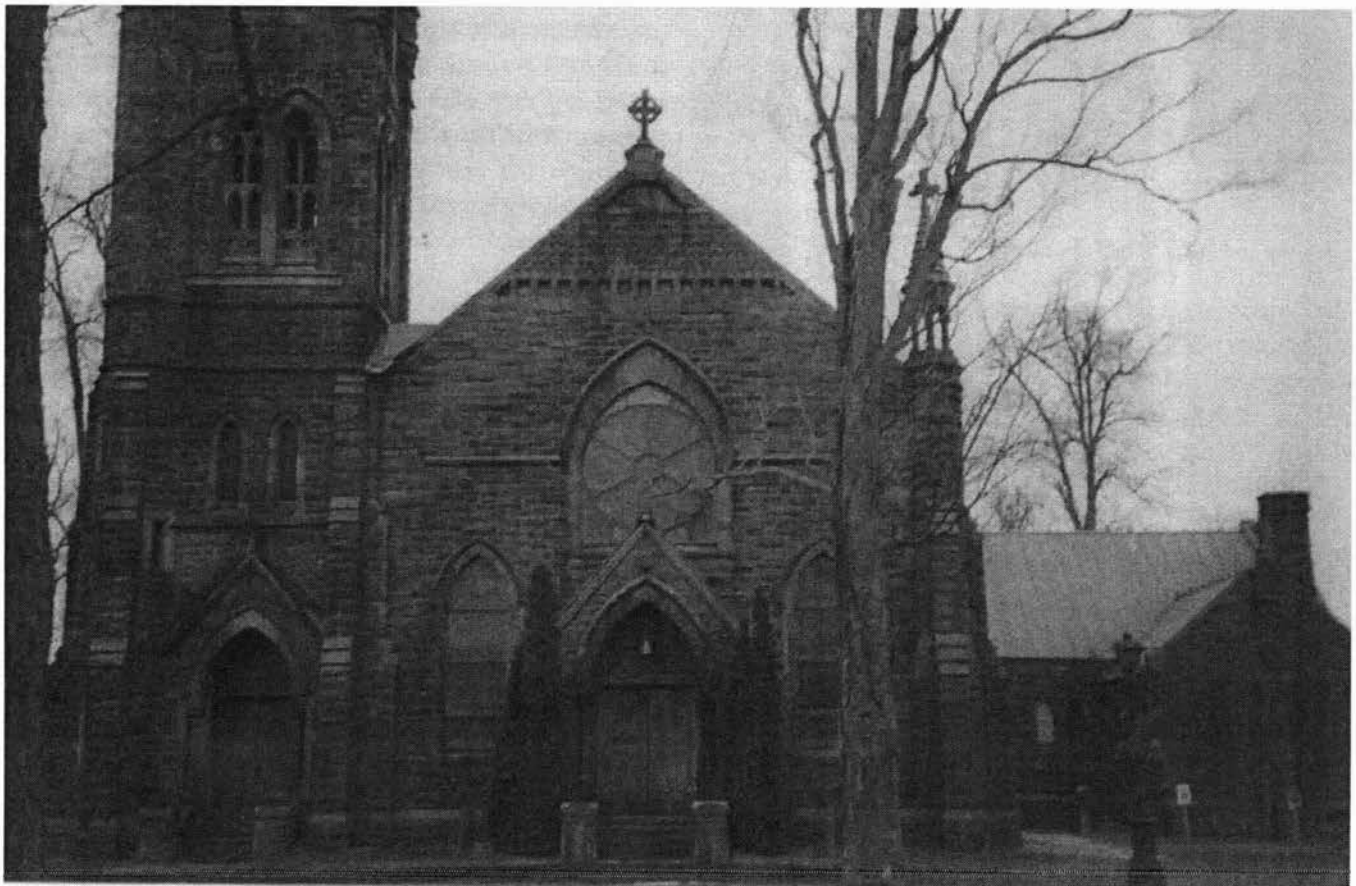
It's instructive to compare the 1868 Presbyterian Church to St. Mary's Catholic Church, which was built in 1900 two blocks away on Lawrence Avenue. Both churches share a Gothic style, with lancet windows between buttresses on the side walls, asymmetrical towers, heavy wood doors in arched doorways, steep roofs, dormers, and so on. But the masonry in St. Mary's shows the effect of three decades of development. The size of blocks is much larger. (The whole church is much larger). There is more decorative carving. The quality of the masonry is high, the

color of the stone uniform (it came from the Clarkson quarries), and there are no irregularities in the work. The effect of the Presbyterian Church on the viewer tends to be comfortable and modest in scale, that of St. Mary's imposing and massive.

Potsdam's Clarkson family was directly responsible for construction of five of our fifteen buildings. The Clarksons provided financial backing, the sandstone, and the workmen. They not only promoted the sandstone industry, they used the product to display their social position and promote their religious and educational goals. The five buildings are Trinity Episcopal Church in Potsdam, Zion Episcopal Church in Colton, Bayside Cemetery and Gatehouse, Clarkson University's Old Main, and the Clarkson Office Building.

Trinity Church was originally built and consecrated in 1835 as a fairly plain,

modest Federal style building in slab and binder (defined by courses of alternating grain) masonry. However, the parishioners, guided and financially supported by the Clarksons, began a program of development in the late 1850s as the church gradually adopted "high church" practices. In particular, the 1880s saw a program of enlargement and elaboration under the influence of Elizabeth Clarkson and her children. Elizabeth (1810-1883) arranged for the construction of the chapel extension in ashlar masonry on the west side, and that work was completed in 1884. Also, in 1886 the church was extended forward about 14 feet and given an elaborate Gothic-style façade with rose window and a 110-foot-tall ashlar bell tower on the left (east) side. These additions were designed by James Johnston, an architect from Ogdensburg. Because of its outstanding sandstone masonry, historic importance, and significant artistic features (including seven docu-



The front of Trinity Episcopal Church, on Fall Island in Potsdam, achieved its present form late in the 19th century. A work of art, it is on the National Register.



Zion Episcopal Church, in downtown Colton, is a small gem closely modeled on Trinity.

mented Louis Comfort Tiffany windows) Trinity Church was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

Elizabeth Clarkson was also largely responsible for the construction of Zion Epis-

copal Church in Colton in 1883, which was financed by her bequest and the work supervised by her son Thomas. The architect was James Johnston again. Therefore it is not surprising that the building and its furnishings

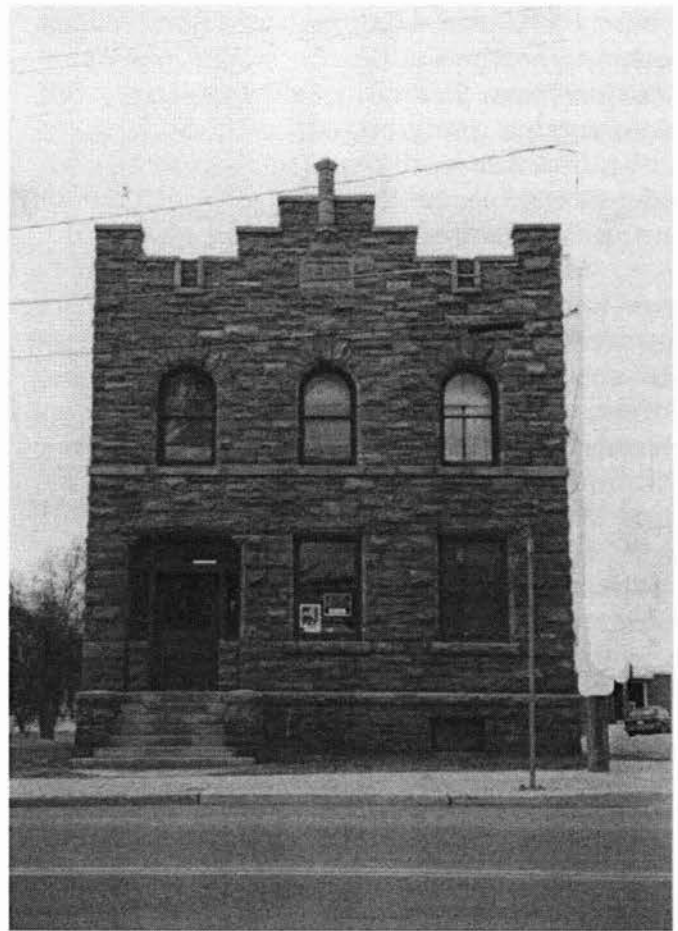


A view of the lodge at Bayside Cemetery, visible from Clarkson Avenue at the Potsdam Village/ Town boundary.

very closely resemble features at the mother church, Trinity, and are in no way inferior in quality. Using large blocks of rough-cut ashlar sandstone in a deep red color, the Gothic style front of the church displays elaborate carving. A tower on the left balances a large rose window on the body of the church. Zion Church is remarkably well preserved, and was placed on the National Register in 2002.

Bayside Cemetery was established in 1865 on the outskirts of Potsdam, with the backing of the Clarkson family. Bayside was designed as a "rural cemetery," artfully making use of the riverside setting and low hills, providing winding roadways and landscaping to encourage a feeling of peace and meditation as people visited their family members and friends. Bayside as we see it now was completed about 1900, with the construction of the lodge, entryway, and front wall. The architect for the lodge was Edgar Josselyn, a New York-based architect with a national reputation. The building he designed is in late Victorian Chateaufesque style, with rugged, asymmetrical massing, a steep roof, and looming towers. The building is distinctive in combining residential with religious functions: the front room was a viewing room, and the bell in the tower was rung to collect people for services, while the sexton made his home in the back portion of the lodge. The gatehouse, as the building is called now, is currently used only as a private residence. The gatehouse and cemetery entrance display lavish ornamental sandstone carving. Bayside Cemetery was placed on the National Register in 2002.

In 1901 Annie Clarkson, manager of the family sandstone business at this time, built a handsome new sandstone office building on Fall Island in Potsdam across from Trinity Church. This had rugged ashlar masonry in Richardsonian Romanesque style, was embellished with a castellated parapet, and gave a massive, fortress-like impression exceeding its modest size. The main office, on the first floor, featured a sandstone fireplace, a bathroom, and a



The front of the Clarkson Office Building, on Fall Island in Potsdam.

brick-lined vault for valuables and documents. The second floor held two or three smaller offices. This building's masonry is in excellent condition. The Clarkson Office Building was added to the National Register in 2002.

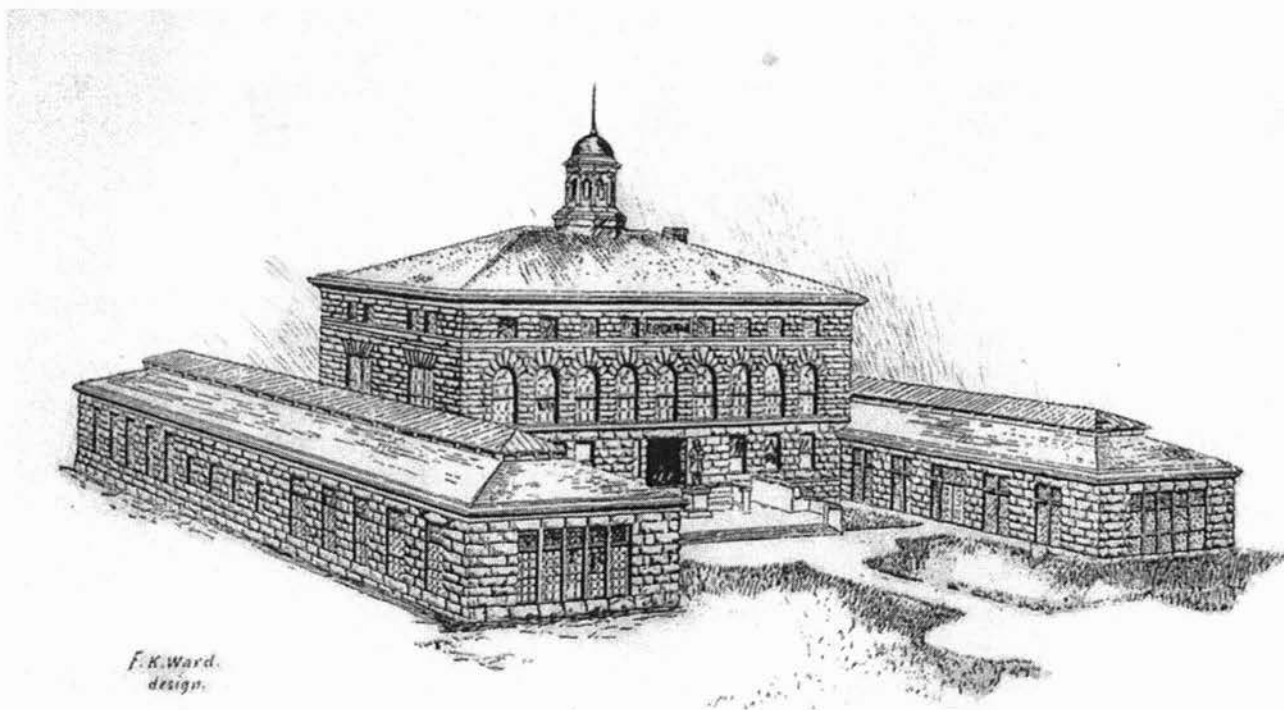
The fifth industrial-era sandstone building in our group produced by the Clarkson family is Old Main. Old Main was the premier edifice of the Thomas S. Clarkson Memorial School of Technology, established in 1896 in memory of Thomas, who died following an accident at the quarry, by his three surviving siblings, Elizabeth, Lavinia, and Frederica. The well-known architect Edgar Josselyn received his first Potsdam commission from the family here. Old Main is a large, 3-story building in rugged ashlar masonry, with low, long wings. At the time, it represented the height of fashion and also incorporated advanced technology. It served almost all college functions, including

chapel services and dances (third floor), classrooms, laboratories (in the wings), and student services. Though now not in use, Old Main retains many original interior features as well as impressive masonry, and is considered eligible for the National Register on the basis of its architecture and historic value.

Not all later Potsdam sandstone buildings were lavish, high-style endeavors. The former water plant in Potsdam was a utilitarian structure, although even it was embellished with carved window and door surrounds and a parapet. The water plant was Potsdam's first industrial-era practical structure, built in 1871 when the village decided to install its first municipal water supply. The addition on the west dates to 1906. It was harmoniously added to the original building, copying the door and window styles closely. The water plant is now a restaurant. It is part

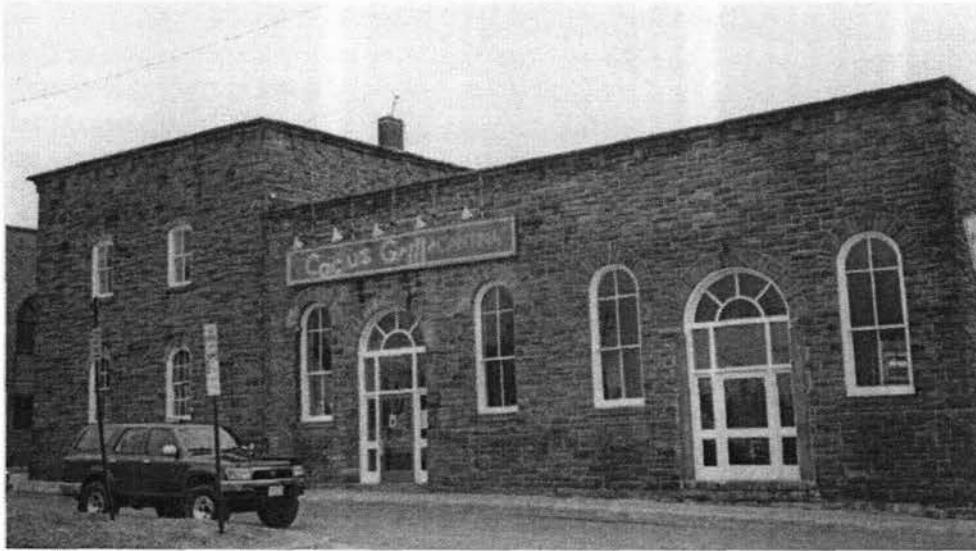
of Potsdam's National Register-listed Historic District.

Another utilitarian building is the Hannawa Falls Power Plant, built c. 1900 along with the Hannawa Falls dam and canal by the Hannawa Falls Power Company. The Red Sandstone Company supplied the stone from its quarries on the west side of the Racquette River and promoted its construction, since the company controlled the water rights. The walls are plain rectangular blocks laid randomly, but the window lintels are outlined with uniformly-sized blocks and the side walls enhanced by modest buttresses. The company was proud of its achievement, which was described in the *Transactions of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers* by Wallace C. Johnson in 1901. Originally, the plant combined the functions of hydropower generation (it supplied electricity to Potsdam,



THE THOMAS S. CLARKSON MEMORIAL
SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY.

A c.1896 drawing of Old Main, on Main Street in Potsdam. The wings no longer have skylights, because they proved leaky, but otherwise the drawing depicts the building well.



The former water plant on Raymond Street in Potsdam. The 1871 building is the two-story section on the left; the 1906 addition is on the right.

among other villages) with a paper pulp facility. The latter function ceased in 1912. However, production of electricity continues, making this the county's only utilitarian sandstone building still serving its original purpose. Incidentally, the railroad line from Potsdam ended at a flat storage area just north of this building; a few relics from that area may be discerned. The Hannawa Falls power plant retains sufficient integrity and historic interest to make it a possible candidate for the National Register.

The 1888 Cox Building is a significant member of Potsdam's National Register-listed Market Street Historic District. It is a

unique, elaborately decorated ashlar commercial structure, boasting carved rosettes and twining foliage and letters and numbers (spelling out "Cox 1888"). The carving plus parapet and arched windows and a variety of other geometric forms combine to create an exuberant, complicated façade. Charles Cox was a quarry owner as well as storekeeper, and the building seems to re-

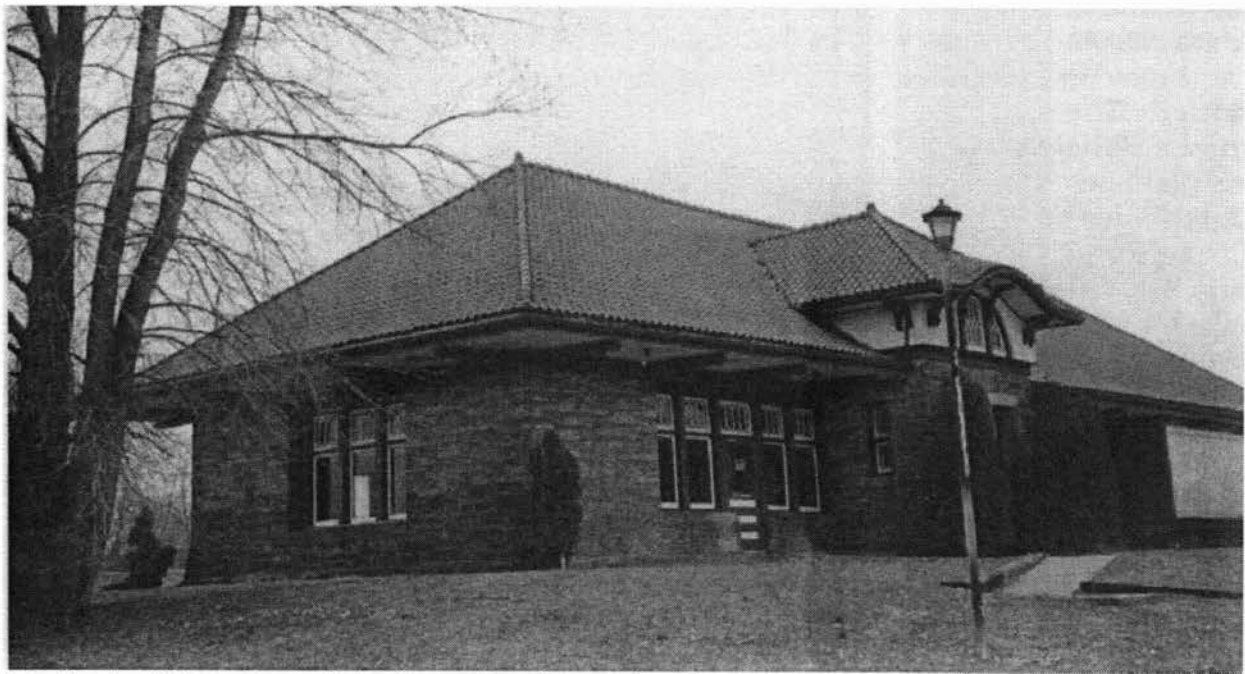
fect his fondness for the material as well as a desire to make an impression. For most of its existence, the building housed a series of dry goods merchants (one was Maxfield) and department stores. In 1981 the interior was gutted and "Maxfield's" Restaurant established.



A view of the large Hannawa Falls hydroelectric power plant taken from the west side of the Racquette River, with the canal and penstock behind it.



The lavishly carved and decorated front of the 1888 Charles Cox mercantile building on Market Street in Potsdam.



The back of the re-located but intact Potsdam train depot.

The last commercial structure in ashlar style masonry to be mentioned in this group of fifteen is Potsdam's 1914 Penn Central train depot. This was a handsome ashlar one-story building with wide eaves and tile roof and large, multi-paned windows. Its Mission-influenced style was very popular in train stations of that era but largely unknown in St. Lawrence County. Ironically, this seems to have been the last-constructed local building utilizing freshly quarried sandstone before the rail line to the Hannawa Falls quarries ceased operation. The depot served passengers until 1960. In more recent decades it has housed a series of restaurants, but it retains many original interior features.

In 1917 the State Normal School built a sandstone edifice on the town square (Park St.) in Potsdam. It was the third sandstone building on that site, following the 1825 St. Lawrence Academy building, then the 1868 Normal School building, and in part re-used

earlier stone in a more up-to-date style. It is a large, 3-story building in Beaux Arts style, featuring large-scale pillars and other classical details on the front. The color of the stone is closer to pink than red. "Old Main" was a spacious, well-appointed classroom building, and was the most important Normal School building for many years, until Potsdam College became a unit in the State University system and moved to a new campus. The building was acquired by Clarkson College and renamed Snell Hall. Now that Clarkson University has moved out of its downtown buildings, Snell Hall's future is uncertain.

Across the street from Snell Hall is Potsdam's Civic Center, an assemblage of sandstone structures created in 1934. At this location a Universalist Church had been constructed in 1876 on the north end of Park Street, and an opera house/town hall in 1875 on the south side. By 1934 the church was no longer used for religious purposes. The interior was gutted: it currently contains the



The front of the building erected in 1917 for Potsdam's Normal School, now belonging to Clarkson University and known as Snell Hall.

Potsdam Village museum, but indications of the former church remain in the lancet windows and Gothic cornice. The town hall was torn down, but the stone was re-used in the creation of the civic center. The sets of stairs and porches across the front unify the old and more recent components. The southern section of the civic center contains the village library, and village offices occupy the center portion. The ashlar masonry is sound but undistinguished.

Canton possesses one red Potsdam sandstone building, the Herring-Cole building on the St. Lawrence University campus. This is another hybrid building, a western portion built in 1869 and an eastern wing added in 1902. It manages to gracefully combine Gothic and Classical design elements. Silas Herring, vice-president of the New York Universalist Education Society, gave \$10,000 toward construction of the Herring Library, which was the second building on campus. Although this is an early ashlar construction, the masonry is proficient and elaborate. The

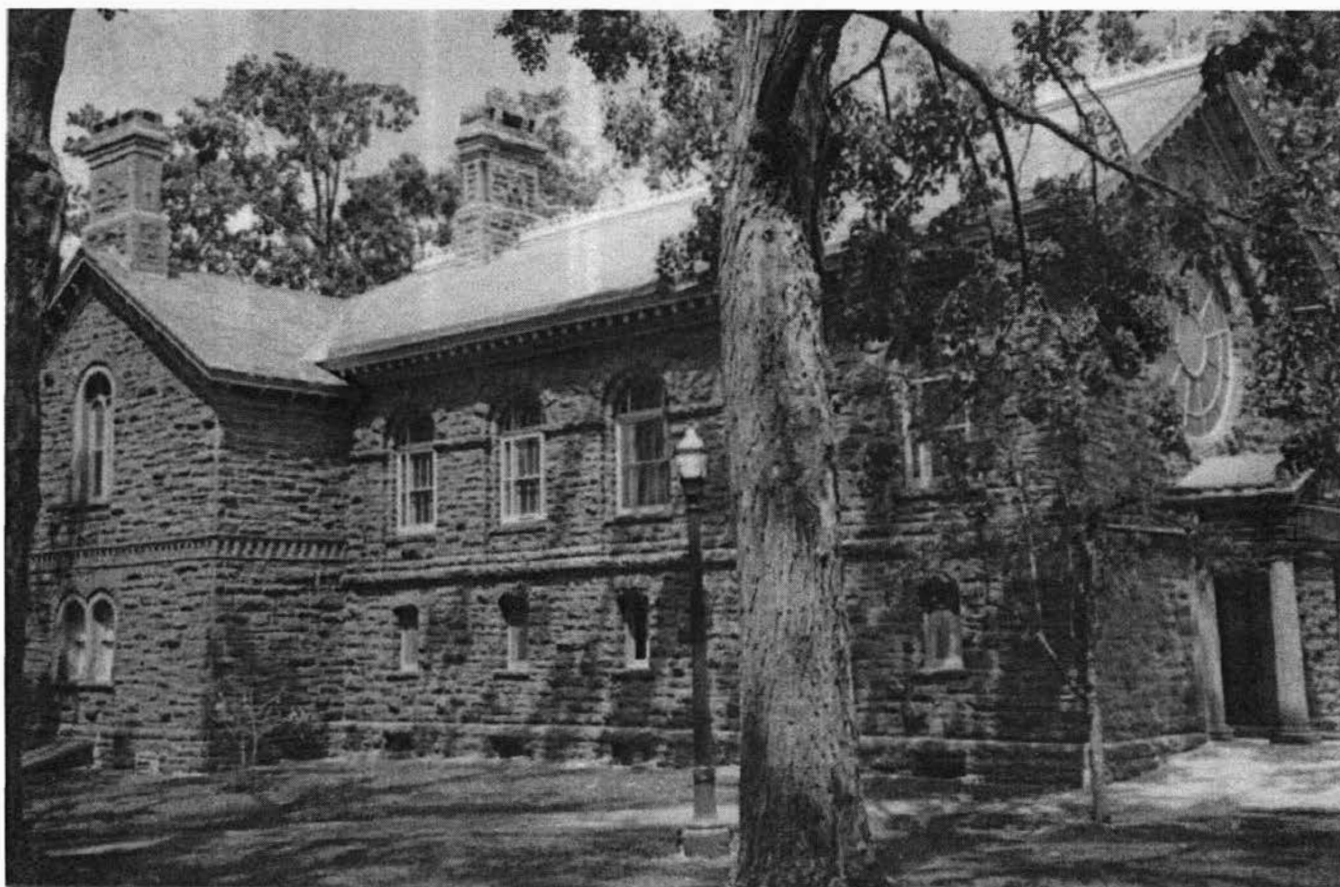
front door is arched, in Gothic style, in a massive stone frame. "Herring Library" is carved into this stone frame, and a keystone bears the intertwined initials "SL."

In 1902 Edward Cole financed the addition, the Cole Reading Room. Though harmonious with the older building, the stonework differs in style from the earlier work in several respects, and the entry's columned portico is more classical in style. On the interior, as well, the two portions of the building differ in appearance, the 1902 addition containing elaborate dark, varnished woodwork, notably around the balcony and ceiling. Though no longer used as a library, the Herring-Cole building remains in good condition. It was listed on the National Register in 1974.

In all this variety of industrial-era building styles and functions, there is but one house, the 1922 Scheller house in Potsdam, built in Dutch Colonial style. This house incorporates stone that was taken from a dismantled house in Hannawa Falls and re-cut in ashlar style. The pieces tend to be large



Across Park Street from Snell Hall is Potsdam's Civic Center. The 1934 construction is on the left, the former Universalist Church of 1876 on the right.



The former Herring-Cole Library, on the campus of St. Lawrence University, in Canton. The earlier construction is on the left; the 1902 addition is more prominently shown in this view.

and symmetrically arranged. This is a comfortable four-bedroom family home with a large living room and sunroom on the west side. The Scheller house is well built, in good condition, and remains a family residence.

In summary, the 15 red Potsdam sandstone buildings erected in St. Lawrence County between 1868 and 1934 represent a wide range of styles and functions. Collectively, they are a major part of our built environment, especially in Potsdam. Since it is highly unlikely that the sandstone industry will ever revive, it behooves us to preserve and care for the structures that remain.

Editor's Note: All photographs accompanying this article printed courtesy Susan Omohundro.

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The Scheller house, built in 1922 in Dutch Colonial style on Elm Street in Potsdam.

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1930 Memories From Little Old Piercefield

By Ella Banford Chellis
January 20, 1990

Home from school: The gloom of the back shed vanishes with the light of the kitchen as I enter, home from school. It is quiet. I hang my jacket on a peg behind the door. The room is warm and fragrant with the comforting smell of cinnamon buns baking. This means that Mother is not far away.

Our big black iron stove heats the room. In winter when I come from play, my toes cold through, I pull up a chair before this stove and, for just a few moments, stick my freezing feet into the warm oven on a little heavy folded blanket Mother puts beneath them. This is when the weather is very cold, perhaps near zero, and I have been too long at playing in the snow, or skating on the pond with my sister Alice, or sledding on the school hill. This is the same oven from which emanates on most days, as today, the most wondrous aromas of dinner cooking or pies or buns or whole wheat bread.

Our big black stove is trimmed with shiny metal, even the fancy legs. It is kept polished. Across the top there is a warming oven with a lid that comes down over. Here Mother puts serving dishes and cooked food until the rest of the meal is ready. At one end of the stove there is a large well for keeping water hot. My parents and my older sister sometimes dip from this well.

On one of the griddles, at all times, stands the copper tea kettle, for, you see, we are a family of tea drinkers. At breakfast our parents have coffee and we three girls have cocoa, but for the rest of the day, on all occasions, such as someone dropping in, or recovering from illness or feeling poorly, or just because it is four o'clock, it seems that on goes the kettle. Daddy's favorite tea is Earl Grey which he speaks of in respectful tones. Not so when he speaks of Al Smith who ran against Mr. Hoover.

Lady visitors, Mother, my sister Alice, Colleen and I try to read the leaves. Our friend, Mrs. Remington, tells our fortunes. They change from day to day. We laugh a lot and ponder the possibilities of these fortunes coming true. Colleen and I are allowed weak tea with milk and sugar in it. That is what we and our little friends have for tea parties on the lawn.

I don't know what our family would do without our kettle. When it is bubbling something good is going to happen. I don't know what we would do without our stove. It is so comforting to have this great black friend.

Cookies and milk are laid out for me on the kitchen table where we eat breakfast and lunch. We are almost always in a hurry when we eat here, either to get to school in the morning or to get back there after lunch. Daddy has to go to school earlier than we do because he is the principal.

Mother's pride and joy is her electric Easy Washer which is kept in this large kitchen. It is shiny copper. Wash day means a great deal of work for her, but it is much easier than before Daddy bought this electric machine. Back then she had to make much use of the scrubbing board, which is here in the back shed along with two huge tubs which are used for rinsing. They are hauled in and mounted on a wooden frame. Mother fills the washer and the tubs with a hose from the sink. When the clothes are washed clean they are put, one by one, through a wringer into the first rinsing tub and then wrung again into the second tub. Then the water from the washer and the tubs must be drawn into buckets and emptied down the sink. Mother likes to hang the wash outside, even in winter, because it makes it smell so sweet and clean. When things are first brought back inside in freezing weather, they can almost stand by themselves!



Courtesy: Ella Banford Chellis

The author and her family. From left to right: Ella; her father, Robert; her sister, Alice; her mother, Edith; and her sister, Colleen. The photograph was taken in Piercefield in 1936, when she was 15.

The next day Mother irons for hours, getting Daddy's starched white shirts just so, the tablecloths, the sheet and all our dresses and slips. Alice helps with towels, napkins, handkerchiefs and little things.

In one corner of this big sunny kitchen is a stack of large drawers which Daddy had built right into the wall. One drawer is all mine! Here I keep a book or two, my drawing paper, homework paper, crayons, pencils, paint set, Sunday School papers and my paper dolls which I cut from the *Pictorial Review* magazine every third month, when it is my turn. Here, too, is my roller skate key when it is not around my neck, and all kinds of things with which I am not to clutter up the house. Each member of our family has a drawer for the odds and ends of everyday living. Alice is a Girl Scout. She is fourteen. In her drawer she keeps a Scout handbook, a jackknife, a length of rope for practicing knots and a boon-

doggle with a whistle on it. There is also a baseball mitt and ball because she used to have her own neighborhood team. She was a tomboy. Now she has embroidery and crocheting in her drawer.

My mother's mother was a professional seamstress who had apprentices. She also taught her daughters to sew well. Her old treadle Singer sewing machine is in our kitchen. Mother makes pretty dresses and coats for us.

We spend much time in our dining room which is furnished with polished old mission oak which belonged first to my mother's parents, who died young. Our buffet has a wide mirror over it and my grandmother's silver service on it. The pretty things in the china cabinet come out when we have company.

Best of all is the table around which we gather for the evening meal. I am only nine

years old, but I know how to lay out the silver properly and the linen napkins with their silver rings. My father serves. After he has said grace we start eating. We must be careful with our manners. One may not leave the table until we are all finished eating unless one has permission.

The supper hour, or dinner hour on Sundays, is always fun unless one of us is cross for some reason. We talk about what is going on in our village and what we did in school that day and with our friends, and also what news from relatives may have arrived in the mail.

Mother is a wonderful cook and friends love to come to our house for dinner. Mr. Wood, who was once Superintendent of the International Paper Company which built our little town of Piercefield, used to say that Mother is wasted on one man and one family. When we have company there is even more conversation. Daddy often has a joke or two which makes everyone laugh. Politics and the world situation are tossed about by the grownups. They talk about the sad situation in our country and fear for our paper mill and the workers following the stock market crash. Will the company close our mill?

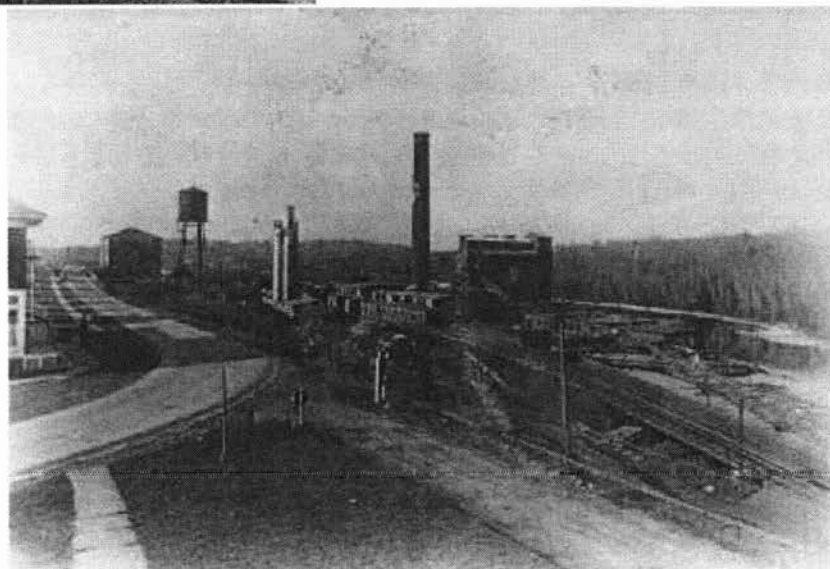
It is at this same table that we do all manner of projects: homework, drawing, painting, playing paper dolls and cards and games. I like to cut pretty pictures from magazines. I cut furniture and a family from the Montgomery Ward catalog. I paste the furniture on rectangular pieces of white cardboard, all the same size. I color in windows and curtains. I move my family from room to room.

Here, three days after my 6th birthday, in 1927, Daddy sat one afternoon, quietly weeping, his face in his hands. He had just received a telegram telling him that his father had died. This was the only



Courtesy Ella Banford Chellis

Two views of the International Paper Company plant in Piercefield in the 1930s. In the second view (right), the community building is left of the water tower.



Courtesy Ella Banford Chellis

grandparent I ever knew. He was stern. I was a little afraid of him. They say that he was a charmer when he was young, with a beaming personality and a beautiful tenor voice. What made him change?

I remember, when I was also much younger, times at night when Mother would lay my baby sister Colleen on a blanket on this table. Dr. Bury would spread a medication all over her chest and Mother would cover her eyes with a small cloth. The doctor would turn on a bright light over her to heat the salve in hope of easing her asthmatic breathing. Colleen would cry hard and I would get all weepy. I was told to stay out of the room, but I would sneak back and stand in the doorway, my curled index finger between my teeth.

At the end of the dining room, near the entrance to our living room, stands a large brown Heatrola. It is a wonderful place to stand next to on a cold morning while I am putting on my clothes. If I lean against it I may get a hole in my dress. That happened to me last year after my mother had warned me more than once. I had to wear a patch in the back of my skirt the rest of the winter! I won't do that again! Sometimes I see flames dance through the little isinglass window over the door. I don't know what our family would do without our Heatrola. It is cheery and keeps us nice and warm.

There are lamps, big chairs and little tables in our living room, and a mahogany settee with flowered cushions. On one wall hangs a very large print of "The Laughing Cavalier" by Franz Hals. He was the painter, long ago. The cavalier is an old-time Dutchman with an enormous white ruffled collar. He smiles and his eyes twinkle. He is my friend. He makes me feel happy.

My father enjoys sitting in the big green leather chair with the wide wooden arms to read the daily paper and book after book, to do crossword puzzles and smoke his pipe. He is the tallest person in our family, being five feet, six inches tall. A lot taller than Mother, who is only five feet. Daddy has dark hair and deepset hazel eyes and he wears horn-rimmed glasses. His name is Robert I. Banford. If you

ask him what the 'I' stands for, he will say 'Isabel.' He doesn't like 'Ivan.' Mother's name before she was married was Edith May Wallace. Our cousins call her Aunt Edie. She loves to read also. She sits here in the evenings with a book or her sewing or mending.

Our parents love children. Daddy says he wouldn't trade one of us girls for all the boys in the world. They want to know where we are and what we are doing. I am allowed to play up and down our block of Main Street and up through our back lot to play with friends on Waller Street. When I am roller skating, I can go up the hill here on Main Street and down to the end of the next block which is long. They give me permission to go to Ethel's house, which is farther away. I only once went with Alice up on Porcupine Hill, which is on the way out of town. There are houses and a couple of streets up there.

When Mother and Daddy have bridge parties or friends in, this living room fills with laughter and chatter. I love to sneak partway downstairs and listen to them. When they go out at night, Mrs. McNeely, Ethel's grandmother, comes to stay with us. She sits here long after we have gone to bed.

There is one time of the year when this whole room turns into a magical place. That is the day before Christmas. Our home is bustling! It is usually snowing and sometimes blowing. Mother spends the day in the kitchen making Aunt Clara's chocolate cookies with a dab of white icing on top, and other scrumptious things that will appear at breakfast and dinner on the morrow. No baking ahead of time for her! Everything must be fresh!

Daddy sets up our tree. He stands on a stepladder to arrange the lights and tinsel at the top and to place the Christmas angel and the smallest things that go up high. Alice is allowed to help hang the shiny balls and fragile old ornaments that break if you even touch them. Mother comes in and shares in the trimming for the length of time she can spare from the kitchen. Colleen and I fasten on little birds and things that go around the middle or the bottom. The fresh cut balsam

makes me feel heady with the perfume of the forest.

When greens have been placed around the room and large red poinsettias have been pinned to the curtains, our decorating is completed.

My father's mother, the grandmother for whom I was named 'Ella,' was buried on the Christmas Day prior to my birth. Mother says that Daddy idolized his mother. He gets a little moody in December. He cannot get into the Christmas spirit as soon as we can. He has sad associations, but when the tree is finished and supper is over, he joins in our celebration.

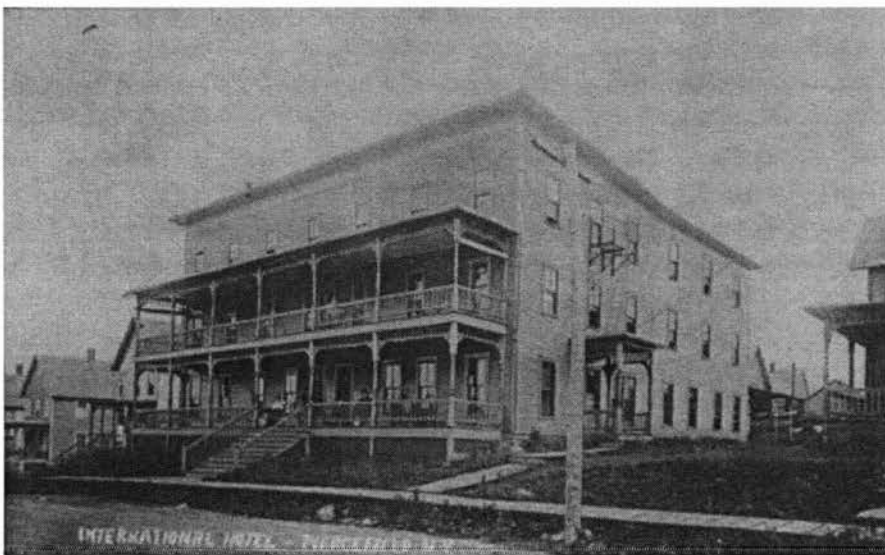
We sit around in this room and 'Oh' and 'Ah' over the lighted tree. It glimmers and glows with beautiful ornaments and magical colors. We talk about what we hope to find under the tree in the morning. We sing songs we have learned at church and at school. In a little while we come to "Away in a Manger" and "Silent Night," all about the baby Jesus, and I wish I could hug him. We have cookies and Moxie and a bit of ribbon candy. Then we put our little gifts for each other under the tree and set out Santa's snack. He will like Aunt Clara's cookies too.

I go to the window. The snowing has stopped and the plow has been through. There is moonlight. The snow sparkles like tiny diamonds. I can almost inhale the crisp cold air on the other side of the pane. Everything is just right for Santa. I really no longer believe in him. . . . I just wish I did. Colleen does . . . Have I been good enough? Will there be a new doll? A game? A book? Even a dollhouse? I want to sing "Up on the Rooftop" but a carol is now playing on our victrola. I turn back to gaze at the glory of it all and I almost stop breathing from the excitement and awe of Christmas Eve.

The following day is one of surprises and delight. There is a doll, a book, a family game and a few other little things. Long hours of play with new treasures. . . Naming the new doll. . . Little friends dropping in to see our tree and our presents . . . Return brief visits to their homes . . . A feast here with our guests, our nearest and dearest family friends, Remy and George. They have no children. Some of our nicest gifts are from them. As the day grows old and darkness falls, we all seem to become quiet. Before too long I tumble into bed in the drowsy contentment of Christmas night.

We also have in our living room an oak bookcase with glass doors. On the top shelf are many books, some bound in leather. On the bottom shelf rest the family Bible on its side, and Mother's textbooks from the Roosevelt Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in New York City. On the middle shelves are thick encyclopedias and a dictionary. Our parents are in and out of these books often, looking up topics they want to know more about, and reading to us definitions of words we girls ask about. They want us to grow up using these books.

A couple of years ago my father bought something new called a radio. It sat on a small table and ran on batteries placed in the back of a square black case. When Daddy put headphones over my ears I could hear very faintly



The former International Hotel in Piercefield, in its prime. It faced the community building.

music or men talking. The sound came from Station WGY, far away in a place called Schenectady. It was so new that some of Daddy's friends would drop by in the evening to share this radio. They passed the headphones around and, with surprise, discussed the miracle of our time. Our family could then get news faster than from the *Watertown Daily Times*. Today we have a newer and improved radio. Every noon at twelve o'clock sharp, still from Station WGY, there is a time signal by which to set clocks.

Mother has a nice dropleaf cherry desk in our living room. Both parents use it for all of their letter writing and household business. Daddy is the Town Clerk. A great many people come in the spring and fall for fishing or hunting licenses, a number of them from downstate. Daddy has friends in the State Education Department in Albany. They come, often with companions. International Paper Company officials come from Westchester County down near New York City. Daddy takes many of these men fishing and enjoys their company. Others come from Canada, friends and relatives of those who live here. Summer cottagers drive in from the lakes and down on the river. Fishermen and hunters come to our house any day except Sunday and are met with a smile. Mother issues most of the licenses because Daddy is often away from home. There is usually a bit of friendly chit chat. We girls are used to welcoming strangers and talking to them. We must not let them in if we are alone, though.

Mother is Registrar of Vital Statistics for our township, which includes the villages of Piercefield and Conifer, Childwold, Sevey and a few small settlements. With a population of only three or four thousand, there are few statistics to register, but people do get born, married and go off into the next world. Mother is paid forty dollars a year for doing this job. She spends months musing over what she will do with the money. There are so many needs and Daddy's salary is so small.

Our bathroom is downstairs and is large. There is an old Morris chair not far from the bathtub. The back of this chair can go

down or up. It is good for setting our clothes on and for draping towels over. On the opposite side of the room is a very wide, floor-to-ceiling cupboard which stores all sorts of things, among them towels, sheets, extra blankets, medical equipment and supplies and the hot water bottle which I love when I have a tummy ache. There is even the church communion set wrapped in linen. Daddy is ruling elder of our small Presbyterian Church. I like to come into this bathroom when he has just finished shaving so I can smell his Bay Rum.

It is from this cupboard that Mother one day drew a large box containing a beautiful sealskin coat she had just inherited from her Aunt Clara. She hadn't even worn it. It had been improperly stored and was full of moths. She sat down in this Morris chair and cried. After a little while she got up and carried the box and coat outdoors to the trash can.

I go into the front hall. Here we have a towering hall tree, also of oak. Mother bought it once from the Larkin Company. The bottom part is a seat which opens up to hold toques, tams, scarves, mittens and gloves. I climb up on this seat and look into the beveled mirror between claw-like brass hooks on either side which hold jackets and coats and my father's hats. I always hope that I will have miraculously turned into a beauty like Norma Shearer or Janet Gaynor. Instead, I see a round face with a Dutch cut, a turned-up nose, and blue eyes with a tiny brown spot in the right one.

Sometimes Colleen and I sit here at the bottom of the long staircase that reaches up onto our second floor. We play school or paper dolls. When we cannot play out of doors because of the weather, we often stand at the bottom of the steps and toss a rubber ball all the way to the top. We try to catch it as it bounces back down. Alice is good at that. We have a banister that is fun for sliding down when no parent is around. As I start to go upstairs, Mother comes down. She hugs me and goes on out to the kitchen to check the cinnamon buns.

At the top of the stairs is my sister Colleen's room. She had an asthma attack last night so she is sick today. She also has undulant fever which means she sometimes has to stay in bed. She colors and draws and looks at story books which she knows by heart. Among the hills and valleys of the bedcovers, she builds little villages with tiny wooden houses and trees, just like the little boy in "The Counterpane Fairy" storybook.

For a long time she had to wear little metal-rimmed glasses to correct an eye that turned in after Alice brought measles home to me when I was three and I gave them to Colleen when she was only three months old. She is our precious little sister, thin and blonde with blue eyes. When her asthma is bad, and we can hear her wheezing all the way downstairs, and the doctor and Mother are with her upstairs, I kneel on the steps as far up as I dare go, and beg God to make her better, to not let her die. To make her well! I feel so sad that she gets so sick.

I play with Colleen a lot, nearly every day after school. She is six years old and very bright. Even though she cannot go to school all the time, I teach her what I have learned and spell out little words with her. We play games like Old Maid. She is spoiled. If she becomes angry with me for any reason, as she does now, she throws books at me, and I scurry from the room.

Next to Colleen is our parents' room. Over the bed is a huge portrait in sepia tone of Jesus kneeling in Gethsemane. It is the first thing Daddy and Mother purchased for their new home after they were married. Lower, on another wall, is a triptych, also in sepia. On the left is Mary and the baby. In the center are the grownup Jesus and little children. On the right is Mary after Jesus has gone to heaven. On another wall is an ink sketch of a mother with a baby in her arms. It is a very loving room.

When I was younger, Mother used to sit here in her room with me on her lap. She would tell me stories. Now and then she would tweak my hair. When I jerked away

she would say, "There must be a fairy around here today!" I could never find the fairy.

Alice and I share a bedroom in the front of the house, around the corner and down the hall from Colleen. We have a double bed, little tables, a dresser, two chairs and a closet. Almost every night Alice reads aloud a chapter from the Bible. We kneel and thank God for our blessings and for each other, asking him to please make Colleen get well, and we ask sometimes for other things. If we cannot get to sleep right away, we "write" names with our index fingers on each other's backs. The trick is to guess what has been written. The hardest last name we use is "Farquhar," so we call the game "Farquhar."

In our closet I keep my playtime dress-up clothes. Our Aunt Effie Lou lives in Rochester, a long way away. She is pretty and looks like a lady on a magazine cover. A few months ago she sent Colleen and me beautiful silk and chiffon dresses with ribbons, sequins and fringe. Also in the large box were hats and pastel-colored spike-heeled shoes, size four. These are lovely things she wore in the twenties and had difficulty parting with. Friends come to play, we dress up, and have a wonderful time pretending we are calling on each other the way Mother and her friends do. We serve "tea" and have names like Mrs. Cameron, Mrs. Livingston and Mrs. Astor. Alice does not play dress-up.

My dolls and their clothes are here in my bedroom. Mother says that since I walk around all the time holding my bare doll by a foot with her clothes spilling out of my pocket, she can see no reason why I should have any doll clothes at all! Alice used to play with dolls. She would cut their hair off and make them into boys. Mother had to sew pants for them to wear. Alice still keeps "Howard" in the closet.

I love my big sister very much but she has always been a problem to me. Before I was born she looked forward to a black baby brother. She would have nothing to do with me when I turned out to be a white baby sister. Gradually she began to like me. When I was a toddler she would try to make me into a

boy. She would borrow boy clothes from friends who had little brothers and dress me up in them. I would go around the neighborhood with her until Mother found out.

I was practically six when I started first grade because my birthday is the twelfth of September. Late in August Mother gave Alice money and sent us both to the barber to get haircuts. Alice told the barber I was to have a boy's cut. He questioned her but she insisted. She kept telling me how nice it would look. When we arrived back home with my hair cut off, Mother about swooned and Daddy was very angry. I cried and cried.

I went to school and, the first thing, Miss Walker took us all outside to have a class picture taken. I tried to hide in the back row but there I am, peering between shoulders, shorn head, bare ears. Children teased me. It was the middle of the winter before my hair grew back. I don't know why Alice thinks boys are so great or why I had to be one.

A while ago she talked me into letting her have my new paper doll, promising me that she would trace a doll for me and make twice as many clothes for it. It would be far better than the new one she wanted. . . Well, the homemade doll is not better. It looks terrible! Its skin is all white! I want my own paper doll back, but she won't let me break our agreement.

Now she takes screechy violin lessons from one of the nuns at the Holy Ghost Academy at Tupper Lake and has to practice every single day.

Just outside our bedroom door is the door to the attic. It runs the full length and width of the house. It has slanty walls along the sides. The center part is wide and grownups can walk around easily. There are two old trunks, boxes full of things, items no longer

used, books, toys, ice skates, dolls and things to play house with. In the trunks are extra blankets, quilts and pillows.

In one trunk Daddy keeps a Mohawk Indian ceremonial war club, given to him by the chief of the Hogansburg Reservation when his son graduated from the eighth grade. This was back before I was born, when Daddy was principal of the Bombay District School, near Malone. He takes out this war club on rare occasions. It is really fancy with narrow, draping strips of leather and strings of tiny, multicolor beads. It is kept in a trunk because it could become dangerous if played with. It could crack your head open!

Mother keeps the attic clean and fresh. We play house here. I don't know what our family would do without our attic in summer when we have lots of company. Friends and relatives stop by for a night or more on their way through the mountains or they come to Piercefield just to visit us. We girls and company children often sleep on thick quilts that Mother lays out on the floor. At Thanksgiving time, after Mother has cut open a pumpkin for baking pies, Alice washes the seeds and spreads them out on paper up here for a snack. I pretend to like them. Someday I will be a Girl Scout and learn things too.

I go back down the attic stairs. Sometimes we decide we need something up there



Another view of the paper plant, taken from across the Racquette River.

at night. Never will I go up alone after dark! Alice thinks it is scary too. At the foot of the way downstairs, we start singing, "Hail! Hail! The gang's all here..." It makes us feel braver to pretend there are other people with us. We open the attic door and climb the dark steps and grab the light pull at the top. Then everything is all right.

I go back down the hall and look into Colleen's room as I pass her door. She is sleeping. I go on downstairs. Alice comes into the house as I enter the kitchen. She stopped at a friend's house. Mother hands me a pan and asks me to go down cellar and get potatoes for supper. What a dank musty place! A furnace and a full hod of coal. A small pile of kindling. Barrels of potatoes and apples. A place for preserves. Strong-smelling cheddar from Uncle Albert's cheese factory. Tools. Canning equipment. Things I do not know the names of or their use. Daddy's fishing equipment. His snowshoes hanging on the wall. I pause before our Flexible Flyer sleds, our skis, and our skippers which Daddy made from barrel staves and two-by-fours. Soon we will be using these again. Next month will be November and there will be snow.

I gather the potatoes and start back up the stairs which have no risers. Here and there, on the ends of these steps, are crocks full of things. Pickles. Sauerkraut. Ugh! I go on up, glad to leave the cellar behind and below.

Daddy comes in the door. I ask if I may go out to play until supper is ready, even though the October weather is nippy. I put on my jacket and a tam and mosey out to the back shed. It is small, with two little windows and our wooden icebox. The top of the icebox lifts, and every few days, except in winter, the iceman comes and lowers a huge chunk of clear ice down beside our milk, butter and other things that must be kept cold. Our laundry tubs and kitchen coal hod are kept in this shed.

Here are the glass gallon jugs which it is supposed to be my duty to help keep filled with fresh mountain spring water. I

usually take an empty jug to school with me in the morning and leave it in Daddy's office. After school I should pick it up and go around by the village spring on the way home. I am so happy to be getting out of school with my friends that I often forget the jug. Then sometimes Alice goes to the spring for me. A couple of times I accidentally broke a jug. The family teases me! There is so much chlorine in our faucet water that just about every family in town goes to the spring.

Once in a while, in summer, I sit here in this shed watching a big neighbor boy work the handle that turns the paddle that makes ice cream for our family. Licking homemade chocolate ice cream from the paddle is just about my most favorite thing in all the world.

I now go out the shed door and cross the cinder alley that runs behind all the houses on this end of Main Street. I look up at our little hotel for purple martens, high up on a very tall pole. Next spring the birds will return. Right now their hotel looks cold and desolate. The door to the woodshed has been left open. I climb the four steps onto the stoop to shut it. There is nothing inside but a coal bin, kindling, gardening equipment, and a couple of old buckets. It is a goodsized room with a half window opening out to the alley. My parents say that as soon as our coal furnace has been converted to gas we girls can have this shed for our playhouse. I can hardly wait. We can fix up a regular little house! We can put on shows!

I love to play movie actress with my friends. Jean Williams is Constance Bennett. I am Janet Gaynor now. I used to be Norma Shearer. We sometimes go to the movies in Tupper Lake on the weekend. We try to act out the stories all the next week. We sing and dance all over the lawn. When we play cowboy shows, Zelcie Wiggins comes down from Waller Street and takes the role of the hero. She gallops all over the back lots on her make-believe horse. I would rather play stories with singing and dancing.

Our garage is to the right of the woodshed and a number of feet back from the alleyway. Along one whole wall is a blackboard Daddy had delivered here at home when they

replaced the old ones at school with slate. We spend hours here in the garage drawing and writing, especially on rainy days. Two weeks ago I did a terrible thing, only I did not know that it would be terrible. I tired of erasing the board over and over, so I turned around and wrote my first name on the front passenger door of our Chevrolet. I erased that and went in the house. A few days later, Daddy entered in utter dismay. In a certain light the indentation of my name can still be seen! It cannot be removed. Now when we trade in the car for a new one, Daddy will get less for it because "Ella" is on the front door. I am ashamed of what I did.

Up behind the garage is what is left of our vegetable garden, dried and torn and blackened. We play Fox and the Geese here in winter when the snow is deep.

As I walk back toward the house I see my friend, Muriel Rosebrook, coming down the alley from her home. She has a jump rope. I go in and get mine. We run around to the front porch. It is as wide as the house and has spindles and pillars. It is a good place to jump rope when the ground is cold.

One, two, buckle my shoe.

Three, four, shut the door.

Fix, six, pick up sticks.

Seven, eight, don't be late.

Nine, ten, a big fat hen!

Our porch is also a good place to sit and tell secrets and play school when it is warm enough. On the Fourth of July, Alice keeps our box of firecrackers here. We have a few lady crackers, snakes, devil's crackers and something we grind under our heels. Alice is allowed three or four little bomb-like things that she fires down onto the cement below. Colleen and I stand here and watch her and cover our ears at the loud bangs.

One potato, two potato, three potato, four.

Five potato, six potato, seven potato more!

Muriel and I tire of jumping rope. We run down the steps and hop-scotch all the way down the long approach to our house.

I whirl around and look back just as lights blink on. I do not see a white porch, tan clapboards, a peaked roof, windows on two floors and an attic. I see through windows and walls to my precious family within, and my insides get all rosy with love.

The author and her husband live in Johnson City, New York.

Evangeline (Vangie) Rorke of Hopkinton

By Arthur L. Johnson

A lifelong North Country personality, Evangeline (Vangie) was born in Natural Bridge in Jefferson County on June 4, 1915 to Leonard and Helen Underhill Prittie. She was the first born of eight children; six girls and two boys. Her father worked as a woodsman, blacksmith and carpenter, a North Country skilled survivor. The family lived about a mile from the village center. She has fond memories of childhood there. One memory is of trains, the means of transport for most people before Henry Ford democratized automobile travel. She remembers flagging the train at Diana Crossing flag station, east of Carthage, for the ride to Harrisville on the New York Central's Carthage & Adirondack line. She attended Carthage High School by boarding with three different local families. She worked for her room and board. The last family paid her \$3.00 a week beyond room and board, not an inconsiderable sum in those days. Work consisted of helping in the kitchen, babysitting and light housekeeping chores. This on top of homework kept her busy.

In her 90 years Vangie has seen many changes: the growth of automobile travel, air travel, radio, television, electric appliances of all kinds, the interstate highway system and shopping malls. She has lived through two world wars, the Great Depression and the Cold War.

She came to St. Lawrence County in 1931 to attend Potsdam Normal School, now SUNY Potsdam. She loved the school but again it was necessary for her to board and work. This left little time for extracurricular activities. Her first board and job was with the Whites of White's Hardware, now Evans & White Ace Hardware. This was handy to the college, which was on Park Street (now

the older Snell Hall of Clarkson University). She later boarded at 74 Market Street until her graduation in the spring of 1934. During this time, with the help of a Mr. Reeder, she got a summer job in a hotel at Inlet, as cham-



Courtesy Arthur L. Johnson

Vangie Rorke, September 14, 2002, in Hopkinton. Vangie is standing at the entrance to NuMed, formerly the Hopkinton Elementary School, where she taught third grade.

bermaid and then waitress in that beautiful resort area. She loved Potsdam and remembers Market Street as "a wonderful place." There was a drug store with a soda fountain, the teen hangout of the time and of most American villages as those of us of a certain age remember. There was a five and dime store, another long-gone feature. The village was a true commercial center in those days before satellite strip malls sapped its vitality. Elm Street had real elms then and was quite beautiful, she recalls. The railroad station and freight yard were busy places with four or five passenger trains in each direction every day. She visited her home by train, changing at Watertown or Philadelphia for the Newton Falls line.

Potsdam social life consisted of parties at friends' houses. Though Prohibition had recently ended, she mentions nothing of beer blasts or alcohol problems. They weren't those sorts of parties. At one such gathering out on Route 72, she met a man named Trask who helped get her first teaching job: a one-room school on the Potsdam-Hopkinton Road, now 11B. There she taught grades one through eight, although, she says, there were usually not students in every grade and the students only numbered around ten. There were no discipline problems. The older students helped the younger ones. Vangie loved teaching. She believes she has outlived most of her students of that time but still sees a few from time to time. Many of these one-room schools are still standing. Some have become dwellings since school busing centralized district education.

Marriage in 1936 to Milon Wright, whom she met at a social gathering, meant the end of her teaching for a time. A married teacher was likely to get pregnant and have to be replaced. Single teachers rarely did in those more staid times. The couple lived briefly in Hopkinton but then moved two miles up the road to Nicholville where Mr. Wright ran a store. They returned to Hopkinton in 1945 to the house Vangie still occupies.

About the years of the Great Depression, Vangie waxes elegiac. "It was not bad for us up here. We had a garden and a cow, so we were not going to be hungry." Clothing was often homemade. She remembers her happiness at buying her mother her first electric iron after the Rural Electrical Administration (REA) brought power to the North Country. Even steadfast Republicans in Republican country did not object to that aspect of Mr. Roosevelt's "New Deal." She remembers they were good times in many ways. She recalls the front-porch sociability in the evenings without the constant roar of trucks and cars speeding through. Families visited each other on porches on warm summer nights. Listening, I am reminded of James Agee's wonderful preface to *A Death in the Family*, titled "Knoxville: Summer 1915," the heartrending memory of a family summer evening in the back yard with the hiss of watering hoses and the "iron moan" of a passing streetcar.

A Hopkinton gathering place was Chittenden's Store, across the street from Vangie's. The post office was also a daytime center for news and gossip. There were back yard cookouts and card parties and sometimes they would walk the mile to the Parkers' hotdog stand where homemade ice cream was available. Croquet was a popular game and one sound of summer was the "thwock" of wooden mallet on wooden ball. These were the simple pleasures before TV distracted and mobility scattered families and friends from the little villages. Train tracks never reached the hill towns but Greyhound buses served them and Route 11B was paved by the thirties. Church was an important part of rural life. Vangie has been a faithful member of the Congregational Church and also a strong supporter of local dinners and festivals. She occasionally appears at service in Trinity Church, Potsdam, where she has many friends.

Vangie bore three children: Judy in 1936, Danny in 1943 and Tim in 1957. After Milon's death in 1966 she returned to SUNY Potsdam, to update her teaching skills and credentials. There she met Edward "Dick" Rorke, an Episcopal priest released from parish ser-

vice, who was also training to teach. They were married in 1968 and lived in Hopkinton, in Vangie's house. Vangie taught for ten years, third grade at Parishville. Dick taught high school social studies, first in Ogdensburg and then in Massena until illness made that impossible.

Again, Vangie loved teaching. Teaching, she believes, was easier then. Children seemed to have more respect for adults. She chuckled over one memory: the time Bob Larue's sister got herself so tangled up in the underside of a chair the janitor had to cut her free with a saw (used on the chair, not the child). She retired in 1978 and the subsequent few years were difficult, with Dick's progressive illness. He died on January 22, 1990. Twelve years later, in February 2002, she lost her older son, Danny, to a heart attack in Texas. Her daughter Judy Greene, of Sanfordville, has been seriously ill. A cruel feature of longevity is to outlive your child. But Vangie is a lady of undaunted reserves of cheer in spite of trouble and sadness. Her

memory is lit with family celebrations, Christmas parties, pageants, and humor.

A few years ago she celebrated Halloween with a characteristic Vangie gesture. She installed her friend and neighbor Sarah Chittenden, 98, in a chair in her spacious kitchen. She stretched an orange ribbon across the kitchen door and vested Sarah with a crown. As trick-or-treaters came to the door Vangie invited them in and informed them that in order to receive a treat they must pay their respects to "the Royalty." Girls were to curtsy, boys to bow at the waist. Then each child was to do something scary to earn the treat. With the treat they got numbers on pieces of paper and any child having the number 7, 8 or 9, got an extra treat, these numbers being part of the ages of Vangie and Sarah (87 & 98). Not your ordinary Halloween, but Vangie is no ordinary lady. Like Edgar Lee Masters' Mrs. George Reece, she lives these lines from Pope:

"Act well your part, there all the honor lies."



Floyd Beswick provided this postcard advertising the Sharples Separator Company. The firm was apparently based in West Chester, PA, a small town near Philadelphia. Their separators were sold locally by Thomas P. Rutherford in Madrid. The postcard was sent to Mr. James E. Beswick of Madrid Springs in February, 1907.

Mystery Photo



Many stone cottages of this type were built in St. Lawrence County in the 1820s and 30s. Like many others, this appears to be a simple Federal-style farmhouse with a center hall, four rooms on the first floor, two bedrooms on the second floor, and a wing for the kitchen. Can you identify this one? Hint: it is probably not red Potsdam sandstone, but the masonry is well done.

Information on our last Mystery Photo:

Sue Longshore, SLCHA Collections Manager, has identified the activity shown in last issue's mystery photo. The men are St. Lawrence Canoe Club champion paddlers. The man in the middle is wearing the club badge. Sue found this in a J. H. Rushton notebook from the Manley Collection in the SLCHA archives.

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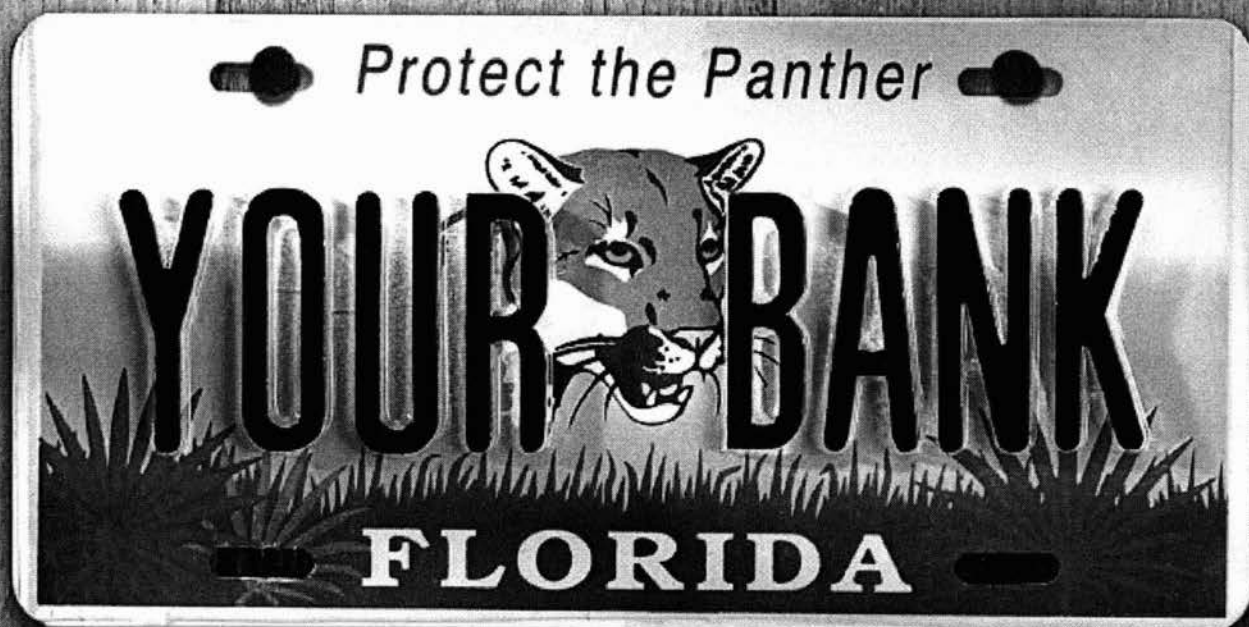
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