

ISCHUA VALLEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MACHIAS' GLORIOUS JULY 4TH CELEBRATED IN 1835

In the days of her pristine strength and while the doughty pioneers were still with us and before high living had hardened our arteries and age had cooled our blood, Machias had many times carried off celebrations worthy of both the occasion and the enthusiastic young village.

The musty annals of the Old Town contain an account of a celebration which took place here in Machias on July 4th, 1835, one hundred years ago, when the infant town was but 8 years of age. As we are not likely to be called on to describe an observance of the Glorious Fourth of July by Machias this year, we recall a few of the incidents of that day which may prove interesting to our readers.

The President of the Day was Col. Peter Ten Broeck, the valiant commander of the 173rd Regiment of the Militia and one of the most extensive farmers of the county. Afterwards he was the founder of the Ten Broeck Free Academy. The procession was formed in front of the hotel of Ebenezer Reed which stood about where the garage belonging to the M.B. Field house stands.

The Marshall of the Day was Col. Jeremiah Bennett, who erected the old hotel building near the B.R. & P. railroad tressle which was destroyed by fire years ago. The immortal Declaration was read by Lyman Tromley, who clerked for Holmes and Washburn. He was the town clerk at the time and afterwards became Supervisor, Justice of the Peace and one of the town's most prominent citizens for many years.

A powerful oration was delivered by Josiah S. Masters, the attorney of the village. Masters was a man of ability and talent, but was addicted to strong drink, a habit which finally gained complete control over him and affected his ruin. At the close of the program, a national salute of 13 guns was fired from a large brass field piece, which saw service during many bloody contests of the Revolution.

Afterward a banquet was served to upwards of 300 persons by host Reed, and a large number of patriotic toasts were given amid enthusiastic cheers. Many were volunteer toasts such as "Martin Van Buren, scholar, patriot and statesman," by Col. Ten Broeck; "Richard M. Johnson, the hero of the Thames" by Judge Israel Day of Ellicottville; "General Lafayette," by Oliver Hubbard, who built the second sawmill in town; and "Our forefathers, who fought, bled and died for the liberty we enjoy," by Robert H. Shankland, who owned a newspaper in Ellicottville. The best perhaps was that of Lyman Tromley "Political factions, may they be wholly dissolved and a spirit of '76 bloom in their stead, in the bosom of every true American."

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It was estimated that upwards of 1,000 persons were present at this celebration of the National Holiday, coming from all over the county. This was a remarkable attendance when it is recalled that the population of the county was about 25,000 at that time. It is also considered that railroads and automobiles were conspicuous by their absence and the commonest means of transportation was by heavy wagon and ox team.

But the businessmen of Machias in those days were patriotic, public spirited, open hearted, energetic, united, up-to-date, full to the brim of pep and ginger and jealous for the good name of the town.

~ Taken from the MACHIAS SENTINEL, July 4th, 1935 and submitted by William Watkins, Deputy Historian for the Town of Machias.