

Maple Traditions Scenic Byway

Regional & Local Histories of the Byway Area

Introduction

This section provides a basic historical overview of the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway region and the Byway communities located in Lewis County and St. Lawrence County.

Towns and villages are addressed in the order they would be experienced by a traveler starting in Lowville and heading north to Ogdensburg. The locales along the touring loop from Ogdensburg through Canton and back to Gouverneur are also included.

Lewis County

The area known today as Lewis County was formed on March 28, 1805 by Governor Morgan Lewis from Oneida County. According to archeological investigation, human occupation in the Black River Valley extends back at least 10,000 years. In this territory of the Oneida Nation, indigenous populations found an abundant supply of opportunities for fishing and hunting. The Oneida ceded the area to New York State by the Treaty of Fort Schuyler in 1788 and was then sold in 1791 as part of the Macomb Purchase. Settlements were slow to grow until the construction of the Black River Canal System was completed in 1855 as part of the Rome to Carthage waterway transportation route. A 35-mile stretch, the canal served as a feeder route to the Erie Canal System and opened the “North Country” to trade and commerce. Comprised of 109 locks, the canal was abandoned in 1926 giving way to the railroad and automobile.

The first attempt at settlement in the densely forested area was made by French aristocrats fleeing the French Revolution. The efforts failed when the settlers found they could not tolerate the wilderness and cold winters. The French aristocrats were followed by European immigrants from Ireland, France, Wales, Germany and Switzerland who were attracted to the abundant supply of natural resources and a dream of prosperity. They engaged in the primary industries of logging and tanneries through the 1800’s. By the late 1800’s, easy access to water power and a plentiful supply of wood, logging and paper making became important industries to the area. Next, the clearing of forests lands made way for the planting of crops and the beginning of dairy farms thus launching the agricultural industry which remains a major economic contributor today.

Despite Lewis Co’s large expanse of forested land and rugged terrain, about 60% of its area was occupied by 4,124 farms in 1875. Currently only about 22 % of the land is utilized for farming. Today, dairy farming is a primary industry concentrated in the Black River Valley with a part of its production serving the kosher market in New York City. In recent years several Amish farmers have moved into the area. This religious order is separate from the long-established Mennonites elsewhere in the county.

The 20th century Lewis Co continued to maintain a significant industrial sector which included: furniture made in Castorland, Glenfield and Lowville from 1905 to 1931; Lowville products included cardboard boxes, imitation leather, bowling pins, and cream cheese. Today, few industries remain. Wood and other forest products continue to be harvested. Manufacturers included Burrows Paper Corp, Kraft (cream cheese), Climax (boxes), AMF (bowling pins, flooring), Fibermark (paperboard),

Otis Technology (gun-cleaning products), Harrisville Dry Kiln, Viking Cives (snowplows), and Interface Solutions (gaskets).

The tourism industry in Lewis County began to grow early on as vacationers were attracted to several of its lakes. During the 19th century visitors frequented area hotels such as the Fenton House (1826) at Number Four, Brantingham Inn, the Lowville Mineral Springs House (1872), and Forest Home and the Hermitage Hotel at Lake Bonaparte. Winter sports became significant soon after World War II. Since the Tug Hill Plateau has the highest annual average snowfall east of the Rockies, Turin was selected as site for the Snow Ridge Ski Area in 1945 and the Swiss Ski School. Winter recreation grew throughout the rest of the county in the 1960s with the rise of snowmobiling. Lewis County today continues to grow in popularity as a major snowmobile destination.

Over the course of the county's history, residents, businessmen/women and interested parties participated in the nation's struggle to identify itself. Men and women fought in wars – i.e. Revolutionary War of 1812, American Civil War, World Wars, etc. Early women pioneer/s & travelers forged the way for the suffrage right movement to advance equal rights for women in New York during the mid-late 1800's and Black slaves seeking freedom traveled north to safety via the Underground Railroad.

Rich in history and intertwined with the 17 towns and 9 incorporated villages, the county continues to emulate its roots through local events, historic preservation of buildings and monuments, a continuing agriculture-based economy, and the promotion of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Town of Lowville

Part of the Black River tract divided on August 11, 1796, when Nicholas Low acquired property by drawing lots 2, 7, and 11. Lot 11 which is known today as the Town of Lowville (Lot 2 is known today as Watertown and Lot # 7 is known today as Adams) was first settled in 1798 by a company from Westfield, Massachusetts. The town was formed by virtue of an act of the New York State Legislature on March 14, 1800 and is named after, Nicholas Low, a Revolutionary War Patriot and prominent businessman. Early French and European settlers were first attracted to the area to begin dairy farming in the rich soil of the Black River Flats. Construction of the Black River Canal began in 1851 opening up trade corridors to commercial markets thus supporting local Lowville businesses.

The Utica and Black River Railroad reached Lewis County in 1867 and went on to Carthage in 1871. The Lowville and Beaver River Railroad was completed to Croghan in 1906 providing a much needed transportation system for the paper mills and farmers. Opportunities for business and industries in Lowville flourished – i.e. the Asbestos Burial Casket Company (1885-1955), J. E. Haberer Furniture Co. (1905-31), Payne-Jones/Pajco (1935; imitation leather for books and US passports), AMF (1957; bowling pins), Kraft (1965), the largest cream cheese plant in the country, and Climax (1980; cardboard boxes). In 2008, Lowville is the site of the county offices, fairgrounds, a general hospital, and a shopping mall serving the county.

Village of Lowville

Incorporated in 1854, the village is named after the town and early land owner Nicholas Low. Located in the north central part of the Lewis County, the village serves as home to the County Seat which was moved from the Town of Martinsburg in March 10, 1864. In 1894, Susan B. Anthony,

central figure in the suffrage right movement and life-long advocate for equal rights for women, spoke to an audience of women and supporters on the history of women suffrage to encourage support for legislative action at the local Methodist Church. In honor of the 2500 men from Lewis County who served in the Civil War, the Guilford D. Bailey GAR Post #200 dedicated the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Memorial on July 4, 1883, donating it to the citizens of Lewis County. The memorial lists the service of Joseph Dievendorf, an African American from the Town of Harrisburg, in the 97th New York Volunteers Regiment, two years before Abraham Lincoln authorized the service of African Americans.

Town of New Bremen:

The Town of New Bremen was named after the German city of Bremen and was first settled around 1798. New Bremen was delineated in an 1826 survey of the Towns of Croghan and Watson in 1826 by Charles Dayan. The town received its charter in 1848. The Hamlet of New Bremen was originally called Dayansville and is located in the western part of the town. A restored water-powered grist mill stands beside Crystal Creek. The mill is privately owned.

Town of Croghan:

The Town of Croghan was formed in 1841 availing itself to the Black River's abundant supply of wood thus supporting its primary industries of logging, tanning, and the paper making. Named after George Croghan, a hero in the War of 1812 recognized for his defense of Fort Stephenson, the town grew slowly until completion of the Black River Canal, which opened trade & commerce markets. Comprised of rich farmlands, forests and swamps, a small section of the town lies within the Adirondack Park. The Indian, Oswegatchie, and Beaver Rivers flow through this township with the Black River bordering part of the town. As with neighboring communities, early settlers were attracted to the rich farmland and natural resource of the rivers to power mills, factories and industry. Farming and the production of maple syrup served as the primary industries of yesteryear and continue today followed by logging, papermaking and sawmill operations.

Lewis County, and the Croghan area experienced an influx of Anabaptist immigrants of both the Amish-Mennonite sects from Germany and the Alsatian area of France over a twenty-year period from 1831 to 1854. The Amish-Mennonite Church grew in the Croghan area later dropping the word *Amish*, from its title.

In 1883, Dr. Sarah Elizabeth Simonet was the first woman to graduate from Albany College with a pharmacology degree. Two years later, in 1885, she graduated from the University of Buffalo with a degree as a physician and surgeon and registered in Lewis County as one of the first female doctors. In addition, Dr. Simonet served as a county organizer to advance the early feminist movement supporting equal rights for women.

Village of Croghan

The Village of Croghan is home of the famous Croghan Bologna, first produced when The historic Croghan Meat Market founded in 1888 has brought name recognition to the Village of Croghan which is now known as the home of the famous “Croghan Bologna.” Today’s visitors and residents are drawn to the area for its natural beauty. Outdoor recreation enthusiasts still enjoy traditional pastimes of camping, hunting and fishing. The tapping of maple trees, one of the area’s significant natural resources has supported the economy for years and led to the creation of the American Maple Museum which was founded in 1977 to preserve the history and evolution of the North American maple syrup industry. The Railway Historical Society of Northern New York (RRSNY) museum is located in the former depot with a roundtable and Shay Engine on display.



Town of Diana

The Town of Diana was formed from the Town of Watson on April 26, 1830. It was named after Diana, goddess of the hunt, at the request of Joseph Bonaparte. Bonaparte was the town’s largest landowner, and in his favorite pastime of hunting fancied that Diana herself might covet the region as her home because of its ample, wild lands.

Village of Harrisville

Harrisville was named after Fosket Harris from Champion. The Oswegatchie River, flowing through the center of the village, powered a gristmill and sawmill that were built in 1854. In 1859 a chair factory and the Beach and Dodge Tannery set up business. The Carthage and Adirondack Railroad came through Harrisville in 1886. The depot for the Harrisville station now serves as the Town of Diana Historical Museum. The village was home to a paper mill from 1905 to 1957.

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County situated on the St. Lawrence River was the scene of some of the first French explorations. It is considered likely that Samuel Champlain visited the region in his exploration, but it is certain that Father Lallemand, a Jesuit priest, landed at what is now Ogdensburg in 1626, naming his settlement La Gallette.

Around this time, the area was used as hunting grounds by both the Algonquin and Iroquois Indians. The lands were claimed by the Iroquois confederacy, but only a few Oswegatchie families made a permanent home here. The Algonquins consisted of the twelve tribes or families: Arapaho,

Blackfeet, Cheyenne, Chippewa, Kickapoo, Shawnee, Fox, Ottawa, Delaware, Gros Ventres, Menominee and Potawatomi. The Iroquoians are known to comprise of four tribes: the Iroquois, Wyandot, Cherokee and Kiowa. Although the territory of the two nations was divided by the St. Lawrence River, this boundary made little difference during hunting and fishing season. As a result, when hunting parties met there was often blood shed.

Generally across the region, the French and English were both eager to secure the help of Native Americans for several reasons. First of all, indigenous groups provided security for the non-natives' newly acquired lands. They were also adept at trapping and hunting, which contributed to the then profitable fur trade. Throughout this time the English maintained an alliance with the powerful Iroquois Confederacy. English settlements in the Mohawk and Hudson Valley had little contact with this northern region, while the French used the St. Lawrence River as an important strategic corridor. Without Iroquois assistance to the English, the French very well may have been successful in maintaining control over this region.

The English became interested in the region through observing French developments, resulting, in part, in the French and Indian War (1754–1763). After the French surrender, the English promptly improved La Gallette by placing a garrison there and changed the name to Oswegatchie (now Ogdensburg), the name of the river tributary to the St. Lawrence. The new settlers began timber cutting and cleared great areas of land.

Even after the Revolutionary War, ownership of this region was disputed and few white men had ventured into parts of Northern New York. While to the north, east and south, the French, English, and Dutch had successful settlements, this region was one hundred miles north of the direct route west and it was considered out of the way to most, except to a few fur traders and the occasional adventurer. The Jay Treaty of 1794 provided that the British evacuate the frontier posts by 1796 and Albany took advantage in 1787 by offering for sale the township of Louisville, Stockholm, Potsdam Madrid, Lisbon, Canton, DeKalb, Oswegatchie, Hague and Cambray. Today Hague is Morristown, and Cambray is Gouverneur. The only part reserved for the Native Americans was a six square mile plot. At the end of the sale, the fur trader from Detroit, Alexander Macomb, became owner of most of the tracts.

After experiencing financial difficulties in 1792, Macomb transferred some of his holdings to Colonel Samuel Ogden, Robert Morris, General Henry Knox, and Gouverneur Morris, which were roughly the four townships of Hague, Cambray, Oswegatchie, and DeKalb. Many property transfers occurred, but the most significant owner in this region after Macomb became Ogden.

St. Lawrence County was formed March 3, 1802. It was originally part of Clinton County, with the county seat in Plattsburgh. However, resident concerns over the distance and danger of travelling to Plattsburgh led to the formation of the new county.

Oswegatchie Trail

The Oswegatchie Trail was a widely used foot and canoe trail used by Native Americans that held great importance to this region. Beginning northward from the Mohawk River to the Black River close to the present Village of Boonville in Oneida County, then down the 40-mile flat water stretch of the

Black River to Carthage in Jefferson County, the route continued overland to the Indian River. The Indian River could be traveled for quite a stretch to Black Lake and the Oswegatchie River and into the St. Lawrence River. There were other Indian trails, but the Oswegatchie Trail was one of the most commonly used. In fact, the path over land was so well traveled that cuts about a foot wide and deep were worn into the ground by the passage multitude of Native Americans walking single file. It is said that conditioned runners could cover the entire distance in two days.

The Plank Road

When roads were first cut through the forests, the trees were laid in the low or swampy places side by side and covered with dirt. These were called corduroy roads. Later, plank roads were built on the main arteries of travel. The plank road between Heuvelton and Ogdensburg was completed in 1849 by the Ogdensburg and Heuvelton Plank Road Company. The Heuvelton-DeKalb Plank Road Company organized earlier that same year worked on extensions to intersect the Gouverneur-Canton plank road east of Richville. Tolls were collected from travelers to recoup initial investment and turn a profit.

Steamboat Era

In the 1830's through the early 1900's steamboats began to play an important role in transportation history. Flat bottomed, side or stern-wheeled steamers were constructed to negotiate the three known shallow spots in the Oswegatchie Rver between Heuvelton and the mouth of Black Lake. These were known as Grass, Mammie Legg and Delaney's Rapids. The first steamboat to appear on these waters named the 'Paul Pry' was built in Heuvelton in 1830 by Paul Boyington. The "Paul Pry" proved to financially unsuccessful, but interestingly was taken either overland or eased around the dam at Ogdensburg to become a ferry between Ogdensburg and Prescott, located on opposite shores of the St. Lawrence River. Ultimately, the "Paul Pry" played a part in the unsuccessful efforts of the Frères chasseurs, or Hunter Patriots, using American territory to challenge British occupation of Canada. In November 1838, the attempted seizure of Prescott led to the five day standoff that has come to be known as the Battle of the Windmill. As a result, the general unpopularity of those on the south side of river relegated the "Paul Pry" to the Black River Basin where she ended her days.

RWO Railroad- The Hojack Line

The Rome-Watertown-Ogdensburg Railroad was commonly known as the Hojack Line. In 1842, the line began as the Watertown and Rome Railroad. Built to link Watertown with Rome on the Syracuse and Utica Railroad, it was one of the original lines to consolidate into the New York Central in 1853. At the time of this consolidation, the Potsdam and Watertown Railroad came into existence. In, 1861 the two railroads merged to become the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg and a branch line from DeKalb Junction to Ogdensburg was laid in 1864. Years of mismanagement and the consolidation of the railroad had driven the RWO to bankruptcy and earned the railway the new name of "Old Rotten Wood and Rusty Rails." RWO was formally merged with the New York Line in 1913 and was last operational in the 1940's. The line had several branches that carried passengers and would deliver and add cars for milk and cheese, and mail.

Although a few folk stories exist regarding the name Hojack, it commonly thought that the name derived from the engineer of the first train, who was named Jack Welch. Welch was a farmer before

becoming an engineer and was more familiar with horses than locomotives. Upon slowing down the train at stations, he would yell “Whoa Jack!,” becoming Hojack over time.

St. Lawrence Seaway

St. Lawrence County is the largest county in the state. It also has the longest frontage on the St. Lawrence River, which is also the St. Lawrence Seaway, the world’s longest deep draft inland waterway giving access to 15 U.S. and Canadian Ports. Opening June 26, 1959, the extensive system of canals and locks is of vital geographic and economic importance to the Great Lakes system, connecting the lakes to the Atlantic Ocean.

Town of Pitcairn:

The Town of Pitcairn was formed from the Town of Fowler and Edwards in 1836. The lands of Pitcairn are mainly rough and rocky, but in some of the narrow valleys the land is very productive. The first clearing in the wilderness of Portaferry was made in 1824 by James Streeter, who brought in his family the following year. Quite a number of other settlers came in 1824-5 and made small clearings.

The first saw mill was erected in 1828 on Jenny Creek. By the 1890’s there was a train station on the Carthage and St. Lawrence Railroad, two steam mills, several stores, a hotel, and cheese factories. The agriculture of the town consisted mainly of the production of butter and cheese, and the raising of grain and potatoes. Iron mining operations were carried on for several years at the Hamlet of Jayville. Three post-offices existed in the Hamlets of Pitcairn, East Pitcairn, and Jayville.

Town of Fowler:

The Town of Fowler was formed from Rossie and Russell in 1815. The irregular topography consisted of craggy ranges of rock and fertile soil between and along the Oswegatchie River and its tributaries, Sawyer and Shingle creeks. Sylvia Lake is located in the center of town and Chub Lake in the northeast corner. The Oswegatchie River supported many manufacturing industries, chiefly pulp and talc mills.

Town of Gouverneur:

The Town of Gouverneur, located in the Southern section of St. Lawrence County, was formally created in April 1810 from the Town of Oswegatchie. Originally the area was known as Cambray, but was changed to Gouverneur in honor of Gouverneur Morris, the principal landowner in the area. Among his credits, Morris framed the initial Article of the Confederation in 1781 and penned the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. He was also the youngest man, at age 24, to serve in the Continental Congress.



The Gouverneur area is especially rich in marble, which has been quarried for years. This marble has been used in the construction of many buildings throughout St. Lawrence County. Zinc and talc

mining is also one of the area's biggest industries. The terrain, mostly level and gently rolling hills, is great for agriculture and has some rocky hills and limestone ledges.

Village of Gouverneur:

The Village of Gouverneur was founded in 1868. As with the town (see above), the village of was named for Gouverneur Morris. Referred to as the "Marble Village" or "Marble City," Gouverneur is rich with white dolomite marble, which has been quarried and used for marble products and construction for almost 200 year. The area is also home to the Gouverneur Talc Company, one of the world's oldest and largest talc producers and Zinc Corporation of America mines, one of largest zinc production facilities in the U.S. Gouverneur is also the birthplace and headquarters of Kinney Drugs, Inc. In operation since 1903, the family operated retail drugstore still serves northern and central New York and Vermont.

The giant LifeSavers® roll in Gouverneur honors native son Edward John Noble. Pep-O-Mint, the company's first lifesaver flavor, was promoted by Noble after he purchased the idea from its inventor, Clarence Crane of Cleveland, Ohio for \$2,900 in 1913. Noble had the hole added to the candy in case a child might swallow the morsel. The hole in the center would still allow the child to breathe. Several years later, Noble acquired the Beechnut Chewing Gum Company and merged its products with LifeSavers®.

Town of De Kalb

The Town of De Kalb was one of the original ten towns of St Lawrence County named and laid out by the New York State Surveyor Generals Office in 1787. The town was named for Baron De Kalb, who was a native of the Alsace, Lorraine region. De Kalb was a Masonic brother of General Lafayette's. A trained military strategist, he was convinced by LaFayette to join the Continental Army to teach this skill to the Continental officers. He served with great distinction with General Lafayette in 1777 under General Washington in our Revolutionary War. He was killed in a battle near Camden, SC in 1780.

In February of 1803, Judge William Cooper of Cooperstown, backed by a group of prominent New York City financiers purchased the township from Samuel Ogden. Judge Cooper led a grand procession of 34 settlers from Cooperstown to De Kalb arriving on June 12th, 1803. Farms were cleared along the Oswegatchie near what is today Old De Kalb and Coopers Falls. The first settlement was known as Williamstown or Coopers Village. (See ***Hamlet of De Kalb***, on next page.)

The topography of the town consists of ridges of limestone, gneiss and marble separated by narrow valleys. The Oswegatchie River flows diagonally though the center of the town with Beaver and Harrison creeks as tributaries

During the early years the Oswegatchie River was the principal means of transportation. Settlers' income depended principally on the lumber and the "black salts" manure they generated from farm field clean-up. Products were shipped down river to Ogdensburg, then on to the Montreal market. Over time the lands of De Kalb were largely cleared and the agricultural interests developed in ratio with those of neighboring localities.

Dairying rose to prominence in the town with the rise of the neighborhood cheese factories. It is still important today. The opening of the railroad and the establishment of the Junction with the line leading to Ogdensburg in 1862 had a permanent effect upon the business interests of the town, drawing trade largely to the Junction and to Richville. The arrival of the Railroad also led to the development of significant mining interests in the town. At various times between 1860 and 1940, iron, sulfur, talc, marble and pegamatite were all mined in the township. Significant tailing from the Stellaville Sulfur mine can still be seen today on County Route 17 between De Kalb Junction and Hermon.

Hamlet of De Kalb

When Williamstown, or Cooper's Village, was established in 1803, many of the first houses were built upon the edge of the Oswegatchie. The river subsequently flooded in 1804. By 1805, the settlement had moved up the hill, where Judge Cooper erected a large hotel just east of the current hamlet. The town's first post office opened in 1806 and the community was renamed De Kalb. During the war of 1812, Ogdensburg's mail was delivered to this post office to keep it out of the hands of the British. The first school in the town was opened here in 1807.

Hamlet of Cooper's Falls

Cooper's Falls are about six feet high and are about a mile below the Hamlet of DeKalb. Judge Cooper built a saw mill and grist mill here in 1804. In 1864, a stock company built a furnace there, the ore being obtained in the town of Hermon. Following the Civil War, the mine was abandoned and the grist mill went into decay.

Hamlet of De Kalb Junction

The Hamlet of De Kalb Junction grew up quickly following the completion of the Rome Watertown and Ogdensburg Railroad in 1862. The Railroad located their woodsheds and a machine shop at the Junction. Many stores soon opened to take advantage of the farmers coming to town to sell wood to the railroad. At one time as many as 10 trains a day stopped at De Kalb Junction.

Village of Richville:

Salmon Rich and Jonathan Haskins established the first settlement in Richville in 1804. Legend has it that they drew a sled up the frozen river from Cooper's Village – a distance of about ten miles. They formed a camp opposite the village site and began a clearing. In April, Haskins built a log house near the river, and in June, Rich began clearing on the site of the village. The first tavern opened in 1807, along with a grist mill and saw mill. The opening of the railroad and Richville Station spurred considerable growth near the village. An extensive lime kiln was also in operation at the station to quarry nearby lime stone and sand stone.

Town of Oswegatchie:

With the establishment of the French Mission La Presentation in 1748, at what is now the City Ogdensburg (see below), the Town of Oswegatchie became the site of the first white settlement in St. Lawrence County. Some of the county's earliest pioneers established homes in the Heuvelton area, in

the vicinity of the Oswegatchie River which winds its way from the Adirondack foothills and gently flows through Heuvelton on its way to the St. Lawrence River, just six miles away. The town and river were named for the Oswegatchie Indians, who had a small encampment near Heuvelton in the late 1700's. The name "Oswegatchie" is that tribe's word meaning "black water."

Oswegatchie is one of the four towns initially established under the formation of the county in 1802. The township was patented in 1876 in 98 one-mile square parcels of 640 acres each, and the original land titles were to Alexander Macomb, Henry Remsen, and John Taylor.

Village of Heuvelton:

Heuvelton is the only incorporated village in the town of Oswegatchie. The village was originally called Fordsburgh to honor Nathan Ford, the man who has since become known as the Father of St. Lawrence County. In the 1820's, New York aristocrat Jacob Vanden Heuvel purchased the territory that contained the village and an adjoining land tract. Vanden Heuvel invested in several extensive improvements, including the construction of a mill, marking the first notable economic growth in the struggling community. The village name was changed from Fordsburgh to Heuvelton in January 1832 to honor his contributions.

Bessie Pickens whose stage name was Bessie Abott was born in Heuvelton, and was one of America's leading opera singers of the 1900's. Her father owned Pickens Hall, of which the third floor was used as a local Opera House/Music Hall. This recently restored building is the key historical landmark of the community and now serves as an outlet for Amish-made products (quilts, furniture, leather goods, etc.). Future plans include an exhibit on Amish life on the second floor and refurbishment of the performance space on the third floor.

Dairy farming continues as the principal livelihood for most of the Heuvelton area. The early years were followed by a period of improved milk production that supplied several local cheese factories. Improvements in technology and transportation allowed for cheese and milk to be produced in bulk and shipped longer distances. The McCadam cheese company began in Heuvelton. Although that plant closed in 2002, followed by the 2007 closing of Heritage Cheese, as much as ninety-percent of the milk produced in St. Lawrence County still goes into cheese production. In the early 1900's, Heuvelton and the surrounding countryside were considered a center for turkey production, attracting commercial and private buyers.

City of Ogdensburg:

On Sept. 30, 1748 French Missionary Francois Picquet left Quebec to search for a location at which to establish a suitable outpost for New France and to establish a mission for the Iroquois. On November 21, 1748, Picquet chose a site on the peninsula at the confluence of the Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence Rivers (present-day Ogdensburg) and called it "La Presentation." On May 30, 1749 he returned and started the first white settlement in St. Lawrence County. He had much success in converting the indigenous populations until the onset of the French and Indian War (Seven Years War 1756-1763) between France and England disputing colonial rights over the New World when he was forced to abandon his outpost. Samuel Ogden became the most significant land owner by 1792, thus renaming the settlement as Ogdensburg.

The City of Ogdensburg, also known as “The Maple City”, is the sole city in St. Lawrence County. Located strategically on the St. Lawrence River, it had been chosen as the original county seat in 1805, when the county was created. The county seat was moved to the Village of Canton twenty-three years later as fear of the British in Canada prompted pioneers to move government operations inland.

Canton Loop:

Town of Lisbon:

Fort Levi, which was located on Chimney Island on Lisbon’s northern border, was the site of the last large land battle of the French and Indian War. The Town of Lisbon was formed on March 6, 1801. An Oswegatchie Indian village was located on Indian Point in the town’s northwest corner from after the Revolution until around 1806 when the Akwesasne were resettled on what became the St. Regis Indian Reservation.

Town of Canton:

The Town of Canton was organized in 1805 and is home to the Village of Canton and Saint Lawrence University. Notable town resident J. Edward Rushton, born in 1843, became known around the world for his cedar canoes. The town’s name was designated by New York State land commissioners at a meeting in New York City in 1787 and is believed to be in honor of Canton, China and related to the Colonial trade routes that were opened to the Orient.

Village of Canton:

The Village of Canton has been one of the most significant communities in St. Lawrence County since the village became the county seat in 1825. The courthouse was built in that year and was lost to fire sixty-five years later. Canton is home to St. Lawrence University, established over 150 years ago, in 1856, and Canton Technical College. Canton is also the home of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association, Corning Glass, Kraft Foods, and numerous shops and small businesses. Among the most notable and historic citizens are former New York Governor Silas Wright and renowned sculptor-artist Frederic Remington.



Village of Rennselaer Falls

Although located off the actual Byway, Rennselaer Falls is in the center of the loop formed by Routes 812, 68, and 11, and is located at the intersection of County Routes 14 and 15. It is also host to the Indian Creek Nature Center—one of the Byway’s significant resources.

The Village of Rensselaer Falls was originally called Tateville, after Robert Tate, an early surveyor who had settled in the Cooper Falls area. Later, the town was called Canton Falls, due to its proximity to that already settled town. Steven Van Rensselaer was an early purchaser of large tracts of north country land, and in 1837 he deeded 78,932 acres of it to settlers moving into the region. In 1852, the US Postal service arrived and recognized Mr. Van Rensselaer by naming this particular hamlet after him. Early industries were tied to the Oswegatchie River's power: saw mills, grist mills, cheese making, dairy farms and lumber.

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Local Historians On the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway

Listed alphabetically by town.

Lewis County

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Phone: (315) 346-6950

Town of Diana Historian

Ross Young

14457 Wilder Drive

Harrisville, NY 13648

Phone: (315) 543-2979

Village of Harrisville Historian

Gladys Van Wyck

PO Box 2321

Harrisville, NY 13648

Phone: (315) 543-2987

Town of Lowville Historian

Charlotte Beagle

5533 Bostwick St.

Lowville, NY 13367

Phone: (315) 376-7403

Village of Lowville Historian

Vacant
5402 Dayan St.
Lowville, NY 13367
(315) 376-2834

Town of New Bremen Historian

Fred J. Schneider
8974 VanAmber Road
Castorland, NY 13620
Phone: (315) 376-3356

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County Historical Association

Trent Trulock, County Historian
Sue Longshore, Deputy County Historian
PO Box 8
3 East Main St.
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: (315) 386-8133
Website: www.slcha.org

City of Ogdensburg Historian

James F. Boyle
PO Box 26
Brier Hill, NY 13614
Phone: (315) 375-8924

Town of Canton Historian

Linda Casserly
60 Main Street
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: (315) 386-1633

Village of Canton Historian

Linda Casserly
60 Main Street
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: (315) 386-1633

Village of Rensselaer Falls Historian

Mimi Barr
PO Box 18
Rensselaer Falls, NY 13680
Phone: (315) 344-6681

Town of DeKalb Historian

Brian Thompson
68 Streeter Road
DeKalb Junction, NY 13630
Phone: (315) 347-2178

Village of Richville Historian

Stella Tamblin
PO Box 207
Richville, NY 13681
Phone: (315) 287-0182

Town of Fowler Historian

Connie Bishop
1499 Co. Rte. 22
Gouverneur, NY 13642
Phone: (315) 287-2728

Town of Gouverneur Historian

Colin Graves
33 Pooler Street
Gouverneur, NY 13642
Phone: (315) 287-4684

Village of Gouvernuer Historian

Joe Laurenza
30 Church Street
Gouverneur, NY 13642
Phone: (315) 287-0570

Town of Lisbon Historian

Nancy Lafaver
PO Box 215
Lisbon, NY 13658
Phone: (315) 393-4154

Town of Oswegatchie Historian

Linda Marshall
PO Box 322
Heuvelton, NY 13654
Phone: (315) 344-6422

Village of Heuvelton Historian

Linda Marshall
PO Box 322
Heuvelton, NY 13654
Phone: (315) 344-6422

Town of Pitcairn Historian
Leland Ryan
346 State Highway 3
Harrisville, NY 13648
Phone: (315) 543-2255



Byway Description

The Visitor's Experience



The Maple Traditions Scenic Byway follows the entire length of NYS Route 812 for a distance of 78.3 miles, beginning in downtown Lowville at its junction with the Black River Trail Scenic Byway, and New York State routes 12 and 26.



View from southern terminus starting point in Lowville (Left). Downtown Lowville (Below).



Located at the route's southern terminus Lowville is a small rural village with an historic Main Street and tree-lined residential streets with a number of grand historic homes. Lowville is the Lewis County seat. The walkable downtown features a business district and is home to the white-columned, brick county courthouse. Visible from the western edge of the village is the Maple Ridge Wind Farm. With 195 towers, the impressive site is the largest wind farm east of the Mississippi.



American Maple Museum, Croghan, NY

Heading north toward the Village of Croghan (10 miles from Lowville), travelers will observe open, rolling agricultural lands dotted with dairy farms—and some Amish farms--bordered by woodland edges. Croghan is a quiet, compact, and attractive village located on the Beaver River. Croghan is home of the American

Maple Museum and regional famous food products—Croghan Candy and Croghan Bologna. From Croghan to Harrisville, it is apparent that you have left the Black River Valley and are now skirting the western edge of the Adirondacks. Rolling farmland is replaced by forest lands, mixed hardwoods and pine reforestation areas.



Maple Weekend. Left: visitors ride through a sugar bush on a sap-hauling sled. Right: A sugar bush owner explains the process of boiling sap down into maple syrup.



17 miles north of Croghan, the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway joins the Olympic Scenic Byway where Route 812 intersects Route 3 and they overlap each other for a short distance 4.4 miles through the Village of Harrisville. In Harrisville, the two byways cross the scenic Oswegatchie River, one of the most photogenic scenic views along the route. Harrisville's community gazebo, park and nature trail perched above the rocky river rapids is clearly visible and inviting to travelers.

Left: The Oswegatchie as seen while traveling the byway through Harrisville.

In the 16 miles from Harrisville to Gouverneur, the landscape transitions from dense forestland back to more open terrain, again dotted with a mixture of Amish farms and modern farm operations. This area also has a rich mining history (marble, granite, zinc, and talc). Gouverneur, like many of the rural communities along this byway, has retained many of its historic buildings and pedestrian friendly downtown. As in Harrisville, the Oswegatchie River passes through the center of the village.

Approximately 10 miles northeast of Gouverneur, NY Route 812 heads north again, departing US Route 11. Over the next 17 miles on their way to Ogdensburg, travelers will experience a quiet, rural landscape dotted with both Amish and modern-day farm operations. Keep your eyes open, as this segment in particular has a number of roadside Amish stands offering vegetables, canned goods, and craft items for sale. About 6 miles outside of Ogdensburg, the Byway passes through the small Village of Heuvelton, home to the restored Pickens Hall, which serves as a retail outlet for a variety of Amish-made goods (furniture, quilts, crafts, jams, etc.). Pickens Hall also specializes in providing goods and supplies sought by the Amish.



In Ogdensburg (The "Maple City"), the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway intersects the Seaway Trail (a National Scenic Byway) and ends at the foot of the bridge to Canada. Although the most urban of the communities on this byway, Ogdensburg retains that small-town atmosphere characteristic of all of the communities along the route. It has a rich military history (Revolutionary War and War of 1812), is a port city on the St. Lawrence Seaway, and is home to the Frederick Remington Art Museum. As they pass the Ogdensburg International Airport on the outskirts of the city, Byway travelers may depart briefly from the main byway route and

venture straight into and through downtown in order to enjoy these resources. The view of the mighty St. Lawrence River from the waterfront's Maple City Trail is truly a sight to behold regardless of the season.



After returning to the main Byway route, travelers can continue on for another 2.5 miles to the end of the Byway and cross the river into Canada via the Ogdensburg-Prescott International Bridge. Those seeking and alternate return route allowing them to experience more of the North Country's traditions should pick up NY Route 68 southeast toward Canton.

Ogdensburg's Maple City Trail (left)

Canton Loop:

Historically, the Adirondack North Country Region Scenic Byways are long travel routes stretching well over 100 miles and include side routes that traverse the changing terrain, providing access to adjoining thematic resources. The Canton loop is one of those side routes that contribute significantly to the theme of the main Byway.

The 17-mile stretch of Route 68 from Ogdensburg to Canton is dotted with a number of large farms and follows the Grasse River into downtown Canton. This route also goes past the Indian Creek Nature Center and the Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area.

Canton (the St. Lawrence County seat) sits on the Grasse River and is home to the State University of New York at Canton and the esteemed St. Lawrence University. Its historic downtown is also home to Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY) a not-for-profit organization with a multi-county outreach. TAUNY's North Country Heritage Center offers the opportunity to learn more about the history and present status of traditional arts and crafts in the region. TAUNY highlights those individuals and groups who have been significant in carrying on a variety of folk arts and timeless traditions while also featuring a variety of locally produced arts, crafts, and food products for sale. Canton is another pedestrian-friendly downtown and also offers pedestrian trails along the riverfront and on its two island parks. Following US 11S for 12.4 miles from Canton brings the traveler back to the main Byway route where it picks up NY Route 812 back into Gouverneur.



TAUNY's North Country Heritage Center highlights the timeless traditions and folk arts of the North Country.

Summary:

From one end of the 78-mile Maple Traditions Scenic Byway to the other, travelers will experience a variety of unique local food products—their growing practices and preparation (meats, dairy/cheeses, candies, maple products, baked goods, and produce), folk arts, and craft products. More importantly, the opportunities to experience these traditions and products are not limited to the numerous country stores and museums along the route. These traditions—farming, logging, cheese-making, maple syrup harvesting, and more—can be experienced first-hand from a people who continue to live close to the land and whom travelers can observe and meet in the communities along this byway.



Byway Description: Traditions and the Working Landscape

The Maple Syrup Tradition

A sure sign of spring is the sight and smell of the "sugaring" season. Throughout Lewis and St. Lawrence counties, visitors can see maple syrup being made from sap gathered from New York's official tree - the Sugar Maple. Visitors can see a traditional wood burning sugar house, a state of the art reverse osmosis or an oil fired operation. And, while you're here, a culinary delight you don't want to miss is the pancake breakfasts sponsored by local church and civic organizations. Not only will you be served delicious pancakes smothered in fresh syrup, you will be part of the spring tradition in the North Country.

New York State ranks #3 in the nation for maple syrup production with more than a third of the state's syrup coming from St. Lawrence, Lewis, and neighboring Jefferson counties. (Lewis County is New York State's largest producer of maple syrup.) Together, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties boast over 250 maple producers with well over 400,000 taps among them.

No matter where you travel along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway, visitors should see a sugar bush or a sugarhouse at some point, and should certainly not miss seeing some blue or black tubing or buckets along the way. If lucky enough to travel this road during the sugaring season, which usually starts in early spring and last for six to eight weeks, travelers will have the opportunity to see steam rising from sugarhouses and smell the sweet smell of maple syrup.

A rich agricultural history can be found in the region's Maple Industry. The region sees syrup as the first "True Crop of Spring" and many in the area refer to it as "Liquid Gold". Numerous sugarbushes demonstrate a long family tradition of being involved in tapping trees and producing syrup. Many have been sugaring for several generations and it is typical to see the entire family helping out in the sugarbush, from the grandparents or even great-grandparents to the grandchildren. Most syrup is sold directly to the consumer in pint, quart, and gallon containers as well as candies and maple cream. Syrup can be used as a topping for pancakes, waffles, ice cream, cereals, and used in cooking and baking breads, meats, and vegetables to name a few.

Technology has provided improved sap collection and boiling equipment and methods over those of yesteryear. However, the production process remains unchanged. Although very labor intensive, sugaring provides an opportunity for the entire family to work together to produce this pure golden syrup. Observing the tapping of the trees, gathering of the sap, and boiling and bottling of the finished syrup will give you an appreciation for why the process involves the whole family.

Stopping in at the American Maple Museum in Croghan—a town steeped in maple character—will allow visitors to learn about the entire process of tapping a tree to bottling the syrup. There you can review the history of maple processing through the years from the Native American to modern day processing and take home some syrup or other maple goodies with you. You might want to try to catch a pancake breakfast at the Museum which serves up all local foods on Maple Weekend held annually towards the end of March where you can sample a variety of maple products such as maple sugar cakes, hard candy, cotton candy, jack wax, and

taffy to name a few. Visitors can walk through operating sugarhouses to see sap being boiled down to syrup in a evaporator, watch sap being collected with tractors or horse drawn sleds, walk through the woods and see sap dripping from a tap into a bucket or going along tubing to a collection container. These guided tours are informative and usually you can taste warm maple syrup at the end.

Given the abundance of maple trees in this region, the maple theme is prevalent in other ways along this scenic byway. The word “maple” is used in the names of several local businesses (from wind farms to auto dealers).

Ogdensburg is known as “The Maple City” and its Maple City Trail is a key recreational resource along the St. Lawrence River waterfront. The northern terminus of the byway also happens to be at the foot of the International Bridge into Canada, which utilizes the maple leaf as its national



emblem.



Byway Description: Traditions and the Working Landscape

Traditional Arts & Folklife

The traditions theme of the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway captures not only the tradition of collecting sap and producing maple syrup, but also highlights a number of other traditional activities: agriculture, the Amish lifestyle, and the production of a variety of food and craft products from local agricultural and forest resources. Less apparent to the outside visitor, but equally important to the byway experience, is an appreciation of those traditions that are essential components of the rural lifestyle, social fabric, and heritage of the North Country. This richness of tradition is best expressed through the following overview of the Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY). TAUNY's existence and growth is due to the abundance of these traditions in the first place, and because of its own success in serving to preserve and highlight these traditions for others to appreciate and enjoy.

TAUNY: 20 Years and Growing

Celebrating the customs and creativity of everyday life in northern New York.” This is how Traditional Arts in Upstate New York—TAUNY—describes its mission as it goes about documenting and presenting the rich variety of folklife and folk arts of the vast region of New York commonly known as the North Country. Long before the age of electronics and space exploration, residents of the region told stories and sang songs about local life. They marked the passing of time with celebrations and crafted objects for their own use. Over the years people from many parts of the world settled in the region and contributed to the mosaic of local cultural expressions. Through memory, mastery, and legacy, they and their children helped to shape the North Country way of life.

For more than 20 years the nonprofit organization has been gathering and telling the stories of the people, places, and events that *are* the North Country. In a time when rural America—and our region—faces many changes and challenges, TAUNY shines a light on the best qualities of life here. We observe continuity and change in some traditions, over time the gradual disappearance of others, and the emergence of new traditions as time goes on. TAUNY creates a record of life as it has been and is now—for individuals, families, and communities—and preserves it for generations to come. As others work to save our natural environment, TAUNY encourage the conservation of the local way of life, thereby safeguarding local knowledge and local color in the North Country.

TAUNY identifies and documents individuals and groups from the region that reaches from the St. Lawrence River valley to Lake Champlain, through the Adirondack Mountains to the Mohawk River. It seeks to record people whose knowledge and experience cover everything from telling tall tales and playing old fiddle tunes for dancing, to building Adirondack guideboats, weaving ash splint baskets, or stitching fancy show quilts. TAUNY maintains a growing archive of tape and video recordings, photographs, and slides, which it makes available to students, journalists, and other researchers. In early 2008, TAUNY purchased and moved into a Victorian building in Canton's historic downtown, the former home of J.J. Newberry's variety store, to develop a regional cultural heritage center. For those unable to visit TAUNY in

Canton, its two websites—www.tauny.org and www.northcountryfolklore.org—offer detailed information about the organization’s events, activities, programs, and research.

Regularly on display in TAUNY’s Canton home are an Orientation Exhibit, which describes folk arts and local of the region and what TAUNY does, and the North Country Wall of Fame, which includes portraits and essays of TAUNY’s fifty-plus North Country Heritage Award recipients. Every year TAUNY also mounts two or three temporary exhibits. Over the years these have included topics as diverse as Adirondack woodcrafts, songbird carvings, log cabin quilts, St. Lawrence River decoys, homesteader architecture and gingerbread houses. Exhibits sometimes travel to local schools, libraries, and other public sites, and programming is often developed to complement the exhibits.



TAUNY’s North Country Folkstore is an outlet for authentic traditional crafts and arts of the region. It features Mohawk sweetgrass baskets; Old Order Amish quilts and furnishing; wood carvings; honey, jams, and jellies; maple products; balsam wreaths in season; recordings and books about regional subjects; and much more. Artists whose products are featured in the Folkstore offer demonstrations and workshops to share their expertise; these have included soap making, rug hooking, wooden paddle painting, woodcarving, and more.

A standout program on TAUNY’s annual calendar is our Salute to North Country Legends (its 16th year in 2008). TAUNY instituted the North Country Heritage Awards program to recognize individuals, families, and community groups who have mastered and maintained traditions indigenous to the North Country and have demonstrated a strong commitment to passing them along to future generations. Since that time, awards have been presented to such special people as St. Lawrence River decoy maker William Massey, the Akwesasne basket makers, the Fraser Family of Celtic musicians, and Adirondack storyteller Bill Smith. The awards are presented each fall at the annual Salute, recipients are honored in the Wall of Fame gallery, and many are featured in TAUNY’s radio series “Meet the Masters,” on North Country Public Radio.

TAUNY recently launched its Register of Very Special Places, which documents and celebrates cultural landmarks around the region. Recognizing that there are places in North Country communities that are very important to local people, many of which have been around for some time and would be sorely missed if they were suddenly gone, TAUNY developed this program to encourage historians and others to identify and document such places. These might include corner barbershops, fire stations, a local watering hole, a drive-in theater, general stores, hockey rinks, local diners, ethnic churches, roadside attractions, Grange halls, hunting clubs, and other such places that are and have been important in the life of the community. All of the landmarks in TAUNY’s Register can be “visited” on the RVSP website at www.northcountryfolklore.org/rvsp.

The importance of TAUNY’s work in North Country is made clear when one stops to think about how much change can happen in one lifetime and how much is lost of a culture from one generation to the next. During this period of economic uncertainty, with society in transition in our nation and around our region, it is vital to keep a clear focus on the strengths that help define our communities. Showcasing the customs and traditions of our region can remind our neighbors and visitors all over northern New York of all that we have to be proud of in our past and our present—and of the importance of preserving those proud traditions for the future.

As the late folklorist Vaughn Ward put it upon hearing of the death of Clarence “Daddy Dick” Richards, a country music pioneer from Lake Luzerne, Heritage Award recipient, and subject of TAUNY’s recent exhibit *Funny Men of the Adirondacks*, “When someone like Dick dies, it’s like a library burning to the ground.” It is TAUNY’s mission to ensure that the North Country’s stories don’t get lost in the fire.



Byway Description: Traditions and the Working Landscape

Amish in the North Country

Copied with permission from the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Website



Heuvelton, NY – Present day historic bridge over the Oswegatchie River.

Driving the back roads of the North Country, one is likely to encounter the horse-drawn black buggies of the Amish residents, or pass by any number of Amish roadside stands selling farm goods or craft products.

The Old Order Amish, descendants of the radical Anabaptist Reformation, first came to the St. Lawrence County area in 1974 in search of available farmland. St. Lawrence County is now home to three Amish communities. In the Norfolk area one finds, for the most part, descendants of the Swiss Amish who settled the Allen County area of Indiana. In the Heuvelton-Depeyester areas are Amish whose ancestors were among the early settlers of Ohio. The Old Order Amish in Lewis County began arriving in the early 1990s, predominantly from Maryland.



These communities illustrate how diverse the Amish are in the 21st century, for they differ in a variety of ways, including the German dialect they speak at home, the style of clothing they wear, the approved haircut for boys, and the type of buggy they drive.

The church is central to all Amish communities. For the Amish, strength of the community, guided by the wisdom of the church, is the key to a life worthy of salvation.

Amish life is rooted in agriculture, but one finds a variety of cottage manufacturing and retail industries helping to supplement the income from the family farm. A drive through the County's back roads will likely lead one to the Amish farm stands offering for sale maple syrup, fresh produce, baked goods, hand-made quilts, baskets, and aprons. **The Amish welcome you to stop but ask that you refrain from taking their pictures, as that violates their religious beliefs.** (Note that the Amish photographs throughout this document do not include close-ups in which you can make out the details of individual faces.) Also be aware the Amish do no business on Sundays.

Pickens General Store, in Heuvelton, offers a huge variety of Amish made products including furniture, baskets, and quilts. Byway travelers will also note the presence of several roadside stands offering hand-crafted items, produce, jams and jellies, and/or baked goods.



Raking hay



A roadside display of Amish quilts & aprons for sale

Byway Description: Traditions and the Working Landscape

Rock Hound's Delight: Mining Country

(From the St. Lawrence Co. Chamber of Commerce Website)



St. Lawrence County is mining country. For nearly 200 years it has supplied New York State with abundant raw materials that include iron, zinc, talc, Wollastonite, limestone and building stone of sandstone and marble. The back roads once were dotted with active mines and quarries whose remains still appear in the landscape. The fine homes and commercial buildings still standing in some tiny villages are an expression of a long vanished source of local wealth.

The county's crystalline bedrock has yielded a host of quality minerals; some rare, but most of common rock forming silicate and sulfide minerals that have unusual color, size and crystal shapes. Specimens of feldspar, diopside, tremolite, tourmaline, spinel, galena, sphalerite, pyrite, millerite, magnetite, fluorite, and many others, reside in display cases of museums throughout the world. An extensive mineral collection can be seen at the Gouverneur Museum.

The abundance and variety of minerals are chiefly due to the presence of ancient crystalline rocks. The wedge shaped county opens northwest toward the St. Lawrence River and a thin covering of sedimentary rocks. The southern and northwestern portions are underlain by crystalline, igneous and metamorphic rocks of Precambrian age. For example, the exposed gray granites along State Highway 11 between Antwerp and Gouverneur have uranium-lead ages of 1.2 billion years. The cream colored marbles intruded by the granites are even older. These crystalline rocks are evident throughout the county, and visitors may want a geology guidebook. The rocks are part of the mineral rich Canadian Shield and the Grenville Province which extends from Labrador to southwestern Ontario. The province extends into New York State in the Thousand Islands and includes the Adirondack Mountains.

Mineral production began with the settlement in the early 19th century and the search for iron and lead ores. Refined mineral products were sorely needed in isolated frontier communities. Furnace construction was underway in Rossie in 1813 on land owned by David Parish. By 1838, the county had at least 8 iron furnaces, 7 foundries, 3 lead mines, 4 marble mills and 2 quarries. Quarries near Potsdam and Hopkinton supplied blocks of red Potsdam sandstone for lining the furnaces and for building local homes, businesses, churches and schools.

In 1836, New York State established a Geological and Natural History Survey. Explorations by Rensselaer and Rutgers trained geologists helped publicize the rich mineral potential of the Adirondack region. Galena (lead sulfide) was mined near Black Lake. Pyrite (fool's gold) south of Canton provided sulphur and sulphuric acid for the paper industry. The first talc mine in the

United States opened in 1878 on a farm near Talcville. Gouverneur became known as "Marble City," thanks to buildings of cream colored marble from local quarries. Beginning in the 1940's but now closed, Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation operated a very large, open pit iron mine near Star Lake.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

New York State Scenic Byway Funding History

For over fifteen years, Federal and State transportation dollars have funded programs in New York to promote tourism, improve traveler and community services, and establish facilities that encourage local visitation and spending. Scenic Byway program funding is provided through the Federal Highway Administration of the United State Department of Transportation. Scenic Byway programs show a steady record of supporting economic and community development with ongoing funding for projects along byway routes. Over the years, New York State has benefited from the Department of Transportation's successful history of securing and distributing grant funding. From 1992 to 2007 the New York State Scenic Byway Program has received a total of \$14,086,245 in Federal dollars from the Federal Highway Administration benefiting Byway communities throughout the State.

Economic Benefits of the Scenic Byway Program

With only a few major employers in its three significant population centers (Lowville, Canton, and Ogdensburg), the rural economy of the communities along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway is based largely on agriculture, small scale business establishments, and self-employment. Businesses in the smaller communities survive because of their ability to serve the local population and by capturing tourist spending.

Current market trends show that heritage travel is one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry. Effectively developing and promoting the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway experience has great potential to capitalize on these trends and to stimulate greater economic activity in the region. The Federal Highway Administration's March 2004 press release described economic benefits. "Studies suggest that byway designations increase the number of visitors to rural communities by up to 20 percent, resulting in billions more dollars and tens-of-thousand of jobs nationwide. Those same studies have found that the typical visitor spends between \$100 and \$200 per trip." Individual communities participating in Corridor Management Planning are poised to capitalize on the visitor attraction potential of the Byway route as a ribbon of interconnected destinations.

Economic & Community Development Goals

The goals identified in the Implementation Plan for the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway include:

1. Strengthen and diversify the agricultural economy by creating opportunities for local businesses and producers to expand their markets and increase revenues;
2. Strengthen and diversify the craft products industry by creating opportunities for local businesses and producers to expand their markets and increase revenues;
3. Support business activity that addresses gaps in goods or services for visitors and residents;
4. Revitalize and focus growth and development in central business districts through Main Street revitalization planning and programs;

5. Preserve the rural and historic character of byway communities to maintain appeal in drawing today’s travelers and tourism dollars to town centers.
6. Promote the tourism industry as an economic stimulus to the region.

Expanding market opportunities for local food and artisan products

Market trends show that the general public is demonstrating greater interest in knowing the source of their food products and home goods—more so than whether it is considered organic. We have also moved into what is termed the “experience economy”, where consumer preference for products is greatly impacted by their experience with the product. Certainly, increasing



tourist activity alone would bring more outside dollars into the region. However, a positive visitor experience could stimulate greater “brand recognition” for the locally produced food and artisan products which characterize this byway. This could result in a demand for increased production and the opportunity to increase sales through mail order or internet based sales. In turn, this could result in the development of complementary business services for the packaging/bottling or distribution of these goods.

The counties of Lewis and St. Lawrence are already part of the North Country Regional Foods Initiative (<http://www.nnyagdev.org/ncrf-home.htm>) which involves the Cornell Cooperative Extension offices in each of the Northern New York counties, Cornell’s Community and Rural Development Institute, the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), and local economic development organizations. The scenic byway could provide a theme based focus to this effort which could yield spin-off benefits to the larger region.

Likewise in the crafts industry, ANCA has been providing support infrastructure and business training—similar to the successful *Handmade In America* effort in the Blue Ridge Mountain region. ANCA’s experience, combined with that of Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY) in highlighting North Country crafts and folk arts could be brought to bear in order to provide support infrastructure to this industry.



In the case of both the food and crafts/art industries, the opportunity to capitalize on theme-based byway promotions can help to generate local community excitement and initiative to promote and support these sectors of the local economy. The effort is likely to generate creative entrepreneurship initiatives among the producers themselves as they work to capitalize on the opportunity.

Opportunities for Agri-tourism include the promotion of educational and experiential tours of dairy (cow and goat), livestock (beef, sheep, goat, pig, lamb), and produce/flower/herb farms. The annual Maple Weekend and tours of maple sugaring operations are also a key component of the region's agri-tourism industry. The St. Lawrence County and Lewis County Chambers of Commerce have lists of those various farm operations that are open to public tours.

Stimulating Community Development

One of the key advantages of the scenic byway program is that it links smaller rural communities via a common theme. Collectively, they become more attractive as a package experience, thereby drawing more visitors than they would otherwise attract individually. Increasing tourist traffic is likely to stimulate greater interest in Main Street revitalization and historic preservation as local officials recognize the potential return on investment by attracting visitors to stop in their communities. To support the growth of niche businesses or lodging establishments (new or existing) will require the installation or upgrading of public utilities, which can make additional business development possible.

Advances in telecommunications and web-based technologies make it possible for knowledge and information workers and creative entrepreneurs to live anywhere. By highlighting local quality-of-life assets—and enhancing them through revitalization projects—byway communities may attract new residents to their communities—i.e. talent—who may establish new businesses that contribute to the region's economic health and vitality. It is therefore important that the availability of such infrastructure be considered in any planning efforts.

Success in these efforts will necessitate that communities begin with strategic and/or comprehensive planning. In essence, Byway communities must ask themselves the question, “What do we want to be, and how do we intend to get there?”

A local plan helps a community prioritize projects and guides decision-making as it related to the allocation of limited resources in order to achieve those priorities. Communities that have completed a planning process are also better positioned to compete for various grant programs that might fund the implementation of certain projects identified in their plan. (*For specific examples, see “Related Programs, Projects, Plans, & Studies” section.*) With future vision in hand, communities can more rationally debate the adoption of zoning and enforcement strategies—not for zoning's sake, but with an eye toward using those practices as tools through which the community can preserve what is important to its residents while also working toward the desired future of its residents.

Strengthening local capacity in both the public and private sectors

Given their limited resources, many of the byway communities will need assistance from their county and regional planning and economic development agencies in preparing their plans for the future and developing the strategies to implement those plans. These agencies (*See list below*) are also familiar with the variety of funding programs that might fund certain implementation strategies, and may even be able to assist local officials and community organizations in writing grant applications.



Training and technical assistance to the private sector will be equally important. Training for tourist service businesses (lodging establishments, dining establishments) can focus on strategies for promoting and packaging their businesses, developing additional value-added services, and enhancing the visitor experience. Developing targeted technical and financial assistance programs could help such businesses with property improvements and improving their use of technology in promotion and management.

Similarly, training for local artisans and food producers is needed to address pricing and packaging, as well as basic business management skills. Technical assistance programs could focus on helping to expand their production capacity, developing distribution networks for their products, and utilizing technology in managing the business and selling their products.

Byway organizers will need to direct business owners and independent producer to those organizations offering instruction in best practices. Outreach to local business efforts could also help to target specific needs for technical assistance and training. Following is a list of those local and regional involved in economic and community development, agri-business development, and business planning assistance in Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties.

Community, Economic Development, and Agricultural Development Agencies:

Lewis County

Lewis County Office of Economic Development
Warren Rosenthal, Director
Lewis County Court House
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-5422
Email: economicdevelopment@lewiscountyny.org
Website: www.lewiscountyny.org

Lewis County Development Corporation
5402 Dayan St.
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-2834
Email: ldolhof@northnet.org

Lewis County Industrial Development Agency
Ned Cole, Executive Director
PO Box 106
7642 N. State Street
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-3014
Email: lcida@lcida.org
Website: www.lcida.org

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County
Michelle Ledoux, Executive Director
PO Box 72
5274 Outer Stowe Street
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-5270
Email: lewis@cornell.edu
Website: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/lewis/>

Small Business Development Center (serving Jefferson & Lewis counties)
Eric Constance, Director
Jefferson Community College
Outer Coffeen St.
Watertown, NY 13601-1897
Phone: (315) 782-9262
Email: sbdc@sunyjefferson.edu
Website: <http://www.nyssbdc.org/centers/centers.cfm?centid=4>

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development and
St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency
Ray Fountain, Executive Director
80 State Highway 310, Suite 6
Canton, NY 13617-1496
Phone: (315) 379-9806
Email: rfountain@co.st-lawrence.ny.us
Website: www.slconestop.com

Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County
Clive Chambers, Executive Director
1894 State Highway 68
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: (315) 379-9192
Email: cbc34@cornell.edu
Website: http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/st_lawrence/
Small Business Development Center at SUNY Canton
Dale Rice, Director
St. Lawrence Center Mall
PO Box 6069
Massena, NY 13662
Phone: (315) 764-0683
Email: sbdc@canton.edu
Website: <http://www.nyssbdc.org/Centers/centers.cfm?centid=10>

City of Ogdensburg Department of Planning and Development
J. Justin Woods, Director
330 Ford Street, City Hall, Room 11
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
Phone: (315) 393-7150
Email: jwoods@ogdensburg.org
Website: <http://ogdensburg.org>

Town and Village of Canton
Linda McQuinn, Director of Economic Development
60 Main Street
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: (315) 386-2871, ext. 5
Email: developer@cantonnewyork.us
Website: www.cantonnewyork.us

Regional

Adirondack North Country Association
(Serving the 14-county Adirondack North Country region)
Terry Martino, Executive Director
20 St. Bernard St.
Saranac Lake, NY 12983
Phone: (518) 891-6200
Email: anca-martino@northnet.org
Website: www.adirondack.org

Development Authority of the North Country
(Serving Jefferson, Lewis, & St. Lawrence counties)
Robert Juravich, Executive Director
317 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 785-2593
Email: info@danc.org
Website: www.danc.org

New York State Tug Hill Commission
(Serving the Tug Hill region portions of Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, & Oswego Counties)
John Bartow, Executive Director
317 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 785-2380
Email: john@tughill.org
Website: www.tughill.org

NOTE: For tourism related businesses, refer also to the agency listing under the “Tourism Development” section.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, & PROMOTION

Introduction

The scenic byways effort is primarily a tourism development and marketing effort. As evident throughout this plan, however, all of the goal areas are interrelated. Increasing tourist activity along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway can stimulate growth in retail, hospitality services, and the production and packaging of the locally produced goods that characterize the byway's theme. The desire to capitalize on byway promotion serves as an incentive for communities to preserve and enhance their historical, cultural, and recreational resources which draw byway visitors. Better stewardship of these resources enhances the community's appeal to tourists and new, entrepreneurial residents. Corridor-wide identification with the byway's themes encourages regional cooperation in planning and promotions.

Tourism, Marketing, and Interpretation Goals

The tourism goals of the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway are as follows:

1. Develop Byway Marketing and Interpretation Plan and work with communities on promotion and branding;
2. Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between Byway communities in order to enhance product image and strengthen marketing efforts;
3. Provide quality visitor experiences using proven strategies to improve Byway offerings;
4. Develop strategies to improve shoulder season and year-round new and repeat visitation by appealing to the market interests of a broad audience;
5. Develop theme-based packages and tourism guides to promote the Byway and to encourage extended visitor stays;
6. Improve the availability of basic tourist information to accommodate visitor needs and increase desirability of the Byway as a destination;
7. Improve the availability of comfort facilities.

Goal #1. Develop Byway Marketing and Interpretation Plan and work with communities on promotion and branding.

Using a common theme with which these scenic byway communities can more strongly identify (i.e. Maple Traditions rather than Black River) will encourage stakeholders to be more engaged. It provides a common rallying point to which they all feel connected, and around which they will cooperatively work together. The proposed "Maple Traditions" theme is also more authentic to the byway traveler (who will see nothing of the Black River along this route) thereby facilitating promotional efforts that are consistent with both the product label (byway name) and the actual experience of that product. State legislation to officially rename this Lowville-to-Ogdensburg route as the "Maple Traditions Scenic Byway", and the adoption of a fitting logo is therefore an essential first step to effectively branding this scenic byway.

Goal #2. Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between byway communities in order to enhance product image and strengthen marketing efforts.

The establishment of a byway marketing team (chambers of commerce, TPAs, ANCA and other stakeholders) will foster regular communication and collaboration between byway communities. A print or electronic newsletter and website can help to encourage a regional perspective among Byway communities and businesses while also making them aware of opportunities to build on the brand collectively as well as individually.

Goal #3. Provide quality visitor experiences using proven strategies to improve Byway offerings.

A number of factors affect the overall quality of the visitor experience. These include the availability of basic information on lodging, attractions, and services; the ability to navigate the byway and find its resources; comfort and safety; the impact of inclement weather; and the ability to participate in activities unique to their particular interests. A unique positive experience encourages repeat and extended visitor stays, as well as in word-of-mouth promotion that brings new visitors.

Goal #4. Develop strategies to improve shoulder season and year-round new and repeat visitation by appealing to the market interests of a broad audience.

There exist a number of events that could be further promoted and expanded along the byway that already tie into the themes of the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway. Developing and coordinating a four seasons events calendar of these key events may improve joint advertising of events and could aid the planning of additional new events. The benefit of successful special events is not only the influx of visitors associated with the event itself, but especially in the extra publicity that helps to bring more attention to the existence of the byway and its various year-round offerings. The “Special Sites, Attractions, and Services” section of this CMP identifies a number of existing theme-related events.

Theme-based packages are another strategy for reaching a broad range of specific market niches and encouraging both new and repeat visitation. A visitor may travel to the region for one reason, and then learn of another opportunity during a different season of the year that causes them to return. See Goal #5, below.

Goal #5. Develop theme-based packages and tourism guides to promote the Byway and to encourage extended visitor stays.

While visitors may be drawn to the byway through the image and promise portrayed through its marketing and promotion, it is up to byway stakeholders to enhance the actual visitor experience to meet travelers’ expectations. We cannot assume that byway travelers will find the right combination of experiences on their own. By packaging and promoting resources and attractions in theme-based brochures (both print and web-based), we can penetrate specific market niches and improve the odds that visitors will connect with what they seek.

Specialized guides for fishing, paddling, hiking and other activities are also possible. A rainy day guide for bad weather days could direct travelers to alternative activities that may alleviate

the disappointment they might otherwise experience if outdoor plans are thwarted. A “Byway Buffet” guide could direct travelers to outlets for purchasing local food products and to dining establishments featuring regional foods. Local efforts could also build on ANCA’s “Arts, Crafts, and Foods of the Adirondack North Country Region” brochure—featuring local artisans and products. Additional information is available on the AdirondackCraft.com website.

Goal #6. Improve the availability of basic tourist information to accommodate visitor needs and increase desirability of the byway as a destination.

Improving access to trip planning information will encourage more people to travel the byway and will help to improve their actual visitor experience. With more and more people using the internet to make their vacation planning decisions, plan their trips, and book their reservations, it is important to make sure that they can readily find information on the package experience offered by the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway, and that they can readily link to chambers of commerce and tourism offices to locate lodging and other services they may require during their travels. Chambers of commerce and tourism agencies must develop the website capacity to provide centralized information on byway resources, attractions, services and events.

Byway stakeholders should assess the availability of tourist information along the route and prepare a list of suggested improvements that will enable travelers to readily locate tourist information centers or kiosk locations should they require information or directions.

Locating lodging in an unfamiliar region can also be a challenge to travelers. At a minimum, lodging establishments should participate in an online “lodging availability” system (through links to the local chambers of commerce and/or tourism promotion agencies) so tourists can be assured of availability before making futile telephone calls. Ideally, lodging establishments would also offer online reservations. In either case, technical assistance and training may be necessary to aid some establishments in making this transition.

Goal #7. Improve the availability of comfort facilities.

Comfort stations and rest areas should be available and strategically located for traveler convenience. When traveling long stretches of a rural Byway, the need for a comfort facility can affect how much time a visitor will take to enjoy the more isolated Byway resources or whether or not they will stop to patronize a local shop or farm stand.

Private establishments may gain more sales by offering public restroom facilities in their business. For example, a shop in the Midwestern United States has a “Public Restroom” sign on its downtown storefront. People have to meander past the store’s goods on their way to the restroom in the back of the store. The restroom itself is decorated with art and craft items with a note that these items are available in the store. “Visitors” frequently purchase something on their way back out of the shop.

Tourism organizations serving the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Communities

Lewis County

Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
7383-C Utica Boulevard
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-2213
Email: info@lewiscounty.org
Websites: www.lewiscounty.org
www.adirondackstughill.org

Adirondack Regional Tourism Council
PO Box 2149
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
Phone: (518) 846-8016
Website: www.visitadirondacks.com

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce
101 Main Street
Canton, NY 13617-1248
Phone: 877-228-7810
Email: info@slccoc.org
Website: www.slccoc.org

Gouverneur Chamber of Commerce
214 East Main St.
Gouverneur, NY 13642
Phone: (315) 287-0331
Email: donna@lawrencemanor.com
Website: www.gouverneurchamber.net

Greater Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerce
330 Ford St.
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
Phone: (315) 393-3620
Email: chamber@gisco.net
Website: www.ogdensburgny.com

Canton Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 369
Canton Municipal Bldg.
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: (315) 386-8255
Email: cantoncc@northnet.org
Website: www.cantonnychamber.org

RECREATION

Introduction

While its farm lands and natural environment (forests and waterways) are elemental to many of its traditions, the natural resources of the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway also offer a rich variety of recreational opportunities to visitors. This section provides an overview of current, four season recreational resources and is followed by a discussion of the recreation goals from the implementation plan.

Overview of existing recreation opportunities

The Maple Traditions Scenic Byway is rich in opportunities for both active and passive outdoor recreation.

Active recreation opportunities include:

- Hiking
- Cross Country Skiing & Snowshoeing
- Bicycling and mountain biking
- Small and large game hunting
- Fishing
- Snowmobiling and winter recreation activities
- Canoeing, kayaking, and motor boating
- Geo-caching and letter boxing
- Rock and mineral hunting
- Scuba diving
- Golf

Passive recreation activities include:

- Birding and wildlife viewing
- Camping
- Picnicking

Accessible Recreation Activities

There are numerous opportunities for disabled individuals to enjoy the outdoors. These include handicap accessible trails at the Lowville Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail, the Indian Creek Nature Center outside of Canton, Heritage Park in Canton, and the Maple City Trail along Ogdensburg's waterfront. The NYS Department of Environmental has also constructed an accessible fishing platform on the Black River—near its Lowville Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail. A list of accessible sites on state forest lands may be found on the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov. Detailed local information and special permits are available through the DEC office in Lowville at (315) 376-3521.

Non-motorized trails

Opportunities for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing exist in community parks and state forestlands throughout the region. For more information, contact the local chambers of commerce or refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation's website at www.dec.ny.gov. Information on state land opportunities is also available through the local DEC office at (315) 376-3521.

Snowmobiling

A total of over 1,000 miles of public snowmobile trails are maintained in Lewis and St. Lawrence counties by volunteers from local clubs. With the region's abundant snow, these trails are often open when the rest of the state is without adequate snow. Trail maps are available through either the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce or the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. Additional information on local club contacts is available through the New York State Snowmobile Association at www.nysnowassoc.org. The resource map for the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway identifies where snowmobile trail corridors cross the Byway. See Appendix for a map of the regional snowmobile trail system. Note corridor trail connections linking the Tug Hill region and Adirondack region trail systems.

Miscellaneous Winter Sports and Activities

Northern New Yorkers have found a number ways to enjoy the long winters. Community ice rinks may be found in Lowville, Croghan, Gouverneur, Canton, and Ogdensburg. The lakes and rivers, when frozen over, offer quality ice fishing. Several communities also organize a variety of winter festivals and special events.

All-terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Lewis and St. Lawrence counties do offer and promote ATV events and trail riding. However, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is in the midst of reviewing and changing its policies regarding ATV use on state roads and forest lands. Still, many ATV trails cross private lands (with landowner permission) and use local town roads. Before planning an ATV outing, riders should check with the local chambers of commerce for the most current information on roads and lands that are open to ATVs.

Bicycling and Mountain Biking

Cycling enthusiasts traveling the byway will enjoy a unique perspective of the landscape and its communities. Rather than pedaling the length of the byway, some travelers may prefer to bring their bicycles along and enjoy a number of the designated bike-touring loops identified by local cyclists to more closely experience local history, the environment, or small-town atmosphere of the region's communities. Those who prefer mountain biking will find opportunities on gravel roads and informal trails through the area's forests.

The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) is preparing a comprehensive "Biking the Byways" website which will become a valuable resource for cyclists and mountain bikers.

Byway planners and stakeholder groups should take advantage of ANCA's invitation to participate in the project's development.

Hunting & Fishing

Hunting and fishing is a cultural tradition among region's population. Visitors may also enjoy these traditions on state forest lands and on fishing access sites throughout the region. Excellent opportunities are also available on private lands, with landowner permission. Game species include deer, turkey, ruffed grouse, rabbit, and other small game.

Numerous rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and streams offer peaceful surroundings, a variety of species, strong fish populations, and good public access. Available species, depending on the waterbody and habitat include, trout, perch, bullhead, northern pike, walleye, smallmouth and largemouth bass, muskies, carp, and a variety of panfish.

Canoeing, Kayaking, and Motorboating

The region's abundant rivers, lakes, and streams offer a variety of paddling and boating opportunities—from motorboating or waterskiing on the mighty St. Lawrence or the more remote Lake Bonaparte, to paddling the Beaver, Oswegatchie, or Raquette Rivers. Paddlers will find settings ranging from quiet wilderness to sections where they float on waterways bisecting historic villages. Paddlers will find additional information about paddling routes and events on the St. Lawrence Valley Paddlers website at www.slvpaddlers.org.

Rock and Mineral Hunting

Mineral collectors revere St. Lawrence County for the quality of its specimens. The crystalline bedrock has yielded a host of minerals, some rare, but most of common rock forming silicate and sulfide minerals that have unusual color, size and crystal shapes. The abundance and variety of minerals are chiefly due to the presence of ancient crystalline rocks. The wedge shaped county opens northwest toward the St. Lawrence River and a thin covering of sedimentary rocks.

The St. Lawrence Rock and Mineral Club meets monthly and hosts digs the third Saturday of the month during the summer. For more information, check their website at <http://www.stlawrenceco.com/>

Geo-caching and Letterboxing

The vast tracks of public lands make the region popular for geo-caching and letterboxing. Geo-caching is activity designed for GPS users who obtain coordinates of a hidden "cache" of goodies or trinkets and then search for these items, register in the logbook, and usually leave an item in return for the item you take. Letterboxing uses navigational skills to find hidden logbooks and rubber stamps. Participants stamp the logbook with their own personal stamp and stamp their own logbook with the stamp found hidden away.

More information on these activities may be found at www.geocaching.com and www.letterboxing.org. If you are new to these activities, each site has a “Getting Started” section that explains the activity, common protocols, needed equipment, and tips. If you are already experienced in either of these activities, hints and coordinates for caches may be located by entering a search by community name, zip code, or county.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Interpretation

The vast state forestlands and waterways along the byway provide abundant habitat for bird watching and wildlife viewing. Two nature centers provide accessible opportunities for viewing wildlife and learning more about habitats.

Indian Creek Nature Center is a 300-acre tract of upland and marsh within the Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area leased from the Department of Environmental Conservation. It provides a number of programs in environmental education for school groups, scouts, adults, college classes, etc. Its trails lead through fields, past ponds, marshes, swamps, forests and lake-edge habitats.

The Lowville Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail is located on 92 acres and features an arboretum containing over 300 different species of trees and shrubs. A wildlife area provides escape cover and nesting areas where birds and mammals can feed on the naturally growing seeds and fruits. The site also includes the upper section of a former fire tower that visitors may climb the stairs to enter.



Left: Model fire observation at DEC Demonstration Area outside of Lowville

Right: Sign to Indian Creek Nature Center in Rennselaer Falls

Goal #1: Enhance and promote existing recreation opportunities

As illustrated in the above list, this byway offers a great variety of recreation opportunities. Improved facilities and signage can improve way finding to recreation areas and facilitate access to those sites once the visitor arrives. Additional and improved parking as well as improving linkages to and between various trail systems could improve access to trailheads, waterways, and other recreational resources. Simple things such as improving the availability of comfort stations also contribute to the visitor experience and can help to encourage longer stays and repeat visits.

Use of website links and theme-based brochures (crafts, foods, bicycling, fishing, paddling, etc.) can draw greater attention to niche activities that would appeal to different interests. For example, a brochure on “local flavors” could identify retail sources of local food products, places where they can see these products being made, and dining establishments and special events where local foods are featured. Another brochure could provide information on heritage oriented agriculture related events and museums that highlight traditional agricultural practices. A “biking through history” brochure (bike routes featuring sites of historic interest) could encourage loop tours and longer visits from cyclists.

Goal #2: Create additional recreation opportunities that extend visitor stays or encourage repeat visits to the region.

Local officials and recreation groups should look for opportunities to expand four season recreation activities and create additional opportunities: such as new riverfront trails or canoe/kayak river access points. Such planning efforts are already underway in several communities along the byway and will soon produce new project ideas.

The CMP Implementation Plan (Goals C.1, & C.2) lists specific recommendations for action.

SIGNAGE & INTERPRETATION

Introduction

An effective signage program is key to ensuring a positive experience for byway travelers. Signage along the Byway route will be governed by an extensive set of rules and regulations with federal and state origins. The lead agency governing signage along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway in New York State is the New York State Department of Transportation. Local zoning laws must also be considered. Signage regulations fall into four categories:

1. Official signs provided by New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT)
2. Official signs provided and permitted by NYS DOT;
3. Official signs permitted by NYS DOT, including Tourist Oriented Directional Signage (also known as TODS) – provided by businesses or contributing resource/attraction owner; and
4. Non-Official signs provided by communities – placed outside the state right-of-way near municipal boundaries to identify byway communities, approved by NYS DOT, and are subject to local review and approval.

Within these categories, an entire “family” of sign types exists. In the past, interpreting existing signage language and regulations has been difficult for the professional transportation planner, community leaders, as well as the layperson volunteer. The New York State Department of Transportation State Scenic Byways Signage Manual is now the guiding document for ensuring that byway signage meets traffic safety codes and all other applicable signage regulations. Additionally, the Adirondack North Country Association’s New Guide to Interpretive Signage Along North Country Byways should be consulted to insure that the Maple Traditions Byway route will use effective signage and avoid the tendency to over sign travel and touring roads.

Workshops on the byway signage manual would be helpful to local highway departments, community planners and other byway stakeholders as a first step in pursuing the goals below. Encouraging the use of the manual will guide project implementers in the proper design, construction, permitting, and installation of signs along the corridor. Byway communities will need guidance on interpreting the signage manual, locating signage funding opportunities, and establishing contacts with capable administrators to lead community signage efforts as they move into the development, placement, and installation of desired signs. With the ever-changing leadership in byway communities, arrangements for ongoing signage education should be made.

Goal #1. Conduct a comprehensive signage assessment.

During CMP development, it became evident that a comprehensive signage assessment is needed corridor wide. It is strongly recommended that funding be secured to address the adequacy and legality of existing signage and interpretation in place including:

- Complete inventory of all existing signs with name of responsible party;
- Gather steward ownership contact information, including full resource name and significance;

- Notation of locations with lack of signage and locations needing improved signage.

Goal #2. Enhance wayfinding and strengthen byway identity through an effective directional signage program.

Wayfinding signage provides direction and peace of mind as visitors travel along the byway route and as they venture off the main route to access various services, attractions, or recreational opportunities. Since visitors can be moving through the area by motorized vehicle, on foot, snowmobiles or bicycles, consideration must be given to all these perspectives. The visitors' needs require careful planning and coordination in order to avoid a "clutter of signs," which ultimately confuse and disrupt the travel experience. A standardized criteria as set forth in ANCA's Design Standards Guide for Interpreting Scenic Byways should be applied to all interpretation and signage activities along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway. Criteria will include the following:

- Simple
- Well designed
- Easy to read
- Interesting to read (for interpretive signage)
- Well timed
- Well placed
- Thematic
- Easy to follow

An appropriate logo enhances the byway's identity and helps travelers to quickly recognize directional signage as they navigate along the byway route. Byway stakeholders felt it would be more appropriate to retain the maple leaf logo (or some version of it), currently used for the Black River Trail Scenic Byway, as the logo for the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway. A new graphic should be developed for the neighboring Black River Trail that more readily conveys the river theme for that byway.

Goal #3. Enhance visitors' and residents' understanding and appreciation of byway resources through education & interpretation.

Interpretive signage provides information to help the visitor to better understand and appreciate byway resources, thereby engaging them in experiencing the byway's resources rather than just observing them. Local stakeholders, county tourism agencies, ANCA, and NYS DOT should work together to develop a thematic signage program that enhances the overall byway image. In the public's mind the signage theme should be consistently applied to web content and print materials as well, in order to further reinforce the image and experience of the byway. It is suggested that future interpretive material be prepared based on marketing and branding research which should be conducted following the approval of the CMP.

Overview of Signage Types and Issues

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) will be used to lead visitors to area businesses located off of the Byway's primary route. Some on-route businesses may also qualify for TODS. Communities rely on a steady stream of visitor spending to remain viable in a rural economy dependent on tourism dollars. Along the byway route the two-color, blue and white TODS will serve as easily recognizable, consistent beacons. Byway travelers quickly learn to watch for these signs when seeking goods, services, and attractions. Local tourism related business owners should be made aware of their eligibility to pursue this type of signage. The NYS Scenic Byways Sign Manual states that, "TODS may also include advertising of services, activities, arts, crafts or products that are commonly accepted to be of specific interest to travelers. Those choosing to advertise their business establishment or resources will need information on how to obtain a permit and place a sign. Contact information naming the Department of Transportation's Real Estate division representative responsible for the particular areas of the route must be prepared and distributed. Additionally, information on accessing the New York State's Department of Transportation's signage manual should be circulated to all Maple Traditions Scenic Byway stakeholders and byway partners.

Destination Markers

Resource Destination Markers are small signs placed along the route to capture the traveler's attention and direct them to Byway resources. These Destination Markers are usually provided and installed by the Department of Transportation. Along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway, recreational trails' access points need to be marked. Access points for recreation sites are hard to find, as they are so well camouflaged by the landscape and must therefore be clearly marked. Parks, fishing access points, boat launches, wildlife viewing areas and trail heads for many of the Department of Environmental Conservation's recreational and natural resources are so completely obscured that without a sign they would be missed entirely. The Department of Transportation's right-of-way provides a legal space for sign placements that are otherwise not permitted on Forest Preserve lands.

Byway Pedestrian Directional Signs

Byway Pedestrian Directional signs will guide visitors to various points of interest once they are out of their vehicles. To maintain continuity in signing the byway, the directional signs will feature the State's byway logo and lettering for the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway. Byway groups still need to make decisions about where these signs are needed. Those who decide to move forward will have to absorb all costs to design and fabricate the signs. The groups will have to secure permission from any involved landowners, follow local ordinances and install the signs outside the byway's right-of-way.

Interpretive Signs

Interpretive signs provide information about significant events, places, people or things. The use of the byway logo on each interpretive sign reinforces the interconnected system and promotes visitation. These signs will be used to help visitors to learn more about the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway's history, culture, natural systems and recreation. The special stories about local lore, life, and events need to be shared to improve the visitor's experience and create a greater awareness and appreciation for the area. When designing interpretive signs, communities should take the opportunity to include information highlighting other resources to encourage byway users to move from one area to another and to promote visitation of underused resources. A well-coordinated system of interpretive signs will build the expectation that each new site brings another worthwhile experience.

In order to avoid over-signing the byway, kiosks, centralized strategic interpretation spaces, and stop-offs should be used, particularly in communities along the route. These help inform the traveler of the historic, cultural, recreational and natural resources in the immediate area, as well as those at the "next" stop. Coordinating "on the ground" signage locations with an interpretive map and guide help the visitor to locate these interpretive spots. Electronic forms of interpretive programming, in the form of low frequency radio programming, Internet and audiotapes provide another dimension that might enhance the traveler's experience and should be considered. Another important aspect of centralizing interpretive information is to encourage the traveler to get out of his or her car and walk around each community, an important encouragement of commerce.

Official Byway Route Identification Signs

Byway communities will be encouraged to use the byway's name and logo on all signage to lend continuity to the Byway experience. Cities, towns and villages will benefit from the appeal of the brand name which umbrellas the entire route. The repeated use of the easily recognizable name and graphic prominently displayed on signs conditions visitors to watch for similar signs as they alert travelers that they are approaching new services, attractions, or resources. Being entirely outside of the Adirondack Park, Maple Traditions Scenic Byway signs placed within the right-of-way will be brown and white in color per NYS Byway signage regulations.

Route Logo



As mentioned previously, Byway partners believe the current maple leaf logo is more appropriate for the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway than its currently legislated use for the "Black River Trail Scenic Byway".

If a directive is made by the regulatory agencies to pursue a new logo, local plan implementers will ultimately have to follow the logo process provided in the new state sign manual. Depending upon whether or not the original graphic design was adopted by legislation, there may be additional procedures necessary to follow to re-legislate new artwork. Local implementers, in conjunction with ANCA, will need to consider the scope of the work and ways to share the workload associated with a new design and the approval process. Gathering input and consensus on whether and how to pursue a new design, and ultimately on developing a new design, would

involve a commitment by a core group of involved byway representatives from the Maple Traditions communities and a source of funding would have to be identified.

Community Welcome Identification Signs

The Corridor Management Plan organizers agree that Community Welcome Identification Signs should be used to highlight gateways to cities, towns, villages, and hamlets. Upon approval of this Corridor Management Plan, Scenic Byway communities will need to be contacted and reminded that they are eligible to receive Community Welcome Signs designed and installed by the Department of Transportation in the State's right-of-way. Communities may elect to supply their own welcome sign for placement outside the right-of-way. The welcome signs will include locally selected artwork and will also show the byway name and logo. Sign installers will seek Department of Transportation approval and adhere to all local ordinances. Byway communities will work with ANCA in preparing appropriate community identification signs.

Distance between communities would be helpful to have noted. For example, "Community of X, next community is X, how many miles away" considering the dearth of gas, toilets, ATM's etc. and their seasonality.

Bikeway Signage

CMP organizers want to work towards having consistent and regularly spaced bike route marking and directional signage for cyclists and vehicle operators along the Scenic Byway as allowed by NYSDOT. Much of the proposed Maple Traditions Scenic Byway route is already marked with bike lane pavement markers or "Shared Roadway" signs. Regardless, drivers need continual reminders of random presence of cyclers. It is recommended that the pavement markers would be used only in cases where the shoulder width meets NYSDOT requirements. The popularity of bicycling and mountain biking continues to grow within the state as alternative means of transportation and as recreational sports. Opportunities exist for expansion of routes and linkages, both within the community and along the route. Additional discussion is needed regarding the parallel bicycle routes and loop routes. Byway communities are developing and expanding their road and mountain biking systems and are requesting adequate signs to direct and accommodate road and trail users.

Conclusion

As the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway continues to develop its resources, signage and interpretation will play an increasing role in the planning process. All proposed signage planning projects should provide travelers with the information they need to make the transition from a vehicle, to a walking environment, to a visitor experience. The New York State Regional Scenic Byways Coordinator can provide a clearinghouse function to access New York State Department of Transportation and facilitate the exchange of information. The Regional Coordinator can be reached via the contact information on the following page.

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TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY, & COMMUNITY DESIGN

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Multi-modal Issues

The Maple Traditions Scenic Byway is a two-lane highway along its entire route, with the exception of a center turning lane in a few locations. Proposed projects in any of the other goal areas must be evaluated for the effect they may have on the flow of multi-modal traffic (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular) along the byway, across the byway, egress off, or ingress onto the byway.

Bicycling

The Maple Traditions Scenic Byway is particularly well-suited to bicycle touring. Ninety-percent of the byway and the alternate loop through Canton has marked bicycle lanes or “Shared Roadway” signs for bicycles. The existing signage contributes to the Maple Traditions appeal to outdoor recreationalists and makes it easy to move along the route using non-fossil fuel powered transportation.



Most mountain biking opportunities along the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway are informal and involve the use of snowmobile trails or gravel roads through forest lands. Although there are no formal mountain bike trail networks adjacent to the Byway, Lewis County does own a reforestation area just east of New Bremen (take Lomber Rd. from NYS 812) that it promotes for mountain biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing (ungroomed).

Pedestrian Walkability

The incorporated villages (Lowville, Croghan, Harrisville, Gouverneur, Heuvelton and Canton) and the City of Ogdensburg could be considered walkable, pedestrian-friendly communities. One area worthy of investigation is the possibility of an improved pedestrian crossing or traffic calming measures along NYS 3/812 in the center of Harrisville. Despite the 30 MPH speed limit on that segment, traffic seems to go through the village faster than the posted speed limit.

Three of these communities have Transportation Enhancement Program projects completed or underway that will improve desirability for byway visitors. Lowville is currently working to develop a bicycle and pedestrian path along a segment of an abandoned railroad corridor through the village. Canton recently dedicated its new Heritage Park trail on an island in the village and

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passenger service.

In New York State, the nearest access to a passenger train station (Amtrak) is in either Utica or Syracuse, both of which are about 90 minutes south of Lowville. The closest passenger train service to Ogdensburg, at the northern terminus of the Byway, is VIA Rail in Canada. VIA Rail's closest station is in Brockville, Ontario, which is across the river from Ogdensburg and then 12 miles (20K) west of Prescott, Ontario—midway on the Toronto-to-Montreal line.

Ag: Farm Tractors, Equipment, and Wagons/Buggies

One unique aspect of this byway is the amount of agricultural related traffic—both motorized and non-motorized. In addition to modern tractors and farm equipment, byway travelers will frequently pass horse-drawn wagons or buggies driven by the Amish population. Motorists must take special care to pass such vehicles safely, giving them adequate clearance while being aware of oncoming traffic.

Snowmobiling

The rural North County is also a popular destination for snowmobilers and ATV enthusiasts, with many of the major trail corridors crossing the local highways. Although most recreational vehicle operators stop to ensure safety before crossing the roadway, motorists should use caution when they see a snowmobile or ATV approaching the roadway. —*See attachments for countywide snowmobile trail maps. The Resource Map also indicates where snowmobile trails cross the Byway.*

Waterways

With the exception of Lowville (though the Black River is only a short distance outside the village), each of the byway communities has a navigable waterway passing through its center. Lowville is located at the approximate mid-point of a 40-mile flatwater segment of the Black

River that runs from Lyons Falls (on the Black River Trail Scenic Byway) to Carthage (on the Olympic Scenic Byway). Harrisville is located on the West Branch of the Oswegatchie.

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The Oswegatchie River (left) along NYS Route 812 south of Heuvelton. NYSDEC's Grasse River Boat Launch (right) on Route 68, north of Canton.

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Airports

The only public airport in the Byway corridor is the Ogdensburg-Prescott International Airport, at the Byway's northern terminus. The closest airport to the southern terminus in Lowville is approximately 30-miles away at the Watertown International Airport. Both Airports offer domestic flights to Albany, New York. Service is provided by Cape Air.

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There is limited commercial bus service to the region. Adirondack Trailways has daily service to Watertown (Jefferson County), and to the St. Lawrence County communities of Gouverneur, Canton, Potsdam, and Massena. Gouverneur and Canton are the only communities on the byway with direct bus service. Lewis County residents must travel to either Watertown or Gouverneur to access Adirondack Trailways.

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Scenic Byways & Sustainable Energy

During 2005, the Adirondack North Country Association participated in several State workshops on Sustainable Energy. After considering the accelerated level of change in the fuel market, the Adirondack North Country Association felt it was imperative that the Maple Traditions Corridor Management Plan consider the situation as it relates to future Byway planning. The current conditions left unchecked will inevitably impact the communities who rely on tourism dollars. Byways depend on an audience of visitors arriving by fueled vehicles so it is appropriate to address this concern in the Transportation Section.

As we begin to explore sustainable energy, environmental impacts and rising fuel costs in relation to Byway travelers, several questions arise. How will Byway communities and Byway management entities adapt to the effects of rising fuel costs? Should ANCA and Byway Committees consider actively monitoring and studying trends? What will be the impact on visitation along the North Country Byways?

A simple first step will be to explore the best methods of encouraging the use of fuel-efficient cars, SUVs, campers and trucks in the Adirondack region. One example is the Lake Placid/Essex County Visitor Center promotion that awards a special pin to those arriving at the Visitor Center in energy efficient vehicles. Byway leaders should consider following discussions on the use of alternative fuels for vehicles.

With reduced consumer spending at the gas pumps, New York State's interconnected North Country Byway routes are positioned to become economically desirable touring roads based on their road, water, land and rail linkages. The existing connections with neighboring Byway communities will accommodate visitors trying to conserve fuel yet experience a variety of locales. Pedestrian paths and walkways, hiking trails and waterways allow many options to move through the North Country. The close proximity of resources linked via land and water routes allows access for visitors to experience a variety of activities without having to use extra fuel to motor long distances. The expansive connectivity provided through these resources is described in detail in both this section and under the Recreation heading of this document. Byway leaders will have to collect, package, map and distribute information about alternative modes of transportation on land and water to the public. In time, it will serve all communities well to re-iterate the convenience of moving from community to community in their Byway promotions.

The sustainable energy topic is fairly new to North Country Byway planners. A good opportunity exists for the various management entities to work together to promote the "connectivity" of the neighboring North Country Byways along with the other nearby New York State Byways. The clustering of resources easily accessed by Byway crossroads in the State's 2,400-mile system should be explored more closely as we look to encourage fuel efficient touring options.

Transportation/Safety Goals and Discussion

Goal #1. Provide for the safety of all byway users

Byway users include local residents who know the local roads and travelers who are unfamiliar with the territory and potential blind spots. In particular with this byway, highway traffic may include not just vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, but also farm equipment and Amish horse-drawn buggies and wagons. In some areas, major trail systems for snowmobiles and ATVs cross the byway route.

Local officials, tourism organizations, and other stakeholder groups must work with county highway departments and the NYS Department of Transportation to evaluate safety issues at trail crossings and roadside parking/rest areas, historic sites, or pullouts and identify any necessary remedial or preventive actions. Although no immediate issues were identified during the CMP process, these issues deserve thorough consideration for any future projects to create new parking, rest areas, trailheads, or information kiosks. Village and hamlet areas, when developing local plans, should consider traffic calming strategies and pedestrian-friendly design of street crossings and sidewalks.

Examples as they apply to specific sites and usage conditions:

Example One: Pedestrian Crossings

If a parking area is located on the opposite side of the road from a resource/attraction, then pedestrian crossing signage and/or striping should be installed in order to direct pedestrians to the safest crossing point and to alert motorists to the possibility of pedestrian congestion and crossings along the marked section of the road.

Example Two: Parking Area

A new parking area for access to a recreational trailhead or information kiosk should be designed to allow for safe entrance back onto the byway.

Goal #2. Continue to improve the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway transportation infrastructure

Overall, the roadway along this byway route is in good condition. Local governments and the NYS Department of Transportation should continue to monitor needed capital improvements and to share information on maintenance schedules with ANCA and local CMP implementers. Towns or villages should include DOT in any planning exercises or streetscape improvement projects. For example, coordinating a village sidewalk improvement project or infrastructure project with a DOT reconstruction project could save time and yield cost efficiencies while also avoiding the potential waste of tearing up the street to lay pipe after a roadway has already been improved. Streetscape improvements identified in a village or hamlet design plans might be incorporated into DOT's "context sensitive design" approach to a state highway project, thereby minimizing the cost to local municipalities.

Goal #3. Promote and increase linkages and connections for the use of and access to multi-modal forms of transportation

The proposed Maple Traditions Scenic Byway intersects with 3 other designated scenic byways, thereby supporting a network of scenic byways throughout the Adirondack North Country region that provides a variety of tour route options for travelers. The three connecting byways include the Black River Trail, Olympic Trail, and Seaway Trail. (*See Recreation Section/Resource Map for names and locations of trails.*)

A number of motorized and non-motorized trail networks intersect the byway in both the rural areas and village centers, creating numerous multi-modal transportation opportunities. These trail linkages can provide gateway access out to more extensive trail networks, or can provide alternative transportation routes between communities, thereby removing pedestrians and cyclists from the more heavily traveled roadways. Of particular historical interest, the Railway Society of Northern New York has plans for a passenger train excursion between Croghan and Lowville, utilizing the Lowville and Beaver River Railroad. — *See Recreation Section/Resources Map for names and locations of trails*

Goal #4. Establish and maintain an electronic communication network with ANCA, the regional NYS DOT officials and the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway stakeholders

Establishing a proper communication network with the NYS Department of Transportation is a crucial step in bringing forth this CMP's transportation recommendations. The contact information will enable Byway communities to integrate the proposed actions as complementary projects and implement them concurrently as regular state maintenance and other DOT operations are conducted. Points of contacts need to be established locally between project coordinators and Department of Transportation staff. As lead agent, the Adirondack North Country Association would like to receive notification of proposed maintenance operations and other Department of Transportation initiatives planned along the route. Local communities would then be informed electronically by ANCA about upcoming planning meetings and dates of public hearings.

ANCA will need to prepare and distribute a list of names and contact information for use by local and regional plan implementers. Additionally, interested parties should be directed to NYS DOT's agency website for current names and phone numbers for Regional Directors, Regional Byway Coordinators, Resident Engineers, Regional Traffic and Safety Engineers, Real Estate Division and Regional Planning and Program Managers.

General Communication and Coordination of Transportation and Safety Issues

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Local officials and Byway partners should also be sure to attend public meeting held by the county or NYS DOT regarding plans for their upcoming projects. It is a good way to be aware of future projects and is also an opportunity to influence the final design of a project since these meetings are held to invite public comment as well as to inform.

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