

Address to the Chautauqua County Historical Society on August 1, 1992

Lee Towne Adams, County Judge

One of the many delights of London is the historical plaque placed in many buildings in which eminent men and women of the past have lived and worked. Many people of this county have made a mark on society. Many have been forgotten. Some have not. I propose that this society do something like what the British do. For instance, the house still stands where George Abbott, one of the great theatrical producers and playwrights of this century was born. Oldtimers here will recall George Abbott's Follies and his many other productions. The house is on Walnut Street in Forestville.

I do not intend to speak of famous celebrities such as the late Lucille Ball. Jamestown recognizes and celebrates her every year. Nor do I intend to speak at length about Robert Jackson, Solicitor General of the United States, Attorney General, Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes trials. His picture hangs in the County Courtroom where he tried so many cases before he went to Washington in 1933. He grew up in Frewsburg and practiced law in Jamestown. Shouldn't some notice of these facts be made by those communities?

Another person from the Town of Carroll who went to Washington was Reuben Fenton, born in Carroll July 11, 1819, educated at Fredonia Academy, Supervisor of Carroll in 1843, Congressman in 1857-1865, Governor in 1865-1869, and Senator in 1869-1875.

Daniel A. Reed was born in Sheridan. A graduate of Silver Creek High School, he went to Cornell, and to Cornell Law School. Whilst in college, he played football under Glenn (Pop) Warner from nearby Springville. (Pop Warner coached whilst he was studying law.) Whilst in law school, Dan

Reed did the same. He coached the Cornell team, and even after he had started to practice law in Dunkirk, he went back to Cornell for eleven years as head coach each fall. He was our congressman for forty years, and became Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. His successor, Charles Goodell of Jamestown, was appointed Senator by Governor Rockefeller and served as such for two years. He should have a plaque.

Roger Tory Peterson of Jamestown has a monument. He is, of course, known throughout North America for his wonderful paintings of birds, his field guides to the birds of the continent, and his ^{ornithology} anthology. More people today, though, read Brad Anderson than read Peterson's books. Some of you read and enjoyed him this morning. He draws and writes the cartoon strip "Marmaduke". He started that strip for the Brocton High School paper when he was growing up there.

Of course, most Chautauquans had to leave Chautauqua to become well known. Several played heroic parts in the Civil War. On the second day at Gettysburg, the Confederates had broken through and were advancing to the heart of Cemetery Ridge. General Hancock looked for men to throw in and stem this advancing brigade. "My God!" he said "are these all of the men we have here? What regiment is this?" First Minnesota was the reply. Hancock ordered that regiment of 262 officers and enlisted men to stop the Confederate advance. The tiny regiment charged one whole brigade and part of another and fought them to a standstill for fifteen minutes. At the end of those fifteen minutes, 215 men of the regiment had fallen, including their colonel, William Colvill, Jr. who was born in the Town of Hanover and grew up in Forestville before he moved to Minnesota as a young man. He deserves a memorial there.

In May of 1864 coastal North Carolina was in the hands of Union forces. In that month a Confederate ram, the Albemarle, appeared. She enabled the Confederates to retake Plymouth. She played havoc in the sound and threatened to reopen North Carolina to blockade runners. But on October 27 a thirty foot long launch steamed up the Roanoke River passing within thirty feet of enemy pickets and got to Plymouth where the ram was tied up to a wharf. Then, through fierce fire, the little launch charged at a circle of floating logs boomed well out from the Albemarle's side. The launch went up and over with its intrepid commander standing in the bow manipulating a spar with a mine attached. Although his clothing was perforated with bullets, he maneuvered the spar under the ram with one hand, detached the mine from the spar with the other, and when it had floated up against the ram's bottom, pulled a second line and detonated it. He was blown in the water, but swam, crawled and waded the many miles back to safety through enemy infested territory. The commander of the little launch was William B. Cushing of Fredonia, whose grandfather was the first county judge. Commander Cushing's last surviving daughter died in 1960, a lifelong resident of Fredonia.

The deadliest battle in the Civil War was at Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864. The Confederate army of Tennessee, under John Bell Hood, attacked and attacked again the Union Army of the Ohio entrenched there. Eight Confederate General Officers were killed leading their troops. In proportion to the number of men involved, that five-hour battle resulted in more casualties than the two days at Shiloh. The Union general commanding was Major General John McAllister Schofield, the son of a Baptist minister. General Schofield was born in the Town of Gerry on September 29, 1831. His father was minister of the Sinclairville Baptist Church until he moved with

his family to Illinois in 1843. General Schofield was graduated from West Point and served with distinction throughout the war. Before becoming commanding officer of the XXIII Corps and the Army and Department of the Ohio, he had been commander of the Department of Missouri. Secretary of War from April of 1868 through March of '69, he remained in the army and upon the death of General Sheridan became Commanding General of the Army of the United States. He retired in 1895 a lieutenant general, the third person in the history of the country to hold that rank. He should be memorialized in Sinclairville. I include here the figures for Franklin, 26,000 men with 1750 killed and 4500 wounded; and at Shiloh, 40,000 men with 1723 killed and 8012 wounded--these are the Confederate figures.

A monument does memorialize Sinclairville's other famous son, but only in the cemetery where his remains are interred. Most people here are too young to have memories of Felix Frankfurter and his happy hotdogs, otherwise known as Franklin Roosevelt's braintrust, his kitchen cabinet. The leading economist amongst the professors and intellectuals who were the ideological creators of the New Deal was Rexford Guy Tugwell, born July 10, 1891 in Sinclairville. B.S. and Ph.D. Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, professor at Columbia University, he was installed in Washington first as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, then as Under-Secretary under Henry Wallace. He drafted the Agricultural Administration Act. His real role, however, was to be the economic advisor of President Roosevelt. In that capacity he advocated using the Federal Government not merely as a bureaucratic regulator, but as the only ^{central} ~~control~~ institution capable of establishing national economic goals, organizing national resources, and achieving those objectives. Thus he was considerably to the left

of most New Deal economists and most of his countrymen, mainly because of his willingness--actually his enthusiasm--for using the Federal Government as the major vehicle for economic and social change.

Whilst Professor Tugwell's name is known to few people today, he was a major instrument, for good, or ill, in the shaping of this country.

A contemporary of Professor Tugwell had absolutely no effect upon the economic or social history of this country, but his name was known to far more people. He held the record for the most strikeouts by a pitcher in a World Series game for forty years. Howard (Bob) Ehmke from Silver Creek pitched that game for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1929.

Silver Creek also produced the outstanding contemporary authority on Colonial Justice systems. A respected author, his books on Colonial America are required reading in college History courses. He just recently died, in Ohio where he had been Chairman of the History Department at Ohio State. His name was Bradley Chapin, PhD. Cornell, onetime Dean of University College, U.B.

Hanging in the Chautauqua County Courtroom is a picture of the second Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Texas, 1838, John Birdsall. At one time he was a Circuit Court Judge, 8th District of New York State, 1826. I know nothing more about him. The Dictionary of American Biography and the Encyclopedia of American Biography are silent.

I have not talked about the industrialists and inventors such as Mr. Welch once of Massachusetts, then of Westfield. That is for someone else at some other time. But I use this sentence as a leadin for my concluding remarks. Not all the wellknown people associated with our county left it. Some moved in.

Donald Mackenzie was born in Scotland in 1783. Although educated for the ministry, he came to North America in 1800 and entered the fur trade--where he

had an "in", for he was a brother of Roderick Mackenzie of the Northwest Company and a first cousin of Alexander ^{Mackenzie} Mack, the famous explorer. After ten years with the Northwest Company, he entered into a partnership with an American named John Jacob Astor. Mackenzie was the actual founder of Astoria. The War of 1812 interfered with the partners' business and all sold out in 1814. Mackenzie went back with the Northwest Company and remained with the company after it had been merged into the Hudson Bay Company. In 1824 he became the Governor of the Red River Territory. He remained with the Bay until 1836 when he retired to Mayville "where", the Dictionary of American Biography says "he had an estate." He actually bought up huge chunks of land in the county, some of which remain with his descendants at this date. He died here in 1851.

Another transplant to Mayville was Albion Winegar Tourgee. Born in Ohio May 21, 1838, he was educated at the University of Rochester and enlisted in the 27th N.Y. Severely wounded at Bull Run, he was invalided out, but in July of '62 was commissioned Lieutenant in the 105th Ohio. He was wounded again at Perryville, captured at Stone's River, exchanged after four months and fought at Chattanooga. He was released from the Army at the end of 1863 and he studied law. After the war, he settled in Greensboro, North Carolina where he became a leading Republican politician. Elected a Superior Court Judge, he served for six years, and prepared the Code of Civil Procedure for North Carolina. Peripatetic he lived in Denver and Chicago before buying a house in Mayville in 1881. Tourgee wrote many romantic novels, at least one with a Chautauqua setting. The novels are not great but he is remembered for one book, A Fool's Errand by One of the Fools, the first novel with a Reconstruction setting. Only half fictitious, the book presents

a startling firsthand account of the turbulent years in the South after the Civil War. The Raleigh, North Carolina Observer reviewer wrote of it that "it is a powerfully written work and destined, we fear, to do as much harm in the world as Uncle Tom's Cabin to which it is, indeed, a companion piece!" Tourgee died, a resident of Mayville, on May 21, 1905.

President Millard Fillmore had a Chautauqua connection. Whilst a Buffalo lawyer, he was one of the developers of Dunkirk. He, like the builders of the Erie Railway, thought that Dunkirk with its natural harbor would become the Eastern terminus of Great Lakes travel. Unfortunately, ships grew too large and the harbor is too shallow. We must also remember that Thomas Alva Edison summered at Chautauqua Institution for years.

The last emigrant whom we should recognize is buried at Bemus Point. Bainbridge Colby was born in 1869 and died in Bemus April 1950. From March of 1920 through March of 1921 he was the Secretary of State of the United States. A strong supporter of President Wilson's League of Nations, he also was a precursor of the Good Neighbor Policy in the Western Hemisphere.

I do not pretend that this has been exhaustive, although undoubtedly it has been too long and has probably exhausted you. However, I do believe that this Society should encourage the municipalities of the County to memorialize those people with connections to the municipality, perhaps in the way the British do. Also, we should add to the library, in the McClurg Mansion, whenever possible, works by Chautauqua authors.

Thank you.



COUNTY COURT CHAMBERS
CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
MAYVILLE, NEW YORK 14757

LEE TOWNE ADAMS
COUNTY JUDGE

August 6, 1992

Mrs. Virginia Barden
East Lake Road
Ripley, New York 14775

Mr. Henry Weiler
County Clerk
Mayville, New York 14757

Dear Friends:

His Honor took a typed copy of his speech home with him last night.

This morning he tells me (after my careful proof-reading) that he found three errors. So if you would correct them, I would appreciate it very much. I take partial blame—it's a toss-up between his handwriting, his shorthand and my typing!

On page 2 anthology should be ornithology

On page 4, 3rd line from bottom, central
should be control → *Central*

On page 6, 2nd line from top, ~~Ma~~ should
be Mackenzie

Sincerely,

Mildred L. Becker