

Glimpses of the past. . .

J+K
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Two abandoned houses stand at the foot of Chase's Lake, lonely testimony of a thriving village that once was part of a lumbering and tannic acid operation. Visitors seldom realize now, as they turn into the lake resort area, that they are in the midst of what once was a community with a commercialized forest industry, a harnessea stream, and a thriving industry. Such, however, was Chase's Lake in the late 1800's when LeRoy Crawford directed one of the most active and unique plants up the Black River Valley.

Doubtless conceived as a tannery, growth of the tanning process in larger communities and the abundant tanbark available in the then primeval forest, may have prompted Crawford in his venture. He laid plans for a dual business, which for many years proved highly successful.

Stripped of bark, trees

were converted into timber and shipped by the Black River Canal System. But the principal and most interesting phase of the undertaking was the conversion of the bark to tannic acid extract. The acid was sold mainly to Boston.

Crawford's business divided itself into three units. First was the timbering and peeling operations carried out by the lumbering force in the surrounding forest. The acid plant was by itself with vats for leaching and retorts, for boiling down the acid. The saw mill stood by itself on the Independence River, converting the logs to timbers and lumber.

Lumbering operations had preceded Mr. Crawford. Isaac Purser, one of the pioneers into Watson Township, had acquired a large tract from James Talcott of Watson for whom he erected a saw mill near the lake. The Puffer family for several years formed the only inhabi-

tants of the town. A son, Ebenezer Puffer, became

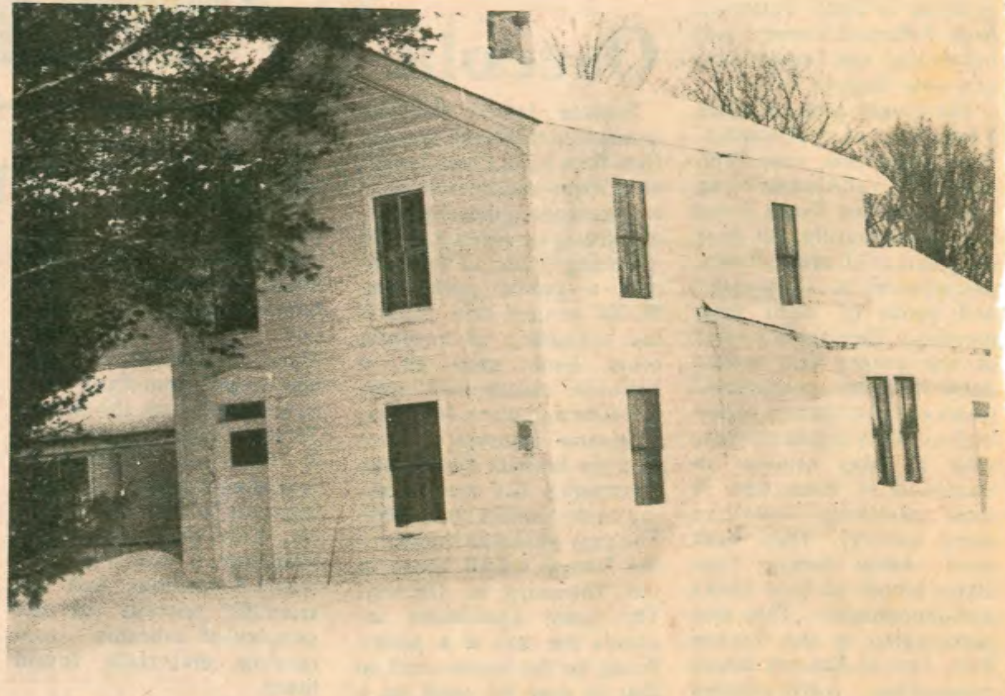
famed locally as a hunter. Forty seven wolves, including five blacks, fell to his prowess as a marksman.

After abandonment of the canal, shipments from Chase's Lake were made by railroad from Glenfield. Business dwindled, however,

when acid began coming from South America at a cheaper price and many years ago the plants and most of the homes were abandoned. At one time, Chase's Lake had a post office in its busiest years, plus two stores, a hotel, and

a school. The hotel burned during the management of Proprietor Platt.

LeRoy Crawford had a large residence, which is one of the only original buildings left to recall when Chase's Lake was a village mecca for lumbermen and a tannic acid industry.



FORMER CRAWFORD HOME - This home still stands along the Chase's Lake Road across from the

entrance to the Chase's Lake Resort. It was the original family home of LeRoy Crawford.

Watch for next week's JOURNAL Survey from the Recreation Alternatives Committee of the Lowville Task Force on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. . .

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From: Mrs. John (Florence) ^{Wm}
Historian, Town of Lowell
Chase's Lake Then And Now

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Town of Watson
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Lumbering and Tannic Acid Operations Once Prevailed.

Chase's Lake June 4, 1936 Visitors to this popular resort, enjoying its wild scenery and the quiet of its woodland spaces, hardly realizes that a village once stood near the foot of the lake, the forest commercialized, the stream harnessed and industry thriving. Such, however, was Chase's Lake of a generation ago, when LeRoy Crawford directed one of the most active and unique plants up the Black River valley.

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LeRoy Crawford had a large residence, which is one of less than a half dozen original buildings remaining to recall when Chase's Lake was a village, mecca for lumbermen and home of one of the few manufacturers of tannic acid in the state.

(Journal and Republican.

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