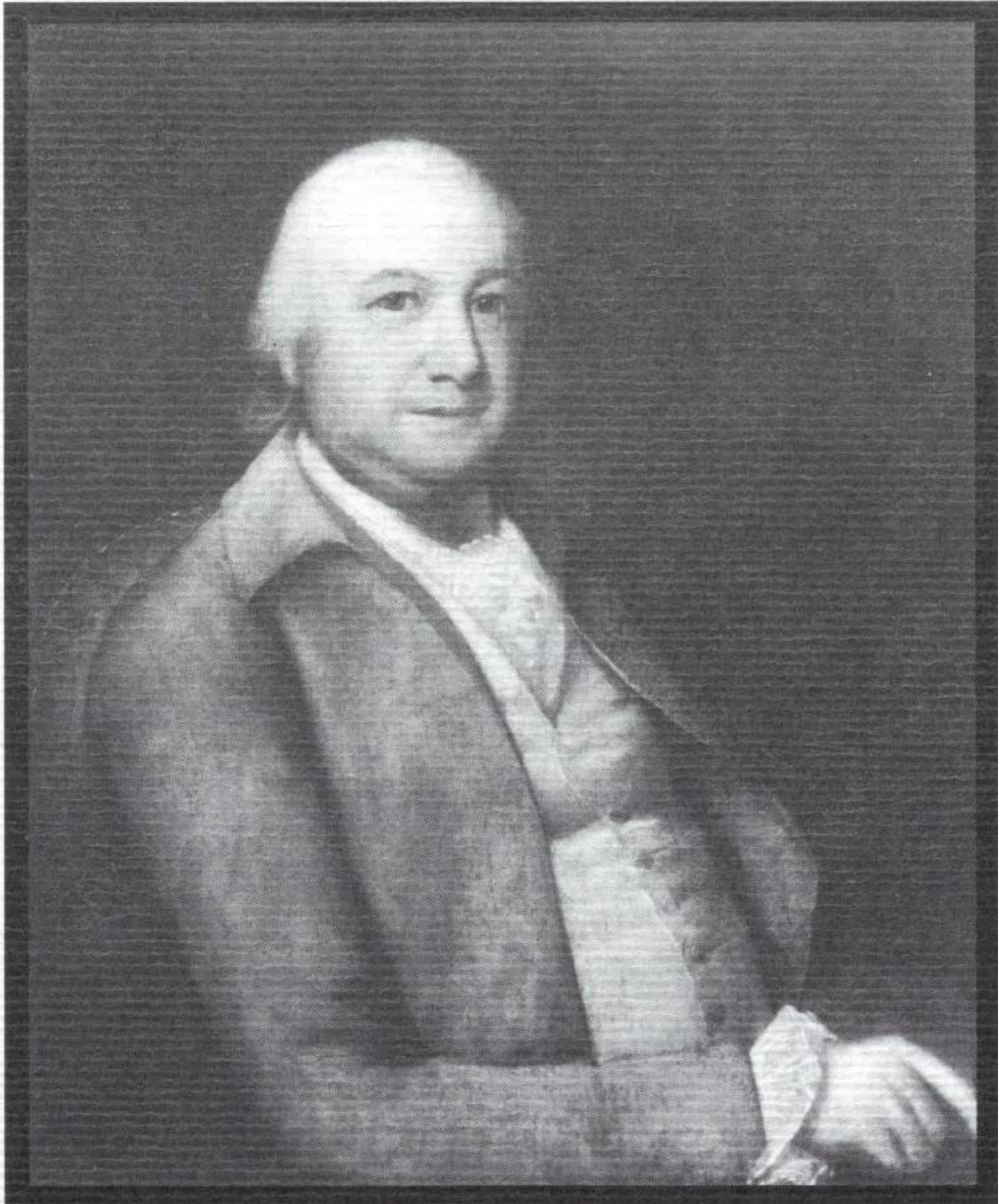


THE ANTIQUARIAN

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Ralph Earl, *William Gilliland*, 1789.

Oil on canvas, 30" x 25".

(Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, N.Y.C.)

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The Catholic Summer Schools of America

by Allan S. Everest

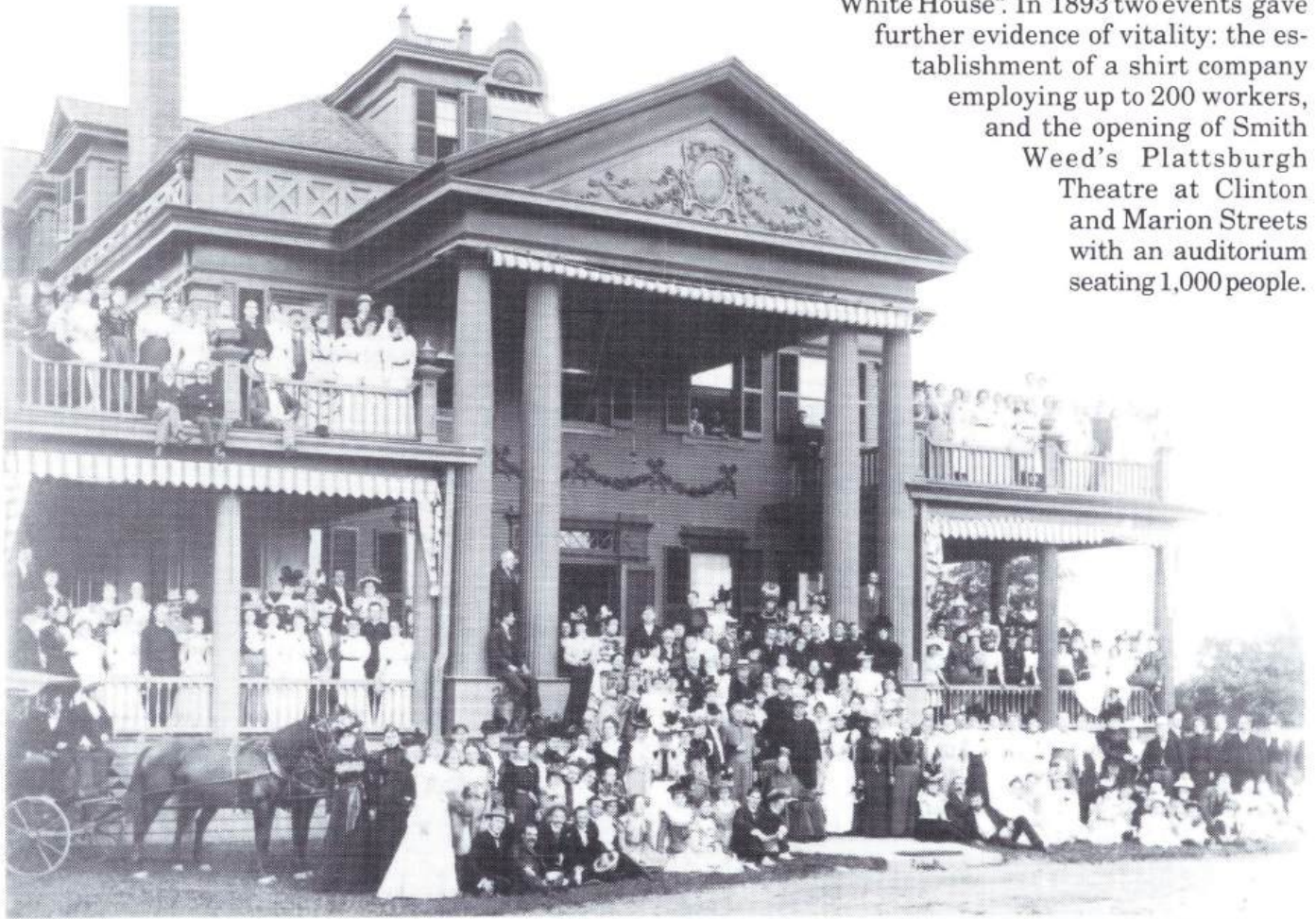
PLATTSBURGH in the last two decades of the 19th century was in a very upbeat mood. One measure of this optimism is seen in the phenomenal increase in the village population: it gained by one-third in the decade of the 1880s and by another 20 percent in the 1890s, to 8,400 people.

There was plenty to sustain this growth. Plattsburgh had become an important railroad center based upon connections north to Montreal and south to New York City. Fanning out from Plattsburgh was rail service to Lake Placid (1893) and Ausable

Forks (1894). As a result, it became the outlet for most of the lumber and iron produced in the interior of the North Country. Its transportation system was rounded out by the opening of the first trolley lines in 1896. Plattsburgh was also regularly visited by lake steamers such as the *Maquam* and the *Adirondack*.

The community gained other assets in the 1890s. The opening of Hotel Champlain in 1890 created new vistas of Plattsburgh as a tourist and recreation center. During two summers President William McKinley vacationed there and made it a "summer

White House". In 1893 two events gave further evidence of vitality: the establishment of a shirt company employing up to 200 workers, and the opening of Smith Weed's Plattsburgh Theatre at Clinton and Marion Streets with an auditorium seating 1,000 people.



Clinton County Historical Museum

This photograph of the Champlain Club at the Catholic Summer School was probably taken on August 15, 1900, for the Feast of the Assumption.

Plattsburgh Military Barracks became a larger and more permanent part of the community. To head off future moves such as the effort in 1882 to move the Barracks to Rouses Point, Plattsburgh more than doubled the area of the Barracks by donating 500 acres. During the 1890s a major expansion took place during which many of the brick buildings were constructed which still dominate the Old Base.

In the midst of this bustle, the Catholic Summer School of America made its appearance, but at first Plattsburgh was only one of the locations that were being considered. The movement toward a Summer School grew out of the Catholic Reading Circles in various eastern cities. Warren E. Mosher had one in Youngstown, Ohio which, like others, was dedicated to systematic reading. It was he who made the earliest suggestion of a summer session which could concentrate courses into a brief period of time. At a meeting of church leaders in the Catholic Club of New York City early in 1892, Mosher gained a sympathetic hearing and was subsequently called the "Father of the Catholic Summer School". Out of this meeting grew a trial run in New London, Connecticut, in the summer of 1892.

From the beginning of the discussions the aim seemed to be the creation of a Catholic Chautauqua, in emulation of the place that had launched the idea of utilizing the summer vacation for educational purposes. The announced object of this new endeavor was "to increase the facilities to pursue lines of study in various departments of knowledge under the guidance of specialists".

The session ran for three weeks in August and featured lectures on a variety of subjects of interest to Catholic prelates and laymen alike. There were no funds, all the work was done by volunteers, but there was a guarantee against a deficit by Bishop McMahon of Hartford. Mosher served as secretary at the first session and subsequently for the rest of his life.

Even before this session a search was begun for a permanent home. A committee, including Mosher, visited Plattsburgh to look at possible sites on Cumberland Head, Valcour Island and Cliff Haven, and to meet local leaders. But a scramble was on, and by fall some free sites, including an island, were being offered in the Thousand Islands; those vied with contending locations near Clayton on the St. Lawrence River and with sites in the Adirondacks. From the start the committee turned its back on metropolitan locations in favor of rural settings, preferably attractive ones.

The committee clearly liked what it saw in Plattsburgh. It was perhaps impressed with a pledge

of \$5,000 each by two local men. The cause of Plattsburgh was furthered by a declaration from Dr. Valentine Browne, President of the Board of Health at Yonkers: "Plattsburgh ranks among the first in the Empire State in the very important matters of health and longevity." When Plattsburgh seemed the likely choice, local leaders Judge John B. Riley and Smith M. Weed obtained an option on the Armstrong farm, site of the eventual summer school, from the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. It contained 450 acres, with a half mile of lake front. In February, 1893 an absolute charter was granted by the New York Board of Regents to a long list of incorporators, and a Board of Trustees was chosen to carry on the enterprise.

And so the Catholic Summer School came to Plattsburgh for its second session, in 1893. Until its permanent site at Cliff Haven could be developed, the program was offered in the village. Parts of the new theater were turned over to the directors of the Summer School, while classrooms were made available at the Normal School. The Board of Studies found space at 21 Court Street, conveniently near the theater, and the Board of Information was located in the theater itself.

The three-week session gave an early glimpse of the nature of the later, fully-developed schedule. An enrollment of 115 persons for the opening session was augmented by later arrivals. There was a sprinkling of North Country enrollees, but the majority arrived by train from downstate. The fare from New York City to Plattsburgh was \$8.15; from Albany, \$5. A tight schedule of lectures was offered for morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Saturdays were given over to sight-seeing excursions, the first being a round-trip ride by railroad to Saranac Lake. The train could provide 200 seats and the fare, usually about \$8, was free to full-course School enrollees from out-of-town.

The School was able to attract speakers who were celebrated for their special knowledge. Father Zahm of Notre Dame on ethics, Helena Goessman on literature and Richard Malcolm Johnston, author and educator, were all there for the second session. Johnston came again the next year and gave five lectures on Dante and four English poets; in 1895 he talked on the "Evolution of the Novel". Speakers were not paid for their lectures and received only their expenses. The launching of the Summer School was considered so promising that in 1894 Pope Leo XIII blessed the undertaking and encouraged its continuation.

The Summer School received full coverage each season in the Plattsburgh newspapers. There were



Clinton County Historical Museum

A group of important personages including New York State Lieutenant Governor Thomas F. Conway, a resident of Plattsburgh (third from right), was photographed during a visit to the Catholic Summer School.

three weeklies at the time: the *Republican*, *Sentinel* and *Press* (starting in 1894). The only daily paper, the *Morning Telegram*, provided the most detailed accounts, often devoting all or part of its fourth page to Summer School news, including the listing, a week at a time, of the scheduled lectures. Unfortunately, it ceased publication in 1894.

The sessions of 1894 and 1895 were also held in the village, each year adding to the length—four weeks in 1894 and six weeks the next year. It stayed at that figure until 1902, when it ran for nine weeks, and in 1908, with a ten-week session. The favored subjects for lectures were education, ethics, English, philosophy and history. Most of the lecturers were Catholic clergy and laymen with a particular expertise. Non-Catholics also spoke occasionally, such as Dr. David Kellogg of Plattsburgh, who talked in 1896 on “The Archeology of the Champlain Valley”. Some lecturers spoke only once; others gave a series of lectures that were billed as courses.

Meanwhile, strenuous efforts were being made at Cliff Haven for the School’s move to its permanent home in 1896. As late as that date, however, a proposal was defeated to leave Plattsburgh for a site “not too far from the Bowery”. Clearly there were still metropolitan Catholics who regretted the distance away from the centers of population which

were furnishing the bulk of the enrollment. Without other serious barriers the move to Cliff Haven was made, the last nails barely driven into some of the buildings.

A sale of bonds in 1893 had raised \$35,000 that was used for early construction and improvement of the grounds. Long-range financing resulted from the sale of building lots, the sale of honorary life memberships at \$100, and of associate memberships at \$25, which included lecture fees at half price. So successful had financing become that the original bonds were redeemed in 1896, with funds still available for more buildings. By opening day the administration building, auditorium, chapel, the central dining hall, the Philadelphia and three cottages were ready for use. The auditorium measured 61 by 91 feet and, with a gallery, could seat 600 people. The dining hall accommodated between 100 and 120. The chapel was soon to be designated “Our Lady of the Lake”.

The Philadelphia was one of the larger cottages; it included reception and reading areas and 17 bedrooms. It was financed by a group of Philadelphians, each of whom contributed a part of the cost. The Buffalo was hardly a cottage at all—it contained 50 rooms and, like the Philadelphia, was financed by a group of people, all of whom would be assured rooms

for the summer. The typical family-size cottage like the Healy cost about \$10,000. People who could not spend so much joined a cooperative venture, as with the Philadelphia and Buffalo. Additional cottages were built by Reading Circles in various cities and usually took the name of the city, such as Boston, New York and Ottawa. The construction of cottages continued at a rapid rate in the next few years: New York in 1897, Boston, Healy, Dundon and Rochester the next year, and seven more by 1901. By 1906 the School had accumulated a debt of \$80,000 but optimistically planned for more improvements.

The Champlain Club in its imposing building was also ready for the opening. It was a private club on the grounds but not a part of the administrative setup. It was formed by a group of 200 laymen who limited its size to 200 members, charged an initiation fee of \$10 and the same amount for annual dues. The club quickly became the chief social auxiliary for the school, offering family amenities, dances and excursions.

The Plattsburgh Traction Company started operation in July 1896, just in time to serve the School in its first season at Cliff Haven. The Company's franchise, granted by the village trustees, listed 20 conditions the company must accept. One of them was a five-cent fare, but soon an exception was made that allowed a ten-cent charge to Hotel Champlain at Bluff Point and to the Summer School at Cliff Haven. The timely arrival of the trolley can be credited with contributing to the success of the School in its new location. Residents at the School had easy access to downtown Platts-

burgh, while dwellers in the village could attend selected lectures almost as easily as they could before the School moved out of town.

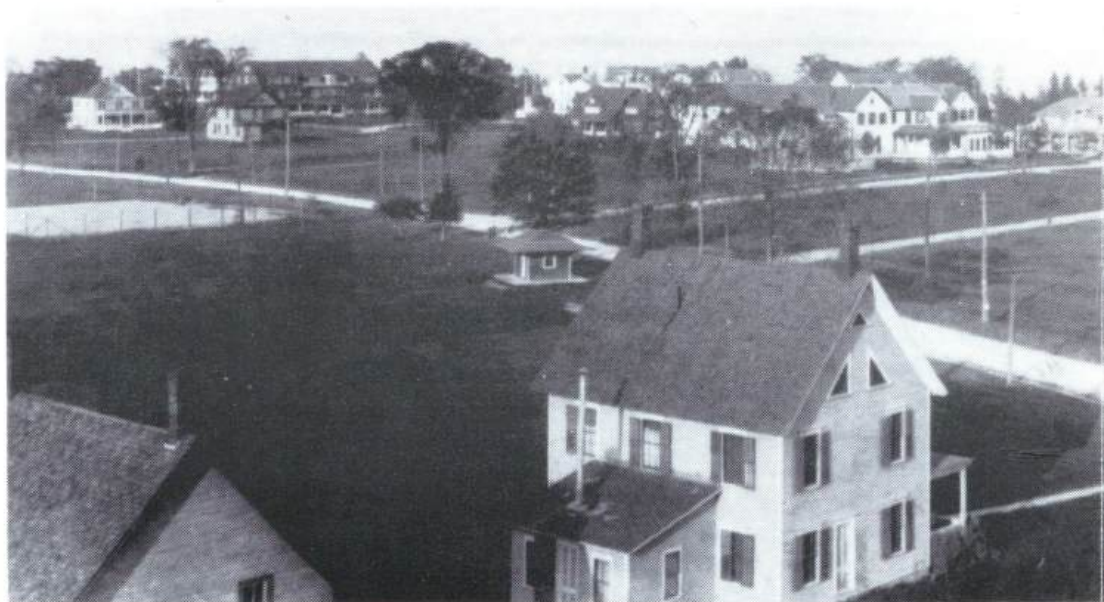
The original cars were open, wooden and operated with a hand brake. They ran at 15-minute intervals around the two large loops in the village and south along Route 9 to the resorts and could reach a speed of 20 miles an hour. In 1897 a contract was let for a station to serve the Summer School; it was wooden, had an ornamental design and measured a generous 21 by 26 feet.

Just as the School had learned to rely on quick and inexpensive travel to and from town, disaster struck. A flume under Bridge Street broke, causing a cave-in of street and tracks. Trolley service across the river and southward was interrupted for almost a month, which included nearly the whole of the summer session in 1898.

In the following year the trolley company offered a combination ticket of a round trip to Cliff Haven and admission to lectures, all for 25¢. As the Summer School grew, together with Hotel Champlain it became increasingly a prime source of revenue in the summer. However, the trolley company expired before the Summer School. It made its last run in 1929, a victim of the automobile and of the burning of the Normal School, when most of the students, who lived or boarded downtown, no longer needed to ride the trolley to classes.

When fully developed, the Summer School had its own railroad and trolley stations, a dock large enough to accommodate the lake steamers, athletic grounds including a golf course, and its own post

This panorama of a portion of the Catholic Summer School grounds was taken in 1905. The White Cottage is in the left foreground. The trolley car stop and the Algonquin are across the road in the center. The Auditorium (with the small steeple) is to the right. The General Dining Room is to the left (above the White Cottage).



office, laundry, barber, telephone and telegraph services. An extensive program of sports included boating, swimming, golf and tennis. Although it did not include courses in music, the School offered a variety of musical entertainments. A Cliff Haven Yacht Club leased a site for a clubhouse for 99 years in 1901.

For several years Father John Talbot Smith operated a tent city for boys at the site of the Summer School still under construction. Father Smith was credited with originating the first camp for Catholic boys in the country. Beginning in 1897 his establishment was known as "College Camp", still a tent city but each tent being provided with a board floor.

Also in 1897, an Alumnae Auxiliary Association was formed for women, perhaps as a counterpart to the male Champlain Club. It welcomed graduates of convents, colleges, academies, high and normal schools, and also professional teachers. Its goal was to make "a missionary effort" to publicize the correct image of the summer school. Its first president was Helena Goessman, who had also given lectures at the School.

The successful season of 1896 was followed by an equally rewarding one in 1897. A highlight of that session was the visit of President McKinley, who was told that the register contained names from about 30 states, as well as Canada. He was greeted by a "Song of Welcome" especially composed for the occasion. After the ceremony he agreed to a public reception, the only one he submitted to during his vacation. Because of the Spanish-American War he

did not come to Plattsburgh in 1898, but in the following year he was again at Hotel Champlain. He delivered a one-hour speech on the Constitution and the flag at the Summer School which one observer said disproved his reputation for taciturnity and lack of a sense of humor.

Other public figures who visited the School in its early years were Vice President Hobart, President Taft, Congressional Speaker Joseph Cannon and Theodore Roosevelt as Governor of New York. There was in addition a steady visitation of high-ranking Catholic clergymen. The Apostolic Delegate to the United States came several times. During the 25th anniversary celebration in 1916, seven cardinals and many other ranking clerics were in attendance.

In 1908 a tablet was placed at Cliff Haven in memory of Warren E. Mosher, originator of the idea of a Catholic Summer School and a lifetime contributor to the Plattsburgh sessions. A high point of the 1909 season was the celebration of a pontifical high mass in the open air. Against the backdrop of cedars along the lake, an altar of birch was erected. Those who attended found the service particularly impressive and probably unique in the Champlain Valley for its beautiful setting. In 1914 the School shared in the general commemoration of the centennial of the battle of Plattsburgh. Acting as president of the school, the Very Reverend John P. Chidwick, D.D., once chaplain of the battleship *Maine*, welcomed Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels to the festivities.

Officials at the School were convinced that their trees were the inspiration for Joyce Kilmer's poem



Clinton County Historical Museum

"Trees", the famous last two lines of which were

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Authorities at Rutgers University claimed that a specific tree on their campus prompted the poem. Kilmer entered Rutgers in 1904 but transferred to Columbia, which awarded him a bachelor's degree in 1908.

The Summer School was so convinced of its point of view that it named a specific maple tree in Kilmer's honor. The poet was a frequent visitor and lecturer; the School's argument was further strengthened by the fact that Kilmer did not continue at Rutgers, and that the poem was first published in 1913, the same year that Kilmer and his wife joined the Roman Catholic Church. He was killed in World War I, having never indicated a particular tree as his inspiration. Though not great poetry, "Trees" was very popular as verse and as music during Kilmer's and succeeding decades.

The attendance at the Summer School grew by satisfactory increments. In 1905 it was estimated that at least 5,000 people were in annual attendance, while 1,100 were living on the grounds. Two years later that figure was 1,500. In 1916 the daily attendance was 500 in July and double that number in August. By 1929, extension courses in cooperation with Fordham University were being offered for teachers and others.

A brochure for the 1937 session described the atmosphere as one of "refined Catholic life". The 14 cottages had rooms available for rent—single or double rooms by day, week or season. Without private bath one person would pay \$1 and up per day, with bath \$1.50 and up. Meals differed by age groups—adults paid \$19.50 a week, children \$10 and transients \$3 a day. The assembly membership fee was 75¢ a day, \$2 a week and \$12.50 for the season.

In 1941 the Golden Jubilee was celebrated with strong premonitions that this brilliant season marked the beginning of the end. Archbishop Francis J. Spellman headed the list of important clergy. For the second year Catholic University was represented with graduate and undergraduate offerings. The number of courses was 21, divided into 6 in education, 3 in English, 3 in history, 3 in philosophy, 3 in

economics and 3 in psychology, which included one in mental hygiene.

Late in the same year the United States entered World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The subsequent rationing and the difficulties of travel caused an interruption in the Summer School at Plattsburgh. More than the war, however, contributed to the faltering of the annual sessions. Ever since World War I young people had become increasingly reluctant to come to the Summer School, which they found staid, stuffy and out of style. During the 1920s and 1930s family vacation habits also changed. With the advent of the automobile and later the airplane, families tended to travel in the United States and Europe rather than vacation in one place. Many resort areas were experiencing the same trend, including the adjacent Hotel Champlain.

Nevertheless, the trustees of the Summer School met at the Champlain Club in August 1946. Seven vacancies on the board were filled, one by James FitzPatrick of Plattsburgh, who met the newly recognized needs of the board by being both young and a veteran. Another seat, intended to give women a voice, went to Elsie Kane from the Alumnae Association. Plans were discussed for a revitalization and refinancing of the School preparatory to a "full-scale reopening" in 1947.

The trustees did not succeed in overcoming the many obstacles to resumption. The grounds remained intact, and cottage owners made some use of their facilities. As late as 1951 the grounds were made available to nuns and children from Grey Nun schools in Philadelphia and New York. The Grey Nuns hoped they were helping to usher in a return of the School's former glory. But the "former glory" never returned. The trustees of the Summer School needed first to obtain from the Delaware and Hudson Railroad a release from the original reversion clause, by which the property would revert to the railroad when it was no longer used for educational purposes. After obtaining this release, the trustees were free to dispose of the property as their own. Eventually the land came into the hands of "Cliff Haven Estates", developers who planned to replace the Summer School buildings with a housing development. By 1956 they had a model home ready for inspection, and an entirely new and different community came into being. ■

Allan S. Everest is a retired professor of history from the State University in Plattsburgh and the author of several books on North Country history.

A History of Old Peru and A Country Doctor

by Virginia Mason Burdick

ON DECEMBER 9, 1739 a son was born to Edward and Mary Allen Everett in Dedham, Massachusetts. He was their first child, and they named him Edward, Jr. When he was 22 years old, Edward Jr. married Ruth Field of nearby Milton, Massachusetts.

Edward Jr. was a surveyor. About 1769 he moved with his family to Rumney, New Hampshire. In 1776 he was a captain from Rumney in Colonel Timothy Bedell's regiment of New Hampshire Rangers in the march to Québec. He was taken prisoner and later released. Edward's 13-year-old son George was the regiment's drummer boy.

About 1781 the Everett family moved to New Holderness, New Hampshire. Edward represented the town in the legislature of 1782.

In the spring of 1785 Edward and George set out to explore the prospects of a new home in the northeast corner of New York State. They had heard that Zephaniah Platt and his realtor associates would sell lots on their large tracts of land only to "sober and industrious men".

When the Everetts found a cluster of log huts in the wilderness on the west shore of Lake Champlain, they met Charles Platt, Zephaniah's brother. Charles hired Edward to survey Platt's tract of land south of their settlement and encouraged him to buy some lots.

Edward liked the area he surveyed. Acres of giant white pine trees sloped down to the lake. A ridge of mountains to the west, Terry and Huckleberry, seemed to protect the valley. On a clear day they could see the High Peaks of the Adirondacks on the horizon. Early explorers named Platt's southern location Peru after the lofty mountains of Peru, South America. Four rivers that drained the town of

Plattsburgh would provide power for mills and factories.

In the fall of 1785 Edward Everett asked to purchase land in the town of Plattsburgh at the foot of Hallock Hill, now in the town of Au Sable.

According to the deed of August 8, 1787 Edward Everett would pay Zephaniah Platt ten shillings for 150 acres of wilderness. But Edward could buy the land only "with the condition that Edward Everett actually improve and settle on said lot of land...within one year the date hereof and there remain with his identical family for the term of six years."

Clearly Mr. Platt and his associates did not want speculators to buy land in the town of Plattsburgh, Washington County. In 1788 the new county of Clinton was formed, named for New York's governor, George Clinton.

Before Edward and George left for New Hampshire they probably cleared some land, built a log cabin and hacked out a trail five miles through the forest to the mouth of the Great Ausable River.

In the spring of 1786 Edward put his wife, seven children and all his worldly goods into farm wagons and set out for their new home. After weeks of jolting over New Hampshire roads, the family stopped at a Vermont farm house. Here, on May 23, 1786 Ruth Everett gave birth to a boy. They named their son David Allen Everett for their kind host, David Allen.

In 1888 Edward Everett's great-granddaughter in Peru wrote that the Everett family crossed Lake Champlain in a sloop. They unloaded on the north side of the mouth of the Great Ausable River and followed Edward's path of marked trees to his log cabin in the wilderness of the then town of Plattsburgh.

One wonders if Edward brought farm animals

with him and if there was enough space between tree stumps to raise a crop of potatoes. The Everetts' nearest neighbors were some friendly Indians. Perhaps Ruth Everett wanted to return to New Holderness. About 1789 William Keese, a surveyor, and his brothers bought land near Edward's lots. The family of Jabez Allen built a log cabin five miles east of the Everetts. William Hay was Peru's first settler with land on the lake shore opposite Valcour Island.

On December 28, 1792 the town of Peru was formed from Plattsburgh and Willsboro. It included what later became the town of Au Sable. On that day Peru's first town meeting was held at Samuel Jackson's log cabin. His home was located near the intersection of the east end of the Bear Swamp Road and the Allen Road. John Cochran was chosen moderator. Edward Everett was elected first supervisor of the town of Peru and reelected three times. Other offices filled were those of assessors, overseers of the poor, pound master, fence viewers, town clerk and collector.

By 1795 the wilderness around the Everetts had become a thriving hamlet named the Union. Quaker families of Keeses, Arnolds, Arthurs, Hallocks and Thews had settled on Hallock Hill or along the road through the Union. The Quakers' log meeting house

was the first church in the town of Peru. Henry Delord opened a store at the center of the Union and in 1804 became the town's first postmaster.

Farming and lumbering were the main occupations. The great white pine trees were cut, and the logs were rafted down Lake Champlain to Québec where they were sold for masts on British ships. On the assessment roll of 1798 some curious valuations may be noted. Edward Everett, with 75 acres on the Rogers Road, had a log house valued at \$15, but a frame barn, 38 by 20 feet, assessed at \$800. Next door, son George lived on 100 acres, with a log house valued at \$20 and a log barn, 34 by 20 feet, valued at \$850.

Edward Everett's death on July 11, 1814 was recorded in the minutes of the Quaker meeting. The tall white gravestones of Peru's first supervisor and his son George the drummer boy still stand on the east side of the Quaker burying ground.

During the 1820s the population of the Union declined. Many Quaker families moved to Ohio. Other inhabitants moved five miles to Peru village to work in mills and factories.

About 1795 John Cochran founded Peru village. His log cabin stood on the south bank of the Little Ausable River near the present shopping center.



Clinton County Historical Museum

This sign marks the site of the Quaker settlement on Rogers (Union) Road in Peru. Peter Hallock built the first church, or "meeting house", at the southeast corner of the intersection of Rogers and Davern Road.

Down the bank opposite his house he built a grist mill and sawmill beside the river. John Hackstaff also built a mill on the river. Richard Hayworth's stone starch factory, built in 1836, is now an apartment house by the stream. The Little Ausable was spanned by a three-arch stone bridge in 1840.

Spafford's *Gazetteer* of 1813 listed many mills in the town of Peru and a "distillery of grain and fruit spirits". Spafford thought the roads were "pretty good and the inhabitants remarkable for habits of industry, temperance and economy".

In 1880 the town of Peru had a population of 2,610 residents and 19 school districts. There were five busy hamlets: Peru, Peasleeville, Goshen, Lapham's Mills and Port Jackson.

In 1810 David Allen Everett married Betsy Thew and bought land four miles west of Peru village. He built a log cabin a short distance from the present Everett homestead, which was erected in 1832. In 1867 their son Harvey became the owner of the farm. Harvey and Margaret Green Everett had four children: Henry, William, Warren and Sara Ann. Warren, their youngest son, was born March 21, 1868. When he was about seven years old, he started walking with his older brothers to a one-room school a mile north of the Everett farm. In later years he

recalled carrying a book, a slate to write on and his lunch in a little tin pail.

Warren was a friendly, studious boy and enjoyed eight years of lessons, teachers and classmates. The little red schoolhouse is now a private residence.

On the recommendation of Warren's teacher, Harvey Everett sent his son to Burton Academy in Manchester, Vermont to prepare for a college education. In 1894 Warren Everett was graduated from Hamilton College at Clinton, New York. For a year he did research in biology at Woods Hole, Massachusetts and in Bermuda.

Warren entered Albany Medical College in 1895 and four years later received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. He then spent two years as an intern at a private sanitarium in Troy, New York.

At the conclusion of his internship Dr. Warren Harkness Everett moved to Peru village to begin the practice of medicine in his home town. Dr. Cole had died, leaving Dr. Arthur De Grandpre as the only physician in an 81-square-mile area. Eventually Warren became a member of the American Medical Association, the Clinton County Medical Society and the Masonic fraternity.

Peru village in 1900 was a pleasant, busy community of about 400 residents. It had three churches:

The Everett homestead on Everett Road, Peru, as it appeared about 1904. The doctor's nephew, Earl Everett, age 7, is seated in front. The house, built in 1832, still stands and is owned by the Everett family.



Courtesy of Virginia Mason Burdick

Methodist, Congregational and Catholic. The village also had a grist mill, tannery, cheese factory and Mason's lumber mill. The little Delaware and Hudson Railroad depot can still be seen behind the Agway store. In the center of the village was a town pump, post office, town hall, barbershop, several stores and Davern's Tavern. The hotel charged \$1 for a room and about 25¢ for a meal.

The house that Dr. Everett purchased was located next to the stores on Main Street. At the back of the house was a large barn for his horse, buggy and sleigh. He had been in practice about eight years when Dr. De Grandpre moved to Plattsburgh. Dr. Edwin L. Sartwell from Mooers, a recent graduate from the University of Vermont Medical School, soon bought a house in Peru village and opened his office for patients. Dr. Everett probably welcomed a colleague to share the load of practicing medicine night and day, in all seasons.

In 1909 doctors in Peru charged 50¢ for office calls and 75¢ for house calls, depending on the mileage. The fee for a rural confinement case was about \$15.

Warren Everett was a sociable person with many friends and many interests. He enjoyed concerts by the Peru Cornet Town Band, card games, baseball games, Saturday night movies in Town Hall, hunting for

wildflowers and fishing. For a hobby he caught butterflies and moths at night by the Town Hall light. He mounted each specimen on cotton batting in glass-covered cases to hang on the walls of his waiting room.

In 1915 Dr. Everett was a member of the committee to establish the Peru Library. He was also a trustee of the Congregational Stone Church near the center of the village.

As the town's Public Health Officer Dr. Everett had the responsibility of giving all the school children a yearly medical examination. Despite the assistance of the Public Health Nurse, the doctor must have needed many days each year to visit the scattered one-room schools.

The two-story school of Peru village was located west of the business center between Pleasant and Elm Streets. It had a large playground and out-house. In 1915 the enrollment for grade one through the third year of high school was 187 pupils.

One of Dr. Everett's best friends was Charles Mason. He was one of six brothers who owned and operated the lumber company in the village. Charles, his wife Pauline and daughter Virginia lived in a large white house next to the tavern and across the street from the Congregational Church. During World War I Charles was chairman of the Red Cross



Courtesy of the Peru Free Library

Onlookers inspect the ruins remaining after a fire destroyed downtown Peru on May 18, 1921. Dr. Warren Everett lost his home and office in that blaze.

drives in the town and worked for the Liberty Loan campaigns.

On November 11, 1918 the townspeople flocked to Peru village to celebrate the end of the war. A few weeks later the influenza epidemic struck the town. Charles Mason was among the many who succumbed to the deadly disease.

While the village of Peru slept peacefully on the night of May 18, 1921, Pauline and Virginia were awakened about 1:30 a.m. by a brilliant orange light in their bedroom. From their window they saw that the light came from windows of the stone church across the street. They rushed over to the church and discovered that its windows reflected the flames that engulfed a barn across the road. Quickly Pauline opened the church door and with all her strength pulled the rope of the fire alarm bell. Within minutes the night watchman at Mason's mill sounded its fire whistle. By this time people were helping property owners in the path of the fast-spreading flames on Main Street.

As soon as the volunteer firemen discovered their equipment would not function they telephoned for assistance from the Keeseville and Plattsburgh fire departments. Despite the efforts of local and outside help, 14 buildings were destroyed. Dr. Everett's nephew Earl Everett and friends helped him save the contents of his house before it became a mass of smoldering embers. A subsequent referendum authorized the Peru Town Board to borrow \$3,000 to buy a fire truck and equipment. By 1929 the village had also installed a water system.

Clough Brothers' three-story red brick store on Main Street escaped the inferno and is still a hardware store. It stands as a monument to the history of Peru village. After the disastrous fire, Dr. Everett moved into an apartment at the new hotel near the burned-out block. After Davern's Tavern had burned in 1919 the Mason brothers bought the land and erected another hotel with a few apartments.

The first house beyond Mason's Tavern was the home of Pauline and Virginia Mason. After her husband's death Pauline rented rooms on the second floor and served meals to boarders. Warren Everett was one of the steady customers in her dining room. In the fall of 1924 Pauline told her 12-year-old daughter that Dr. Everett, already a kind and interesting companion in their home, would soon be her stepfather.

The doctor's furniture and medical apparatus fitted nicely into three rooms on the second floor of his wife's house. Trays of his moths and butterflies decorated the walls of his waiting room. An old sofa was used by weary patients waiting a long time for

the doctor to arrive. In his drug room Dr. Everett had gallon jugs of medicine. He concocted cough syrup and laxatives in small bottles and mailed them to rural patients living many miles from a drug store.

In those days Peruvians never locked their doors, and country doctors never had special office hours. Patients arrived morning, afternoon and evening. During the days of the Depression some patients paid in kind: garden vegetables, apples, eggs, home-made butter, venison, maple syrup, elderberry wine, fish and firewood.

When Warren Everett took his family to shop in Plattsburgh, he hung a sign on the front door indicating the time of his return. When they went to the Saturday night movie in the Town Hall, Warren told the Peru telephone operator where he could be found in case of emergency.

Warren and Virginia soon became fast friends. On cold winter nights the family sat by the fireplace, and the doctor recited poems by New England poets and reminisced about events, such as the night he was lost in a blizzard on the Lake Shore Road.

Virginia enjoyed riding with her stepfather on his calls into the country. In the Peasleeville valley he pointed out Terry Mountain that loomed over farms, a little schoolhouse, a church, store and post office. In the 1800s the hamlets of Peasleeville and Durganville were busy with iron forges, charcoal kilns and sawmills.

When the doctor and his companion rode along the Patent Road on the summit of Terry Mountain, they would stop to look down on Peru valley with Lake Champlain and the Vermont mountains in the distance. The early settlers on the Patent emigrated from Ireland in the 1840s. St. Patrick's Church still holds services for its parishioners.

Sometimes Dr. Everett was called to a sick family in Goshen, a hamlet on the Little Ausable River about two miles west of Peru village. In the early 1800s John Keese owned a sawmill by the river, and a store and red brick house on the road. The red brick house has been carefully renovated and is occupied by the owner.

On their trips to the lake shore, doctor and stepdaughter rode through Lapham's Mills, once a thriving little community of mills owned by Nathan Lapham of the Union. At Valcour they walked out on an old dock. Long ago steamboats stopped here at Port Jackson for passengers and cargo. Nearby was a small stone church and a one-room stone school. The church has been demolished, but the schoolhouse can be seen in a cedar hedge a little south of the Education Center on the east side of the road.

In 1935 Dr. Everett took his family to Peru

Landing opposite Valcour Island. Here they watched the Revolutionary War gunboat *Philadelphia* slowly and gently hauled from the water onto the beach. It was exciting and awesome to witness the resurrection of an American ship sunk by the British Navy during the battle of Valcour, October 11, 1776.

When the new school, Peru Central, opened in the village in 1939, Dr. Everett found it easier to conduct a clinic with the Public Health Nurse in one central location than to examine pupils in small schools throughout the town.

In 1942 Warren Everett's failing health forced him sadly to turn away patients whose families he had treated through three generations. For a few months Pauline took him for rides in the country

where he could easily find the wild flowers he loved: arbutus, trillium, lady-slippers, jack-in-the-pulpit and many more. Warren Harkness Everett, M.D., died December 20, 1944, at the age of 76. He was buried beside his parents in God's Acre Cemetery in Peru village.

Today the town of Peru thrives on a continuation of the old and new eras. Apartment buildings have replaced the old mills on the Little Ausable River. Descendants of Peru pioneers operate farms, orchards and dairies on the land of their ancestors. Newcomers build homes in the forests. They replace the log huts that Edward Everett and his neighbors built in the wilderness 200 years ago. ■

Virginia Mason Burdick, descendant of a Peru Quaker family, is a well-known researcher of 19th-century folk artists in Clinton County. In 1975 she was a curator of the exhibition "Portraits and Painters of the Early Champlain Valley, 1800-1865" at SUNY Plattsburgh.



Courtesy of Virginia Mason Burdick

Dr. Warren Everett relaxing at home, about 1940.

William Gilliland Revisited

by Betsy Baldwin



Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, N.Y.C.

*William Gilliland, pioneer of the
Champlain Valley*

WILLIAM GILLILAND, founder of Willsboro, New York, was born in 1734 in Caddy, a village near Armagh, in Ireland. After his father's death, his mother Jane married a man named Watson. James, Charity and William were born of the first marriage, and Matthew and John were children of the second. A broken romance with Lady Betsey Eccles was said to be the impetus for Gilliland's enlistment in the Royal Army. When he was discharged from the 35th Royal Regiment of Foot in Philadelphia in April, 1758, he was a private with four years' service.

Will, as he was known, moved to New York City together with Samuel Giles, a relative. The two ex-soldiers set up a private school in their rooms situated on Golden Hill. The area was located near what became John and William Streets; many of its residents were Irish immigrants. Advertisements for the new school caught the eye of a Mr. Phagan, an Irish merchant recently arrived from Jamaica, who hired Will to tutor the Phagan children. Within a year, in 1759, Will became both son-in-law and new partner in the Phagan importing business when he married Phagan's daughter Elizabeth. The *New York Mercury* carried a number of advertisements for imports during 1760-61:

"Imported from Ireland and England and to be sold very reasonable by William Gilliland at his earthen and glassware house in Broad Street: Fine and superfine linnen and cotton (of all kinds) fine Irish linens from 5 s. to 8 s. brass furniture ... gun locks, tea table catches, steel buckles, mohair

and buttons ... a very large assortment of stone and Delft ware ... a quantity of choice coffee in bags, Fyal and Teniffe wine ..."

By May, 1761 Gilliland and one Martha Carrick had exchanged shop locations, with Will's business now moved from Broad Street to Smith Street, where he added new merchandise:

"... choice shrub, wines and rum, bottled beer, Cheshire and Gloucester cheese...plain green tea, window glass ... glass lamps for halls ... a variety of hardware. Also a few barrels of beef and soap, and candles ..."

In addition to offering a variety of wares, merchants often became factors or agents for other enterprises. Real estate speculation was a favored project. In September 1763 Will secured a letter of introduction to Sir William Johnson, leading to a visit to Johnson Hall. This strengthened Will's determination to establish a similar baronial estate in the unexplored wilderness north of New York City. The British Crown had issued orders to give former soldiers purchase rights to 100 acres of land in the territory won after the cessation of French-Indian War hostilities. Aided by the £1,500 dowry his wife had provided, Will began purchasing land rights from ex-soldiers for about 25 cents an acre. Much of this land had been under the authority of France, resulting in duplicate grants of land which often left new investors without patents or deeds.

In May, 1763 Gilliland petitioned for a grant of

850 acres on Lake Champlain between Split Rock and Whitehall. The following year he began purchasing large tracts between the mouth of the Boquet River and Split Rock. Land papers show a succession of transfers from ex-soldiers to Will totalling 15,000 acres. Other lands he claimed included 6,000 acres between Bluff Point and the Salmon River, tracts around Chazy and Grand Isle, and the whole of Isle La Motte, a total he estimated at 30,000 acres. Will began recruiting prospective settlers from New York and Ireland to settle as tenants rather than as landowners. In a speech presented to the Society for the Promotion of Arts and Agriculture in 1765, Will explained:

"It is not expected that people in good circumstances will think of settling ... but those of the poorest sort ... the least ... offered is to defray the expense of (transportation) and to furnish the poorest of them with bread and salt the first year..."

During this time Will waged a constant battle with Surveyor General Alexander Colden in attempts to obtain full title to his lands without paying the excessive fees, rebates or bribes which had been common practice for many Crown officials. A temporary Assembly law permitted property lines to be run in the wilderness, stipulating that surveys thus made would not be legally binding. Despite Will's many angry letters including maps and surveyors' reports, Colden apparently ignored his claims. Will set out to settle his lands with relatives and acquaintances chosen for particular abilities.

He kept a journal of his early explorations, which he later called the Willsboro Town Book. The first entries contain the only mention of all the names and occupations of the original party traveling to the Boquet region in 1765: the Rev. George Henry; John Chism and Robert MacLane, millwrights; George Willson, carpenter; John Wattson, clerk; Robert and John McAulay and George Belton, all weavers; also the wives of Belton and Chism, along with Catherine Shephard, hired to keep house; and Mary Craig, indentured for four years. The journal records the numerous business trips that took Will away from the settlement for weeks at a time during that first year. The book is a source of weather information, crops harvested, and the many difficulties of maintaining the new settlements.

Will had taught himself surveying and was an amateur student of astronomy. He recorded the first description of Ausable Chasm and wrote of his voyages around Cumberland Head and the Vermont

islands. The entries are brief and many were written retrospectively. By 1766 he had built what he called his "occupation house" at the mouth of the Salmon River. In June of the same year, family members began their long voyage north from the city. Included were Mrs. Jane Gilliland, his mother, along with Mrs. Elizabeth Gilliland, his wife, and their children Jane, Eliza, Charity and James. This trip brought tragedy, as the six-year-old Jane drowned when a boat overturned. The following year, Jane Willsboro Gilliland was born as a namesake for the lost child.

The areas near the present villages of Willsboro, Westport and Salmon River grew with the arrival of many new families. At first his Boquet settlement was known as Milltown and only later became Willsboro for its founder. Three of his outlying settlements were named for his daughters—Bessboro (Westport), Janesboro at the mouth of the Salmon River and Charlottesboro, on Cumberland Head—and Elizabethtown took the name of his wife. Will arranged a form of weekly postal exchange between Milltown and New York City.

The community was not without dissension. Some settlers became discouraged and left—Will wrote that they "ran away" and "hid out". These deserters were occasionally returned by force because all were expected to reimburse Will for supplies advanced after their first year. Gilliland was commissioned a Justice of the Peace in 1770 on the same list as his friend and neighbor, Philip Skene. Until the colonial assembly created Charlotte County in 1772, Will was the sole authority in his territory. One of the Wattson half-brothers or a McAulay cousin was left in charge during Will's many absences; tenants often found it advantageous to make their departure at those times. (*Inconsistent spelling of proper names was used throughout the journal and official papers, particularly those of Wattson and McAulay, who also appeared as Watson and McAuley.*)

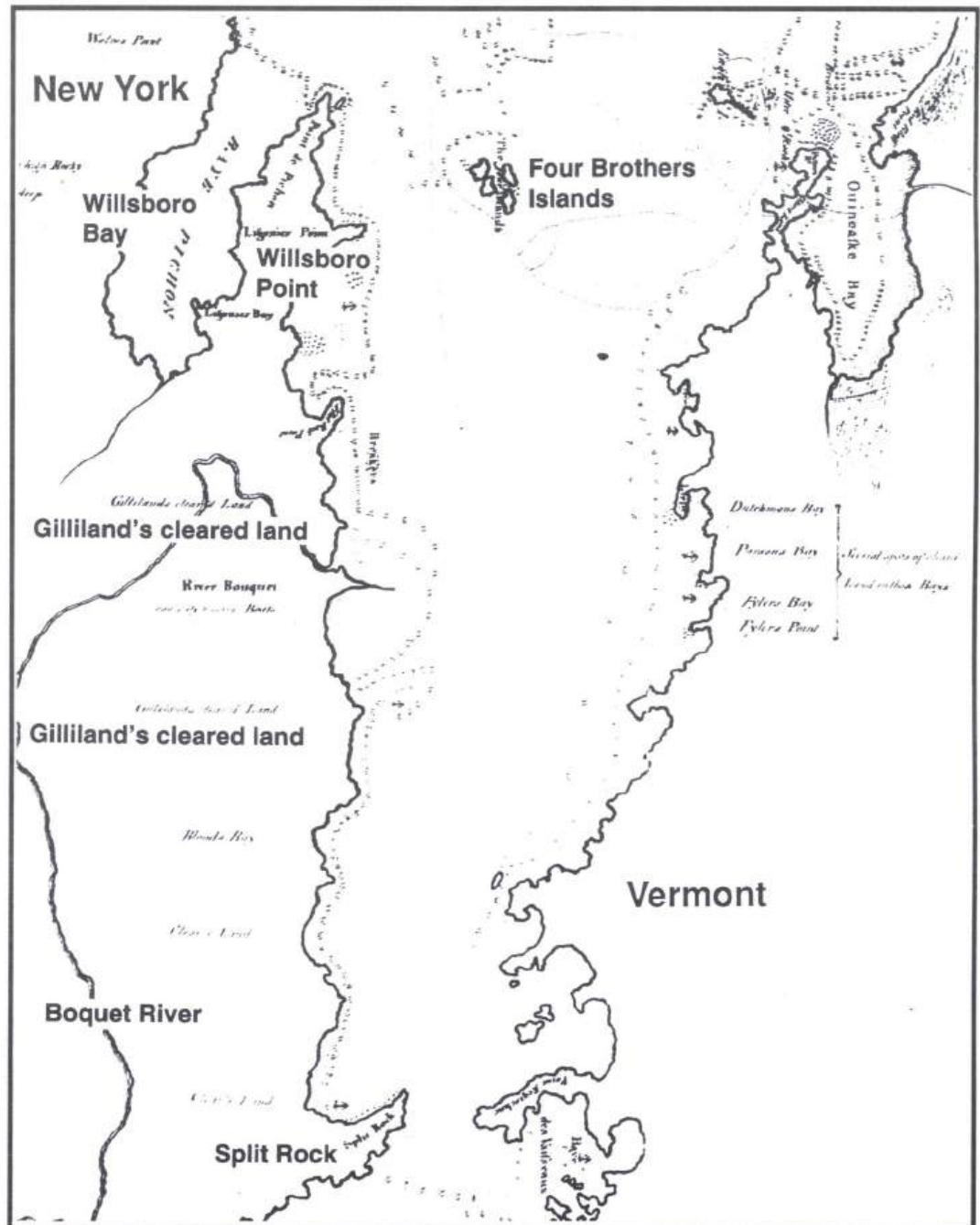
New York papers carried references to the good life and prospective wealth to be found in the settlements. The towns provided haven and rest stops for notables passing up and down the lake. The commissioners Benjamin Franklin, Charles Carroll and Samuel Chase stayed for two days on their futile mission to Montreal. Will's surveying experience and general advice were frequently sought, and he attended the conference of governors to settle the line of the northern border. By the early 1770s, the Gilliland name was becoming well-known to Royal authorities as well as to the increasingly belligerent colonial officials with whom Gilliland quarrelled.

Will was known to be a friend of Ethan Allen as well as of Philip Skene. He was rumored to support efforts of Skene, Allen and Amos Bird to form an independent province from the north country lands on both sides of the lake.

Will was also among many colonials who had a price put on his head by the Royal Governor General in Canada because of his open defiance of the Crown. Some 30 Minutemen were recruited from the Willsboro area with Gilliland as their captain. They aided in the later capture of the British post at Point

au Fer, known as the White House. His settlements furnished boats for General Montgomery, and Will claimed to have personally guided the troops along the lake. He said he had also engineered the first plans for the assault on Fort Ticonderoga and to have been active in forming the Green Mountain Boys. After the fall of Fort Ticonderoga in May, 1775, Will wrote a memorial to the Continental Congress praising the leadership qualities of Ethan Allen and detailing plans to enroll the Green Mountain Boys into the Continental Army.

William Gilliland's holdings in Essex County are shown on this portion of a 1779-1780 map by Captain William Chambers of the British Royal Navy. Chambers, the commander of the British Fleet on Lake Champlain from 1778 until 1883, compiled the Book of Directions necessary for all Commanders of Vessels employed on Lake Champlain. The book contained the earliest set of charts and sailing directions for Lake Champlain. The original manuscript version of the Book of Directions is owned by the Vermont Historical Society. (Gilliland's land and current names of landmarks are indicated in bold type.)



Courtesy of the Vermont Historical Society and Vermont Heritage Press

Despite Will's support of the colonial cause, rumors persisted that his lakeshore holdings were sites of clandestine meetings between his tenants and their Loyalist relatives. Although Will had earlier supported Benedict Arnold, he later claimed that Arnold became angered and vindictive when Will arbitrated a dispute between Ethan Allen and Arnold. Accusations and countercharges were lodged with the colonial authorities at Crown Point. Will's angry response was that he was being framed by hostile and jealous tenants. During the summer, the settlements provided men, material and food for Arnold's fleet. When Will attempted to collect the promised payment, without success, he and Arnold lodged bitter charges against each other, complaining to Generals Gates and Schuyler. Gilliland was expendable to the colonial cause; at that time Arnold was not. Whether under official orders or voluntarily, Will moved to Crown Point, Stillwater and eventually to Albany, where he continued his strident denunciations of Arnold:

"... bursting with pride and intoxicated with power ... he tyrannizes where he can. If temerity, if rashness, impudence and error can recommend him ... he is amply supplied with these qualities ... (which) recommend him in a peculiar manner to Lord North ..."

Willard Sterne Randall's recent biography, *Benedict Arnold*, quotes a deposition given by a former tenant, Thomas Day, accusing Gilliland and some of his tenants of spying and giving information to the British. Randall does not use any of the numerous entries in Peter Force's *American Archives* that refute these charges.

Gilliland continued complaining loudly and employed intemperate language to denounce colonial incompetence; he occasionally made irrational charges, even against General Gates. These actions brought him under suspicion by the Albany Committee of Correspondence. Will was found with contraband ammunition supplies which he claimed had been innocently purchased. Although he was released on £1,000 surety bond, he was re-arrested three other times for nuisance offences. His behavior became increasingly erratic, and he was charged with what became a much more serious matter: illegally holding a black woman, Flora, as a slave. The case was dormant for several years, and Will apparently turned his energies again to commercial ventures.

He had negotiated with groups in New England about starting a forge and iron industry in his



Clinton County Historical Museum

Benedict Arnold

(From a portrait attributed to Du Simitier, drawn in 1779 or 1780)

settlements once the Revolution was over. He resumed a lumbering operation in Canada but was reportedly swindled out of profits by his absentee partner. By 1784 Will returned to the North Country and began selling parts of his land. According to journal entries, he stated that he had applications for 51,060 acres of land at one pound sterling per acre. Unfortunately, much of that land did not belong to him and apparently never had. Settlers were again arriving in large numbers since the state constitution of 1777 had abrogated all royal grants made after 1775, making land again available. In 1781 the state offered lands of 30,500 acres in one location if settled by collective groups of persons. Prosperous landowners from Dutchess County and Long Island banded together to invest in land on many of the locations Gilliland had claimed. Zephaniah and Nathaniel Platt with Simon R. Reeves obtained a patent for 2,000 acres including Cumberland Head and extending north to the Beekman Patent. Captain Israel Platt, Zephaniah Platt and Melancton Smith had been members of the Albany First Committee for Detecting Conspiracies. Will accused this new group of using information procured through their records to copy legal descrip-

tions of his land and thus obtain patents for the disputed acres. Will's claims were denied in early 1785.

Gilliland had also sold large tracts of lands in the present Essex County, even as he was attempting to obtain leases for public lands at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Possibly to gain cash for his return to the North Country, he advertised in the New York *Mercury* to dispose of large holdings in Orange County:

"The subscriber intending soon to return to his estate at Lake Champlain, finds it necessary to dispose of his lands in Orange Co. to enable him to re-establish his several settlements at the Lake. Those lands lye between New Windsor and Goshen, in a genteel neighborhood ... through which the most populous road in America passes. The land is divided into six farms on each of which are very valuable improvements ..."

The earlier lawsuit brought by Flora, the disputed slave, had dragged on for several years. Flora had the backing of anti-slavery forces in Massachusetts, and a judgment against Gilliland for damages in the sum of £676 was ordered. Will was either unable or unwilling to pay. He was sent to debtors' prison in New York in February, 1786, where he remained for five years. When offered his freedom in return for paying the judgment, Will reportedly said he would manumit his slaves only if the state of Massachusetts would agree to be responsible for them. Ralph Earl, well-known artist of the period, was confined in the same jail; in 1789 Earl painted a portrait of Gilliland that today hangs in the New-York Historical Society in New York City. Will appeared as a sturdy, handsome older man, clad in a beautiful red velvet coat with ruffled shirt, and bearing a faint trace of a benign smile.

No information is available about any arrangements that may have been made by his family during the five and a half years the aging man was in prison or why he remained for so long over a relatively modest sum of money. During those years other judgments were brought against him, along with sheriffs' sales, to settle his debts. Will noted that he had earlier made sure that many of his holdings would revert to his children or grandchildren. This is verified by land transfers recorded between family members.

Will's journal had seldom recorded personal information about his family nor mentioned the births of children or the death of his wife Elizabeth. His elderly mother Jane apparently made her home with Will and the youngest child Charlotte. Two of

the older children are said to have spent the war years in Montreal at school. There is confusion concerning the dates of birth and death of his son William Jr. and of a grandson of the same name, with some genealogists speculating there might have been two separate families with identically named children.

Gilliland was called "deranged" from the time of his release from prison in December, 1791. There is evidence that the elderly man walked at least part of the long journey back to Essex County after traveling as far as possible by boat. Will lived the last years with his daughter Elizabeth, who had married Judge Daniel Ross. Will's advice was often sought on land locations, and he had been given a small wilderness tract in return for assisting a group who were constructing roads in the area. An old friend, Platt Rogers, had established a ferry service nearby from the Vermont side of the lake. It was after a visit to Rogers that Will became lost while walking home through a blizzard across the frozen lake. His body was recovered several days later near the north ridge of Coon Mountain. He was buried in Essex Village under a stone erected by two of his grandsons:

Sacred to the Memory of
WILLIAM GILLILAND, ESQ.
Who departed this life the 2d of February,
1796
Aged 62 years
Erected by W. and H. Ross

His body was later moved to the Cuyler lot in Lake View Cemetery in Willsboro.

William Gilliland, North Country pioneer and founder of Willsboro, has been a subject of interest to local historians throughout the past two hundred years. He was indeed a formidable figure, a remarkable man, and the settlement of Essex and Clinton counties was more rapid and orderly because of his trail-blazing activities. He not only had land and wealth but for many years he also enjoyed the power that accompanied it, including arbitrary political authority prior to the formation of a new county by the state.

Gilliland was one of a new breed of pioneers and entrepreneurs soon to be recognized as distinctly American. He was one of three men who tried to settle the New York shores of Lake Champlain before the American Revolution—Charles de Frendenburg at Fresburg (Plattsburgh) and Philip Skene at Skenesborough (Whitehall) were the other two — and the only one whose settlement endured under its original founder. The other two men remained



Clinton County Historical Museum

William Gilliland's embroidered waistcoat. Gift of Lucille Gilliland Holm.

loyal to Great Britain and consequently forfeited their property.

Gilliland single-handedly carved out a new life in the wilds of the Champlain Valley, where he founded a settlement distinguished by a mixture of feudalism and democracy. At great personal risk he backed the earliest colonial attempts at independence. Yet he was accused of treachery by both British and Americans, his property was despoiled, and he was thrown into debtors' prison. A broken old man, Gilliland returned to his beloved North Country and was swindled out of the few funds he had left. He died a lonely death in the snow.

In addition to the towns that bear his family names, he is remembered for his picturesque journal in which scholars can find the inside story of life as it unfolded on the frontier.

This study does not support the general assumption that William Gilliland was ruined by the Revolutionary War. He had acquired his large holdings of land by paying only a fraction of their worth but failing to obtain clear title to some of them. He shrewdly transferred large areas to his children and other relatives when he first experienced financial difficulties, and in this way was able to keep substantial acreage within the family. His children and their descendants intermarried with other prominent settlers in the area and became some of the most distinguished and respected residents of Essex and Clinton counties.

Gilliland was no more a spy or a traitor than were the Vermont Allens or hundreds of other colonials who remained ambivalent in their support of the Revolution. There is no evidence that Gilliland took part in political activities except as they might affect his holdings. He was an opportunist, a characteristic not necessarily to be condemned. He took advantage of any situation that developed, and he could unabashedly change his course whenever discretion demanded. He undoubtedly exaggerated his exploits as well as his grievances. He and his tenants were known to have Tory associations, and they were often rashly and openly vocal in their criticism of American authority. In time of war it is small wonder that they fell under suspicion.

William Gilliland was a self-made man who rose to a position of wealth and respectability, but in doing so he made numerous enemies by his intemperate rhetoric and his authoritarian manner. Many of the losses he suffered had nothing to do with the Revolution; instead, his difficulties arose from a combination of financial reverses after the war and from his intransigence in personal affairs. He was basically a businessman, a promoter. He was not himself a man of the soil, and his attempt to establish a feudal-like domain came far too late in the changed climate of the new world. He was never able to reconcile himself to the new atmosphere after the Revolution, and in this lapse he violated one of the fundamental aspects of the American experience—a pragmatic approach to life and ability to adjust to changing conditions while learning from the past. ■

Betsy Baldwin is a past winner of the McMasters Prize for good writing about North Country history. This article is a condensation of her winning essay.

The Plattsburgh Temperance Movement of the 1830s

by Blake Harrison

IN 1814, BOLD ADVERTISEMENTS for alcohol were common in the local newspapers in Plattsburgh, New York. Store owners placed alcohol at the top of lists of items for sale. Drinking, although not drunkenness, was expected and acceptable in Plattsburgh.

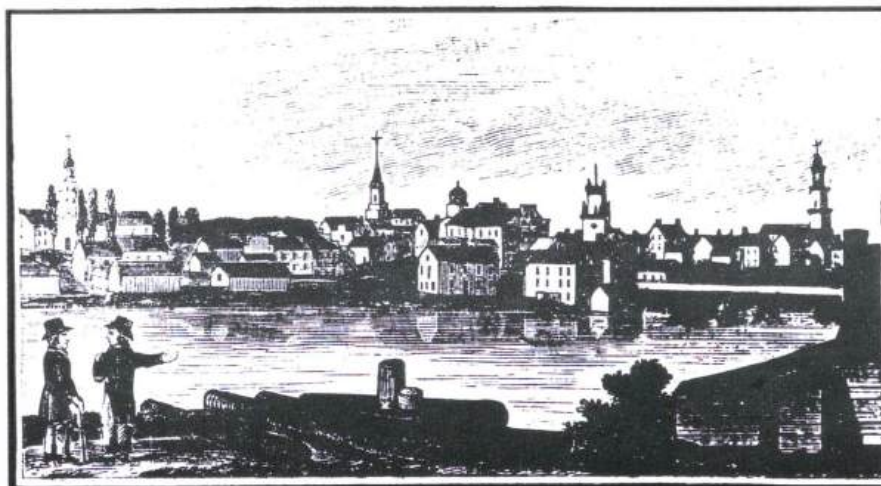
Just 15 years later, however, attitudes towards drinking had been dramatically altered. A certain segment of Plattsburgh's population now objected to even moderate drinking. Many store owners refused to sell alcohol, and some manufacturers attempted to maintain a non-drinking, or in 19th-century terminology, a "temperate" labor force. Their hopes were no less than to reform the drinking habits of everyone in town. In pursuit of this goal, Plattsburgh's leading men formed the Plattsburgh Temperance Society in 1830.

The temperance movement stemmed from the emergence of market capitalism and a middle class culture in the 1820s and 1830s. These were interwoven with new attitudes towards liquor among the

growing economic elite. The temperance reformers viewed abstinence from alcohol as a way to insure stability, both personal and social. Identifying the members will help to show the links between market capitalism and the temperance movement.

Although Plattsburgh's early economy was expanding, it remained primarily local. Prior to the 1820s, goods were normally produced for local distribution through the household economy. This system utilized the labor of family members as well as apprentices and journeymen who shared the same residence as their employer. The household economy was characterized by a fraternal work relationship between master craftsmen and laborers which included a relaxed pace of work and, often, daily allotments of rum. If the era prior to 1820 was a time of measured commercial growth, the 1820s and 1830s were a time of "fevered chaos", characterized by a booming, speculative and unregulated economy.

Transportation improvements in the 1820s transformed the economy of the entire northeast,



Clinton County Historical Museum

A view of Plattsburgh as it appeared around the time of the temperance movement. Taken from the July 27, 1844, issue of the Rural Repository, a semi-monthly journal.

including Plattsburgh. The Champlain canal, completed in 1823, expanded markets southward and generated a rapid growth of Plattsburgh's economy. By connecting Lake Champlain with the Hudson River, both potential benefits and potential dangers were revealed.

This was an era when economic and social stability was tied to distant, unseen and impersonal markets. Competitive market capitalism offered



From D. H. Hurd, *History of Clinton and Franklin Counties, New York*

Frederick L. C. Saily

Merchant and leader in Plattsburgh's temperance movement.

potential economic and social enhancement, but also a new instability which threatened personal security. By the 1830s the Village of Plattsburgh had developed a market capitalist economy, as well as the accompanying social divisions and class conflicts. During this transitional period the Plattsburgh Temperance Society was formed. The men who started it were not reformed alcoholics, common laborers, or even white-collar professionals. Instead, the movement was led by a very discrete segment of the population.

Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of the members of the Society was that they were all men, as compared to a similar movement in the second half of the century, which was led by women. The explanation lay in the growth of market capitalism. As the household economy declined, women were excluded from an active economic role and made responsible for a pure, moralistic influence in the home. Reformers believed that steadfast, tem-

perate families would insure social and economic security.

Besides being men, 86 percent of the temperance reformers lived within the more urban and commercial Village of Plattsburgh rather than in its rural hinterland. The Village was more directly exposed to capitalistic economic development, which helps to explain the occupational positions of Plattsburgh's temperance reformers.

The leaders of the movement were the wealthy capitalist elite. Leading citizens (such as the society's president, General Benjamin Mooers—a merchant, manufacturer, land speculator, politician and former liquor seller) were the primary supporters of temperance in Plattsburgh. Although the percentage of households involved in commerce and manufacturing was still relatively small, these occupations supplied the largest number of reformers. Virtually all of them were owners of or primary investors in mercantile and manufacturing businesses, located mostly in the Village. General store owners and merchants such as Frederick Saily, Lawrence Myers and Heman Cady, as well as manufacturers and producers of iron, cabinets, carriages and wool, such as Noyes P. Gregory, Amasa Moore, James Bailey and Silas Durgin, all joined the temperance crusade.

Rapid capitalist growth transformed Plattsburgh's merchants from local entrepreneurs into merchant capitalists. By the 1830s they dealt extensively with southern New York markets and expanded the number and scope of their businesses compared to ten years earlier.

As a result of the rise of market capitalism, owners of manufacturing shops attempted to reduce the cost of production and make their businesses more efficient, leaving little room for the previous casual sociability associated with drinking in the workplace. Manufacturers centralized production and looked elsewhere for cheap sources of labor, such as young women. French Canadian immigrants also provided a growing supply of unskilled labor. By 1840 they made up approximately 20 percent of the Village households. The vast majority were involved in manufacturing, virtually all as laborers. Class divisions between French Canadians and Plattsburgh's middle class were only accentuated by cultural and language barriers.

Owing to the restructuring of the workplace, previous common social bonds between master craftsmen and laborers were severed. By the 1830s, increasing physical, economic and cultural divisions generated class distinctions between the business-owning elite and the laborers whom they employed.

The reform movement also attracted a large

percentage of professional men such as lawyers like William Swetland and two prominent doctors, Edward Kane and Benjamin Mooers, Jr. Plattsburgh's clergy such as the Presbyterian ministers, Rev. Moses Chase and Rev. Benjamin B. Newton, as well as the Episcopalian pastor, J. Howland Coit, and Methodist minister John Townshend Addoms all played an important role in the Temperance Society. Despite the support of ministers, however, morality was not the primary concern of the reformers.

The most commonly stated benefit of temperance was that sobriety increased the potential for economic and social success and secured personal property. Plattsburgh's capitalists believed that temperance generated self-discipline and physical health. Alcohol was perceived as a dangerously stimulating agent which, according to the *Republican*, made men brutish beasts. Without good health and personal self-discipline, reformers asserted that success was unattainable.

Plattsburgh's manufacturers also recognized that temperate self-discipline applied not only to themselves but to their work force as well. Motivated by a newly formed, revival-inspired work ethic, which stressed order, discipline, efficiency and punctuality, manufacturers campaigned to reform the drinking habits of their workers.

Merchants were also enticed by temperance, believing that only through acquiring a respectable, temperate clientele would they ever receive payments from their debtors or acquire respectability. One way to achieve this was to refuse to sell liquor, which many (but by no means all) store owners did in the 1830s.

The importance of respectability was paramount among temperance reformers for a number of reasons. Respectability applied not only to financial success, but to social advancement as well. In the opinion of much of the capitalist class, temperate respectability generated a successful business, which in turn enhanced social standing within the community. It was also this middle class belief in respectability which divided Plattsburgh's temperate culture from the intemperate majority of society. To the reformers there was no in-between: temperate self-discipline generated success and a respectable status, while intemperance was synonymous with social and economic failure.

Many members of the Temperance Society were also men who held political positions, both on local

and state levels, and most of them were Jacksonian Democrats. Despite the involvement of local political figures, the leaders preferred passive and persuasive reform, and worked diligently to keep politics and coercive legislation out of the movement.

Plattsburgh's temperance reformers were also religious men of Protestant denomination. Revivalism had spread the belief that men had a direct control over the outcome of their own lives. This belief gave reformers confidence in their ability to achieve both personal success and the eventual Christian reformation of all society. The largest percentage of reformers were members of the First Presbyterian Church. Presbyterians closely regulated both the public and private behavior of their members. Episcopalians also comprised a large percentage of reformers, including some of Plattsburgh's wealthiest capitalists such as St. John B.L. Skinner, Frederick Saily and William Swetland. Methodists also closely regulated the behavior of their members, yet examples of Methodist reformers are limited. The Catholic Church, composed primarily of French Canadians and Irish, commonly labeled as notorious drinkers, did not take an active role in temperance reform.

As religious men, the reformers were clearly concerned with their personal and community morality. However, the fears of these men reveal a startling deviation from simple moral concerns. In fact, an 1835 article in the *Republican* actually complained about the lack of a religious and moral focus among the reformers. What actually motivated these men was a deeply rooted concern for their own personal economic and social security. In their opinion, drunkenness, whether among themselves or their laborers, was the biggest threat to that security.

The Plattsburgh temperance movement did not arise out of a great increase in drinking, or a sudden desire among alcoholics to reform. It grew out of a new sense of insecurity generated by the rise of competitive market capitalism. Reformers faced a system of competitive capitalism in which sudden and unpredictable economic misfortune could send independent business owners to the poorhouse. All of the warnings and rhetoric in temperance speeches and in the *Republican*, and all the stated potential benefits of sobriety were made by, and were ultimately aimed at, one specific class of people—worried capitalist men whose social and economic prominence was at stake. ■

Blake Harrison of Rochester was graduated with honors from SUNY Plattsburgh in 1992. This article is a condensed version of his much longer honors thesis, which can be read at Special Collections, Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh.

No Borders Here

Reactions of Northern New York's Champlain Valley to the Rebellions in Lower Canada

by Julie A. Davies

NORTHERN NEW YORKERS did not merely react to the Rebellions of 1837-38 in Lower Canada. They were from the beginning active participants. The influence on regional history of the Richelieu-Lake Champlain waterway's natural north/south connection far overshadowed the man-made dotted line on maps. From the days of the first white settlements the interaction had been constant. By the close of the 18th century the ties were well-established. Merchants, bankers and farmers all did business across the border. Many local families sent their children to Montreal schools. Border-dwelling neighbors, people and livestock alike, had only nominal respect for the national boundary line.

The city of Plattsburgh in 1830 was quite small by present-day comparisons. The recorded population was 4,913. Though more rural in character, surrounding villages such as Chazy (3,097) and Champlain (2,496) were similar in size.

When the October 4, 1837 "Address of the Sons of Liberty of Montreal" (a call to arms to the "young men of the North American colony") was reprinted in the *Plattsburgh Republican*, it certainly came as no surprise locally. The Plattsburgh citizens and local newspapers had been following the growing unrest for some time. There is now evidence that underground activity was already established as well. As early as the summer of 1837, Dr. Robert Nelson allegedly organized several chapters, called Hunters' Lodges, in northern border areas, gathering local military support for the anticipated conflict. A carefully guarded secret, the number of members and exact locations are unknown.

When fighting erupted in Montreal, and martial

law was declared, the local newspaper reprinted the official order in a special supplementary edition. In retrospect the wording is especially revealing—the reformers referred to themselves as *patriotes*. The Montreal government identified them as rebels "who must be suppressed by DEATH or otherwise". That today we call this event the Rebellions instead of the Patriot War (as it is still referred to in some parts of the United States), certainly says something about the sympathies of those who wrote the history.

The *Plattsburgh Republican* (edited by Roby G. Stone and supportive of the Democratic Party) strongly favored the *patriote* cause at first. There was economic disaster on both sides of the border, and demoralized people often look to radical politics for answers. The tone and content of the *patriote* resolutions and position papers resembled the rhetoric of the American Revolution, no doubt inspiring some nostalgia in local citizenry. Reporting on a Town Hall meeting, December 4, 1837, a writer for the *Plattsburgh Republican* was moved to comment: "The remarks of the speakers were spirited and appropriate, and were calculated to kindle the fires and inspire the feeling of '76 in every heart."

Throughout the winter months there was almost daily coverage. The editor repeatedly prefaced any reports from the *Montreal Herald* with an admonishment to readers about its biased nature: "The papers, however, from which we must necessarily make our extracts, are Loyalist—not a paper attached to the Patriot cause is published in Lower Canada at this time. The statements, therefore, must be taken with some grains of allowance."

Though not reflected in newspaper accounts, it

seems there was one group that was strongly opposed to the *patriotes* from the start: merchants with strong ties to the north. A letter from George Hagar (in Montreal at the time of the first uprising) to his colleague W. H. Morgan in Plattsburgh is less than favorable. "It is to be lamented," he wrote, "that a few political leaders have led the poor, ignorant country people to feel they were oppressed." He goes on to write, "Business is at a standstill. The country people are afraid to come to town, which also makes the market high." The *habitant* fared better in an article from the *Keeseville Herald*: "It is said that the people of Canada are ignorant and not capable of self-government. Try them! Give the Frenchmen freedom and they will become less ignorant, the youths of the land will be trained in political knowledge, self-reliance and energetic action."

Mass meetings were held in both Plattsburgh and Keeseville. "The friends of liberty turned out in tremendous numbers," reported the *Plattsburgh Republican*, and resolutions in support of the *patriotes* were unanimously adopted. The newspaper frequently printed letters from the border towns (Mooers, Champlain and Rouses Point) describing military action and refugees. "Families from Canada are flying in consternation from the seat of war and are settling among us," read one such report.

Though Louis Joseph Papineau proved to be an ineffective leader and fled the country, others remained committed to the cause. When the *Plattsburgh Republican* printed the reward list for the *patriotes* still at large, Dr. D'Avignon, Dr. Robert Nelson, C. H. Côté and others were in residence at Plattsburgh's Fouquet House Hotel, gathering support and continuing to plan strategy. For them the incidents were far from over.

On February 10, 1838 the *Republican* printed "The Patriot Chief", a septenary poem by Mrs. Robert Nelson. A former resident of Montreal and a celebrated poet, Mrs. Nelson was now residing in Plattsburgh with her husband. This poem was written especially for the local paper. The five dramatic stanzas glorified the actions of her brother-in-law, Dr. Wolfred Nelson, the proclaimed *patriote* leader of Lower Canada. In the weeks to follow, many newspapers reprinted the poem, including the *Montreal Herald*, whose editorial comments were not so kind.

Supportive of action against British oppression, many young men (and presumably some women) from the north country were willing participants. On February 26, 1838 *patriote* exiles and local supporters raided the state arsenal at Elizabethtown. Throughout the night, sleighs and teams of horses carried the arms north and across the frozen lake.



From D.B. Read, *The Canadian Rebellion of 1837*

Louis Joseph Papineau

On February 27, with a force of more than 1,000 men, Dr. Robert Nelson advanced on the border at Alburgh Springs, Vermont. By dawn on the 28th, however, U. S. government troops had taken position at the border and turned them back.

George Palmer, a young Plattsburgh man home on medical leave from his studies at Yale, was a key player in the unfolding drama. During an earlier visit to St. Denis he had befriended Dr. Wolfred Nelson, and in Plattsburgh he was enlisted in the *patriote* efforts. He traveled in disguise to Montreal to deliver critical messages, was responsible for delivering the plans for the arsenal raid, and in the Alburgh Springs action, was Dr. Nelson's aide-de-camp.

While the Hunters' Lodges were active and local sentiment in favor of the *patriotes* remained strong, the position of the *Plattsburgh Republican* and many prominent citizens took a dramatic turn. In support of President Van Buren's official position of neutrality, the newspaper tempered its rhetoric. In February 1838, the President sent General John Wool to

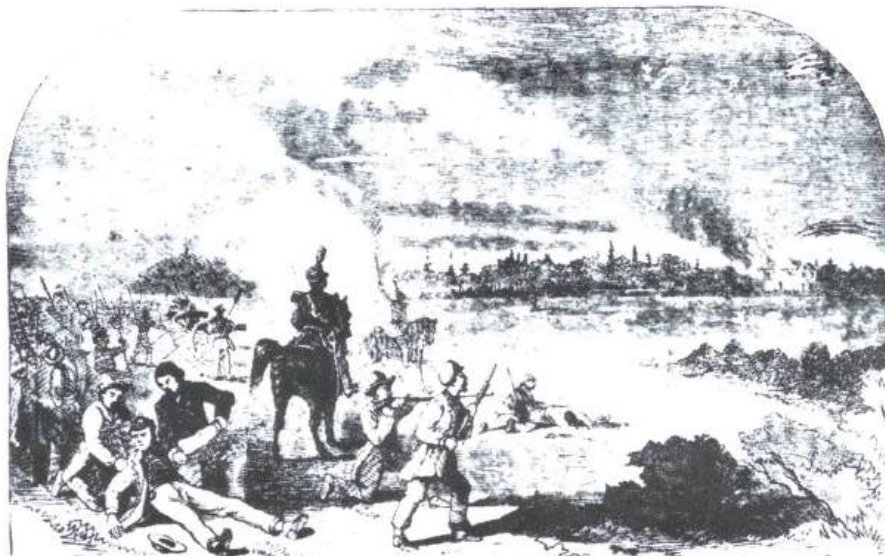
Plattsburgh to command a company of soldiers mobilized against any local unrest aimed north. Strategically, Wool was an excellent choice. He had distinguished himself in the 1814 Battle of Plattsburgh and was remembered fondly. Suddenly the press was filled with letters from leading community members praising Wool and applauding his arrival in 1838. The same prominent folk who had spoken eloquently at earlier meetings, championing the *patriote* spirit and remembering our own nation's struggles, were now faced with a crisis of conscience. From this point on, the official voice of the *Plattsburgh Republican* was subdued. It continued, however, to print strongly supportive letters from readers and was pressured to publish on June 9, 1838, "at the urgent request of some of our subscribers," a long article from the *Keeseville Herald* stating among other things that "the offences with which the Canadian exiles are charged are such as do them the highest honor." Though in favor of General Wool, the paper admitted that "the popular current set strongly against government interference." General Wool remained in Plattsburgh throughout 1838.

On November 6, 1838, the final *patriote* attempt to gain control of the Richelieu River was put down at the Battle of Odelltown just north of Rouses Point. Intent on meeting with *patriote* troops gathering at Napierville, Dr. Nelson's force of exiled *patriotes* and local supporters coming from New York State were easily scattered, most fleeing across the border

to safety. In a dispatch the Royalist commander in Napierville reported, "The rebels to a number of 2,000 evacuated the town hours ago The cavalry are now in pursuit of them on the Chateauguay road." On November 12 a letter to the British consul in New York assured him that "the rebels, who had assembled in arms in the district of Montreal, have been entirely dispersed by Her Majesty's troops."

And so, in less than a year the fighting was over. Historians seem to agree that in French Canada not much changed immediately in the wake of the Rebellions. Land was no more available or fertile, the seigneurial system and clergy were still in place, and as before the British were still in power. The really dramatic change was that something (or more accurately, someone) was missing. In significant numbers the French fled south. These political refugees were joined in the following years by economic refugees anxious to escape poverty and disillusionment.

There were few French in the United States before the Rebellions. Though French seigneurial holdings extended as far south as Ticonderoga in the early 18th century, it appears there was little if any actual settlement on them. Following the American Revolution however, the Canadian and Nova Scotia Refugee Tract granted northern tier land to Canadian sympathizers. Following the Rebellions in Lower Canada, *patriotes* seem to have settled in those areas that had existing French connections. The



From Edwin C. Guillet, *The Lives and Times of the Patriots*

The Battle of Montgomery's Farm, December 7, 1837

In this confrontation loyalist forces routed patriote troops from their headquarters in Montgomery's Tavern, four miles north of Toronto. (From Lindsey, Life of Mackenzie, 1862)

numbers appear to be significant. In the town of Chazy, for example, the 1810 census records 234 households. Out of that number, 27 have franco-phone surnames. The 1850 census is much more detailed and even lists country of origin and arrival date. Of the 881 families recorded, 238 came from Canada, and it appears that 142 arrived immediately following the Rebellions. The numbers of French Canadians that settled along the northern New York border following the rebellion helped to change the anglophone character of "Yankee" or "Yorker"

land. They established a pattern of extended families divided by and yet existing on both sides of the border.

The famous French-Canadian folk song, "Un Canadien Errant", was, after all, a result of this flight. The plaintive lament of a young *patriote* exile unable to return home, it expresses regret for "mon pays malheureux", but assures friends and family that he still remembers ("je me souviens"). The real lament however is that with the passage of time this strong borderland connection seems forgotten on both sides. ■

Julie A. Davies is an independent historian and visual artist who resides in Plattsburgh.

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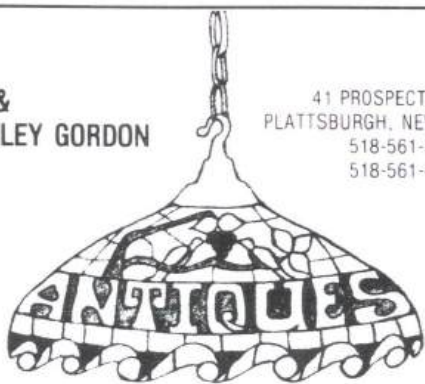
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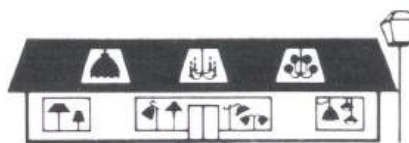
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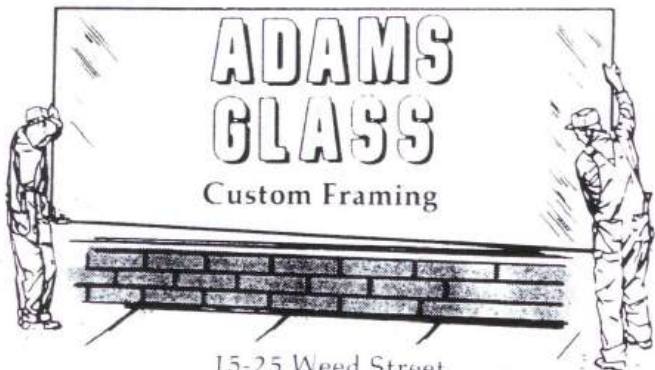
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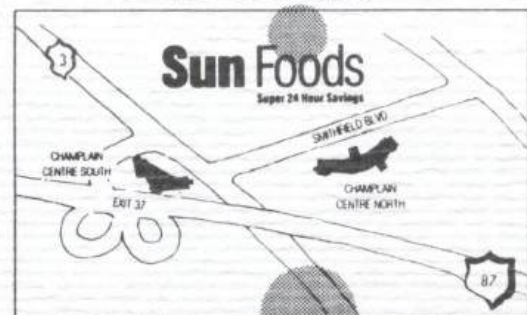
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