

Patchwork: West Potsdam Area News

BY MARY ANN MILLER
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It seems my lack of knowledge about poetry and authors has caused to start this week's "Patchwork" with an apology to Alfred Lord Tennyson. It was he who wrote the words for last week's poem, "Ring Out the Old, Ring In the New." Last week's work was excerpted from Section 106 of Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

Blood Clinics! There is one Tuesday at Potsdam State and I think that it may

last more than one day. A second blood clinic will be held Feb. 5, a Tuesday. It will be held at the Presbyterian Center in Potsdam. The hours are from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. This second clinic will be sponsored by the Racket River Lodge, the Amber Lodge, the High Falls Lodge, and the What Cheer Lodge.

Last week I mentioned that Earl Pattison had left a list of former area residents and their occupations in 1888-1890. I printed the list he gave me and as I did I wondered where these people had

lived. Had a chat with Mildred Pierce and Mildred did her best to bring the list up to date. The first mentioned was J.W. Caldwell, who was a blacksmith. He lived where Ron and Ardie Richardson now live and his shop was where the firehouse now stands. Charles Evans was a veterinary surgeon and he lived where Howard and Helen Dygert now live and then moved to where Chick and Bert Norton now live. Truman Evans was also a veterinary surgeon and lived where the Paul and Roberta farm is

now. Louis Grant was a boot and shoe maker and he lived where Kay Thompson now lives. William H. Lewis was a justice of the peace and he lived in what is known now as the Guy and Amy Blanchard house on the corner of Blanchard Road and County Road 108. L.W. Owen was a wagon and boat maker and he lived on Moore's Hill. Mildred thought maybe in Harold and Amy Wilson's home. John Orr had a blacksmith and wagon shop and lived where Leon and Judy Cyrus now live. P. Simmons was postmaster and general

stock dealer and he had the store that turned out to be next to Fred Henderson's home. C.J. Wires had a machine shop and cider mill and lived where the Clyde Layaw family now lives.

Having mentioned a bit of the past, it would seem a good time to also mention that Ron Richardson has his bear skin and head mounted over the door in the store. Beneath that is the gun that was made by Roswell Cook who also was a blacksmith and had also at one time lived in what is now the Richardson

home. The bear skin is remains of a bear Ron got while hunting last year. The skin was tanned by a man in Ogdensburg.

Beulah Pierce's mother, Sadie Mott of Massena, is in the Massena Memorial Hospital. Beulah and husband Kenneth have spent the last week in Massena to be near Sadie.

The weather must be mentioned. Sad to say, we now have snow. There isn't much, but as of Tuesday there has been enough to call things white. Tuesday the white flakes came down rather gently, but didn't act so gently when hitting the pavement. Many accidents were reported that day and early evening. Locally, Bill LaBarge slid off the road and did some damage to his car, but he was alright. Jan. 23, we did have snow, but the temperatures had not yet taken the plunge to the zero area. The nice clear day made for another unusual happening concerning the weather. Gerald and Mildred Pierce have a sun porch, which does have heat, but only if you turn it on. Mildred didn't turn it on and found that sun had so warmed the room that she and Gerald ate their lunch on the porch. Solar heat works!

A grand event went by and I never noticed. I'm ashamed. Gene Ashley celebrated his 91st birthday on Jan. 11! Daughter Bert managed to get a cake made for the special occasion and the birthday was celebrated with much of the family filling the house. I stopped recently for a quick chat with Gene and I heard all about the party and the tons of gifts. With a gleam in his eye and a sly smile on his face he told me he even got a dog. Naturally, I wanted to see his dog and so asked where it was. Well, Gene got a dog alright, and it's the cutest ceramic dog. The dog was made for Gene by a granddaughter. The dog has no name yet, but he's quite large and lies under the telephone stand quite comfortably.

Also, had a chat with Gene's daughter and nearest neighbor, Bert Norton. Bert is still on sick leave with her arm still in a sling. Bert works at the library at St. Lawrence University. She developed problems with her right arm and was in great pain. Doctor has told her to not use it and so Bert is sitting out the time out in a frustrated way. She's right handed and can't even write letters to her daughters. She mentioned that husband Chick has an ear infection that is giving him great pain. Hang in there, Nortons, it has to get better.

JoAnn Winters says that the hockey in the family has made winter move along. Neither of us care for this cold we've had for the last day or so. But JoAnn said her mother, Marion Farmer, called from Zephyr Hills, Fla. and said it was chilly there, so maybe it's cold all over. Russell Farmer suffered a heart attack recently and is hospitalized. JoAnn mentioned he was holding his own now.

Talked with Sheila Freidel. Those strips of tape on her incision have been removed. Daughter Mary Jo did it for her. The healing looks good. And Sheila is feeling more like her old self. She will return to work Monday.

Last Thursday, the day that I wrote this, was a long day for a great many people. It was a Thursday that many will remember for some time. It all started about 3 a.m. when the fire call came over the home receivers reporting a fire at Thomaris's on Market Street in Potsdam. My thermometer said it was seven degrees below zero. Events moved fast after the call came in. Potsdam called for all kinds of outside help. At 3:15 a.m. I looked out and our firehouse lights were on. Spencer Blanchard had everything ready in case West Potsdam was called. The call from for West Potsdam at 5 a.m. I think half of this corner of the world lay awake listening to their home receivers. Many of those lying there were already dressed. Spencer and Charlie were two who were there before the siren went off. I called Jenary Wright and she said David had heard the call at three and he paced around waiting. Well over 20 men responded to the call from our department. Four men were standing by at our firehouse. Fred Henderson, Paul Bonno, Steve Bowen and Rodney Frary began to get hungry and borrowed an electric fryer pan. They cooked some bacon and eggs and waited. The men at the scene of the fire were also fed. Buckets of sandwiches were made up along with boxes of cookies and delivered to the scene. Jenary Wright and I drove the food in. The traffic was well handled. Anyone having to drive through Potsdam knows what a horror trying to drive can be. With the traffic controlled, it ran most smoothly. Great job of emergency control. We managed to find our truck and park fairly nearby. The wind was piercing cold and as I entered the emergency truck. Men with ice a half-inch thick or thicker on raincoats and three or four inches of ice on their helmets stood trying to shake the cold. They took turns warming and thawing. They cracked and tinkled when they waked with the frozen ice being jarred at each step they took. Fire trucks stood with ice so thick that an artist or even a cake decorator would envy the job done by the ice.

By now we know the results of the fire. As I typed this I wondered how many men were still thawing hoses and making repairs or maintaining equipment. I'm thinking about the cleanup in the town and the rebuilding of losses. It was a long day for many and will be even longer for others.

I recall how nice it was to enter a warm emergency truck. I well remember in the past that we tried to serve coffee and refreshments to men that had no heated vehicle to warm in. The old trucks did what they were designed to do, but this new truck is a real treat. Another thing, with the old trucks I'd always pour a cup of coffee or something similar and stand up and hit my head on a hanging helmet, or extra hanging raincoats were always in the way. In this case the memories are great and I like even more the progress the men have made in gaining new equipment.

A big happy very belated birthday to Gene Ashley!

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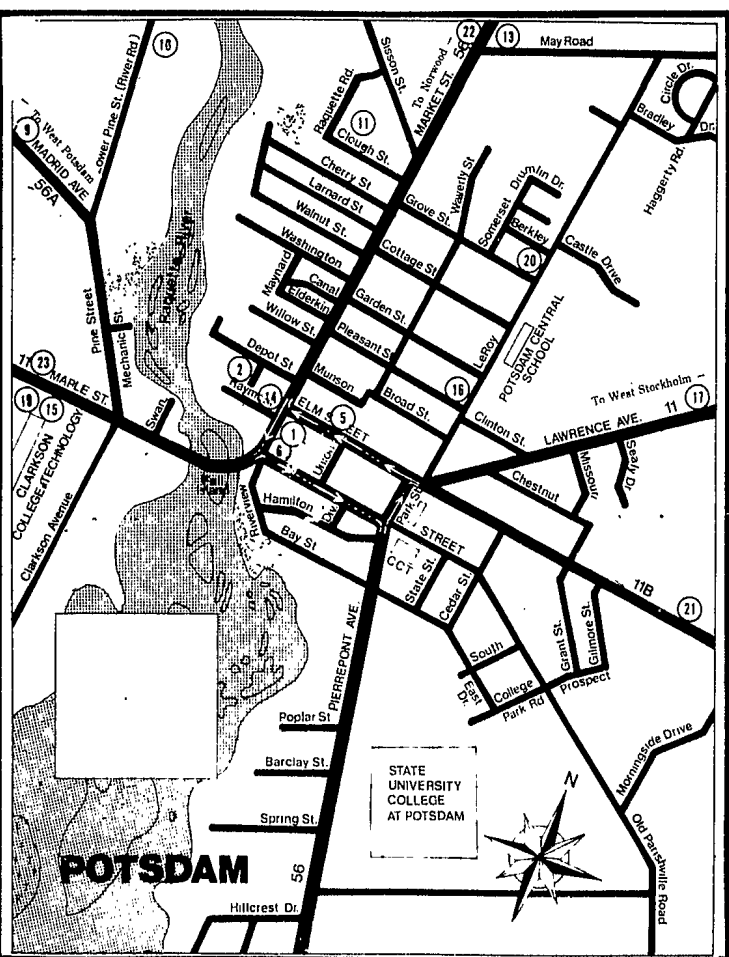
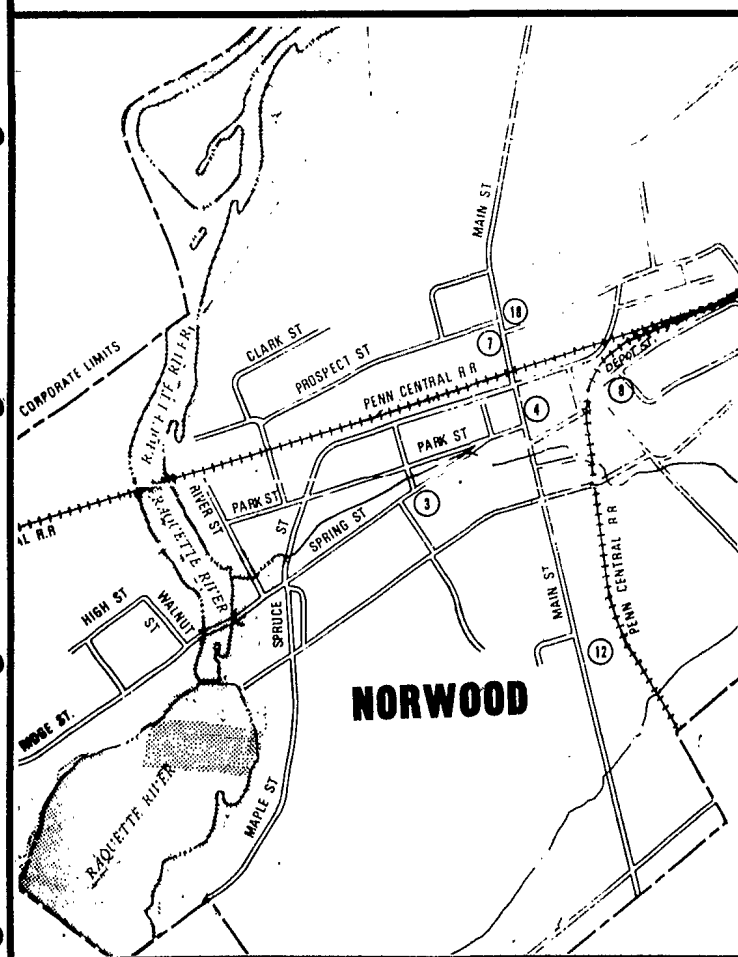
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