

THE HAGUE CHRONICLE

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S E P T E M B E R 1 9 7 5

HAGUE, N.Y.

HAGUE - 1830 - 1855

The earliest federal census on file in the Warren County Clerk's office covered the year 1830. The state census of agriculture and industry taken in 1855 is also on file. From these censuses much of Hague's early history can be gleaned.

The population of Hague in 1830 was 720; 375 males and 345 females. Persons aged 20 and younger numbered 415; those over 20 numbered 305. There were only 21 "senior citizens", those 65 and older, about 3% of the population. This should be compared with 10.5% in 1950; 13.1% in 1960; and 14.6% in 1970. There were 117 families averaging about 6 persons per family. Some of the family names still found in Hague are: Beavins, Hayford, Rising, Dunkley, Balcom, Densmore, Holman, Carpenter and Ward.

The census listed on one page "white people" and on the other "slaves and free colored persons". On the latter page the name of a nine year old boy, Prince Gilbert, is listed as a free colored person. He was described by Mrs. Hoyt Johnson in articles about this period which were first published in the Ticonderoga Sentinel in 1896, as follows:

"Of colored people, the town can boast of one. When Mr. Gilbert came to town.... his wife had two negro slaves. New York had just passed the law (1827) freeing the slaves after such a date but the minor children were to be subject to their owners, boys until 25 and girls until 21. One of these had a child from 2 to 4 years of age. She, with the others stayed with the family until the law freed them. Rose, the mother of the boy, died there. The boy, Prince

Gilbert, as he was called, remained and was often called to play the fiddle for dances. He was always delighted and considered it an honor to play for the white folks".

The census of 1855 came in two parts - the regular census which listed the 615 people now residing in Hague and the census of agriculture and industry. The latter listed 123 persons as farmers, 7 as school teachers, including three daughters of the McClanathan family, 10 coopers, 4 sawyers, 3 blacksmiths, 3 carpenters, and two men engaged in lumbering. There was a Baptist minister, a physician, a miller, a seamstress and a tailoress, and a millwright and a wheelwright. A hotel keeper, Charles Garfield, and a merchant, O. C. Baker rounded out the list.

There were 100 homes in the town - one brick owned by William Cook - now owned by Al Stanley on the Ti Road, one of "blocks" owned by John McClanathan, 12 of logs, and 86 were of frame construction.

The farms ranged in size from about 500 acres down to 8. The average size was 163 acres - 56 acres described as "improved" and 107 as "unimproved". The value of the farms was stated to be \$48,711. or an average value of \$547. with an average value per acre including buildings of \$3.35. Farm stock was valued at \$23,000. for the entire town, an average of \$258. per farm. The average value of the farm tools was \$60.

Principal farm crops were wheat, oats, corn and potatoes. The farms produced 6179 bushels of apples plus 78 barrels of cider, 997 pounds of maple sugar and 12 gallons of maple molasses, and 1056 pounds of honey and 54 pounds of beeswax. No wine

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WARREN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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was produced. There is no record of how much milk was given by the 776 cows but 26,600 pounds of butter and 1090 pounds of cheese were produced. Only 14 cows were slaughtered for beef. The town had 100 working oxen and 128 horses. Five hundred sheep produced 402 fleeces and 637 pounds of wool. There were about two swine per farm and many chickens. Principal fertilizers were "plaster" and "gypsum" with 31,300 pounds being used in a year.

The women were kept busy knitting socks and mittens, making lace and carpeting and even straw hats and baskets.

There were no shops, factories or mines in the town but five saw mills are listed with an output of 117,000 board feet of lumber produced in one year. The only power was water power. Wages, exclusive of board, were from \$14. to \$26. a month.

There were three marriages during the year and ten deaths. Most deaths resulted from tuberculosis although an eleven year old boy is listed in the census as having died from "inflammation of the brain". This is further amplified by the census taker in a note - "The person entered in the sixth line was a boy nearly 12 years of age. At the intermission at noon, the scholars were at play upon the ice near the schoolhouse and in the course of the play this lad was tripped by another scholar and fell striking the back of his head upon the ice. That night cold chills and inflammation set in and he died the next morning. It was a warning to Hague scholars not to play so roughly with smaller ones".

And these were the good old days?

A beautiful water color of the old Warren County Courthouse was reproduced on the cover of the American Bar Association Journal of December, 1974. It was painted by James E. Palmer of Glens Falls on commission from Rist-Frost Associates and has frequently been used as a Christmas card. The building is located on Route 9 in Lake George and is now the home of the Lake George Institute of History, Art and Science.

The land was originally deeded for "the sole use and benefit of the inhabitants of the County of Warren" by James and Elizabeth Caldwell in 1815. In 1845 the courthouse was constructed of stone and brick. In 1878 an imposing tower building was built as a facade on the courthouse. It was well designed and blended well architecturally with the original courthouse becoming the most outstanding structure of its kind in the Adirondacks. Also built about the same time was a matching structure housing rooms for the judge and others involved in county activities.

In 1855 the County of Warren decided to build a large County Clerk's building, locating it directly in front of the main courthouse, effectively destroying the beauty of the new tower building. In 1896 a two-story jail was built in back of the courthouse overlooking the lake. Subsequently, still another addition was added to the west end of the jail linking the buildings together and essentially making them a single building more than 145 feet long.

When the county completed its new municipal center in 1963 the courthouse buildings were abandoned. A move was then made to sell the courthouse property and level the building but interested citizens formed the Lake George Historical Association in a last ditch effort to save the complex and put it to use.

After a long period of negotiations with the Warren County Board of Supervisors, the Town of Lake George

purchased the property. The New York Historic Trust co-operated with the Town of Lake George and the Lake George Historical Association to reconstruct and restore the court house and agreed to provide 50% of the funds. The Town of Lake George agreed to underwrite the balance. The Lake George Historical Association created the Lake George Institute of History, Art and Science and it has become the major tenant of the building. Town offices are located in a portion of the tower building and the Town of Lake George acts as custodian.

The restored courthouse was dedicated in the summer of 1970 with Governor Rockefeller in attendance. In commenting on the restoration the governor said, "You have done more than save this area's history; you have made it".

The buildings, while worthy of being preserved because of their architectural and structural excellence, will serve their highest use by being the focal point for many worthwhile and desperately needed actions by a large number of individuals and organizations which will use the Lake George Institute.

The American Bar Journal concludes "In a very real sense this is a 'museum of community action' in which many specialized groups dedicated to environmental excellence are brought together to work in the common effort to create a finer America".

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BEAUTIFICATION WINNERS

Local winners in the 1975 Lake George Beautification Contest have been announced by the Commission, as follows:

Most beautiful and well kept - Mr. and Mrs. W. Allison, Sabbath Day Point - Merit Award.

Most Improved - Mr. and Mrs. Albert W. Lawrence, Island Harbor - Merit Award.

Most Beautiful and well kept commercial property - Cape Cod Village - Merit Award.

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LAKE GEORGE WATER LEVEL

From a low point in mid-winter to a high point in late spring, the water level of Lake George fluctuates no more than 18 inches. Measurements are taken daily at the Rogers Rock Gauge which is located in Heart's Bay immediately north of the Rogers Rock State campsite.

The zero datum of the gauge is 315.93 feet above mean sea level and the level of the lake is reported as a certain number of feet above this zero datum. The normal range is between 2.5 and 4.0 feet above the datum of 315.93 feet. Stated differently, the level of the lake fluctuates between 318.43 and 319.93 feet above mean sea level.

The level of the lake is controlled by the dam at Ticonderoga which has the capacity to lower the level one inch in 24 hours. However, the capacity of the watershed to add water to the lake, greatly exceeds the capacity of the dam to discharge it. For example, one inch of run off can raise the level of the lake by 5.3 inches in ten hours while it takes almost a week to lower the level by the same amount.

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CYRUS H. WOODBURY RETIRES

Perhaps no single individual has contributed more to the cleanliness of Lake George's waters than Cy Woodbury who for more than twenty years enforced sewage disposal regulations of the State Health Department and the Lake George Commission in the Lake George Park. In addition to these activities, Cy spoke out on many issues, the most recent being the leading role he has taken in acquainting the community with the threatened dangers to the purity of lake waters by reason of the transfer of jurisdiction over the lake to the

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Although retired, we can be sure that Cy will continue to speak out on any issue affecting Lake George.

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HAGUE ARTS FAIR

More than thirty individuals and organizations exhibited their wares at the Third Annual Arts Fair on August 2nd. Although it was probably the hottest day of the summer, the fair was well attended. Many who came to the beach to cool off wandered around and took in the displays of arts and crafts. The ten additional canopies supplied by the town provided some shade and comfort to the exhibitors.

This year's committee included Adra Seerup, Chairman; Sharon Meola, Marion Frasier, Margaret Nielson, and Clifford Decker. Hopefully they will be around next year for the Fourth Annual Arts Fair.

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1975-76 SCHOOL TAXES

Mr. Meola has announced that the amount to be raised by property taxes in the 1975-76 school year for school purposes has been fixed at \$340,721. This represents an increase over last year of \$28,142. The tax rate will be \$15.61 per \$1000. of assessed value on property located in Hague and \$97.05 on Ticonderoga property located in the Hague School District. The increase in the Hague rate is \$1.06. Bills will be out shortly and payment without penalty can be made any time during September.

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TOWN BOARD MEETING

A regular meeting of the Town Board was held on August 12 with all members present.

At a special meeting of the Board on July 28th, bids were opened for the proposed new tractor to be used

at the landfill. A low bid of \$24000 was accepted for a John Deere tractor with accessories. The Board announced that the purchase would be financed with \$10,000. from Federal revenue sharing funds and \$4,000. from the highway equipment fund. The balance of \$10,000. will be obtained from the sale of bonds to be paid for over the next two years.

A delegation of Silver Bay residents appeared before the Board and proposed a reduction of the speed limit on the Silver Bay Road to 15 miles per hour. The group pointed out that the condition of the road and the use of the road by many pedestrians, warranted a reduction in the speed limit. A particular point was made that the Adirondack Trailway's buses were consistently being operated at more than a safe speed.

The Board pointed out that any change in the posted speed limits would have to be approved by the State Department of Transportation before the Town could make the change and the group was urged to present a petition urging the change to both the town and the state.

The delegation also urged the adoption of some system of identifying articles of value so as to provide positive identification in case property was stolen and later recovered. Such a system would also be helpful in the prosecution of persons responsible for the thefts. The Board agreed to study the proposal.

A delegation of Sabbath Day residents next appeared before the Board in an endeavor to reach an agreement as to location of the roadway at the south end of Sabbath Day Point. Several proposals have been discussed and a final settlement appears imminent.

Ida Jordon was appointed custodian of the Town Hall to replace Shirley Bly who resigned last month.

The supervisor announced the appointment of the following to the committee which will study the park and matters relating to it: James

Fitzgerald, Chairman; Jack Henry, Marian Frasier, Bernard Clifton, Barbara Fitzgerald and Marge Burgey.

The superintendent of highways announced that a federal grant of four million dollars has been made to the state for highway purposes and that \$70,000. has been earmarked for Warren County. A part of this will filter down to the town.

An inspection of the town beach was made recently by the State Department of Health and the town was urged to provide a lifeguard and a life preserver with an adequate rope attached.

Black topping this summer will include the Sabbath Day road from the northern entrance from 9N to the Young residence, about a half mile and about two-tenths of a mile of Sunset Drive. Some roadwork will also be done on Decker Hill Road.

With the assistance of the State Highway Department, the area for the proposed ski-tow is being cleared and work on the tow itself should begin early in the fall.

Officer Streeter reported that as of date he had received 336 calls for assistance, 31 citations were issued, \$1700. in stolen property has been recovered, that six break-ins were reported, and that in 23 instances he provided assistance to the Sheriff's office. He indicated that more police help was needed. The Board adopted his recommendation and gave the necessary authorization.

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SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Apparently the School Board and Town Board have come to an agreement on the use of the town garage by the school buses. Rent will be paid by the school board beginning September at the annual rate of \$1000.

Schedule of fees proposed to be paid for officiating girls varsity and junior varsity sports in the Marcy League was rejected.

The Board approved the conditions established by the Federal Government for providing free lunches. The government contributes 52.5¢ for each free lunch provided; the state provides 13.75¢ for all other lunches. The cost to the school for each lunch is estimated at 64 to 65¢. Students pay 25¢.

The president of the board announced that she would attend the school board president's workshop at Albany on September 12-13.

Mr. Meola announced that beginning this September the 7th and 8th grade classes would be consolidated for all subjects. The combined groups would be divided into two with one designated the fast learning group and the other the slow learning group. As an example, he advised that American history is an 8th grade requirement while New York State history is taught in the seventh grade. Accordingly, this year only American History will be taught and next year only New York State History will be taught.

Mr. Meola announced that preliminary plans have been drawn to provide foreign language study for a limited group of grade school students beginning with the second grade. If the plan materializes, Italian will be taught in the first year.

A new home economics and reading teacher is being sought for the next term.

The Board approved the request of Bernard and Anna Denno for bus transportation for two of their children to St. Mary's at Ticonderoga. The requirement that applications for transportation be made before April 15 was waived since no additional costs would be incurred in transporting the Denno children.

The president announced the appointment of the following Board committees -

Building and grounds - May and Bly
Personnel - Fitzgerald and Belden
Transportation - May and Bly

