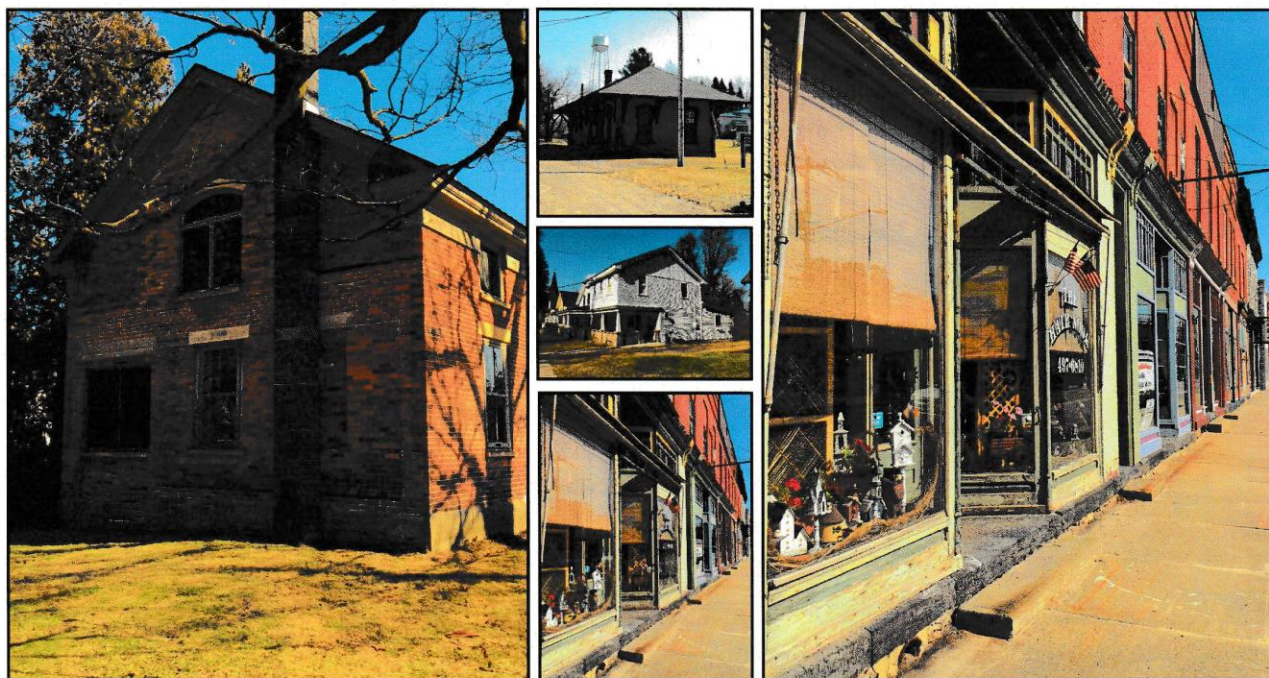# FREE WALKING TOUR CHATEAUGAY

AARCH

AARCH TOUR

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2017

AARCH wishes to thank Mick Jarvis and members of the Chateaugay Historical Society for lending their time and expertise to helping organize and lead this outing. AARCH is grateful for your support!

ITINERARY

10:00 am   **Welcome and Introductions at Chateaugay Town Hall**
Mary Cirbus, AARCH Program Director
Mick Jarvis, Chateaugay Historical Society

10:15 am   **Begin Walking Tour**
East Main Street
Church Street
Depot Street
Four Corners
West Main Street
River Street
East Main Street

12:00 pm   **Return to Chateaugay Town Hall; end walking tour.**
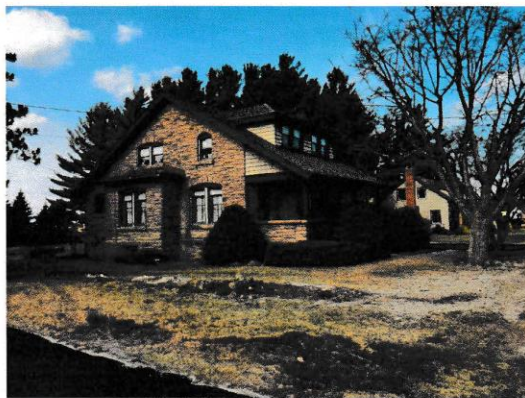
HISTORY OF CHATEAUGAY, 1796 TO THE PRESENT

Chateaugay was initially settled in 1796 by Benjamin Roberts and Nathan Beman, who had completed a survey of the area the year before in 1795. Despite the remote, frontier conditions, the population had grown enough to be declared a township within Clinton County by 1799, and by 1800 had 443 residents, according to the second US census, spread across the town which encompassed all of the present Franklin County. The town served as quarters for American troops during the War of 1812, and as staging grounds for troops that fought in the Battle of Chateaugay (Quebec). Additionally, a small battle was fought just north of the present village.

The opening of the Northern Railroad in the 1850s led to an economic boom for the residents of Chateaugay. The proximity of the railroad allowed farmers to ship their products quickly to a much larger pool of consumers than ever before. Other industries also benefited from the railroad. As a result, the population increased and the town prospered.

In 1856 Chateaugay was destroyed by a tornado that razed or severely damaged 128 buildings within the village limits and several buildings elsewhere in the township. Despite this disaster the village of Chateaugay was formally incorporated in 1868. Subsequently, water, sewer, and electrical power systems were developed for village residents. Residents continued to rebuild in the years after the tornado and erected several notable buildings, including the Chateaugay Academy in 1879, the Town Hall in 1901, and the Chateaugay Agricultural Society fairgrounds, which hosted annual fairs from 1908-11.

The 20th century saw many Chateaugay citizens serve their country in two world wars, Korea, Viet Nam, and other recent conflicts. Many local projects and events helped to further develop and define the town, including a centralized school building complex, a recreational park, and a new fire station. During the 1980s, New York State began planning to expand the state's correction system by constructing several new facilities. The North Country, especially Chateaugay, was very open to the placement of new facilities within the town. Following a concerted local effort to promote the town as the location of a new corrections facility, the NYS Department of Corrections opened a unit in Chateaugay in 1990. The jobs created within the new facility gave the local economy a dramatic boost. The new correctional campus was

constructed on a 100-acre parcel of land. Built as a state-of-the-art facility, capable of being reconfigured and expanded, if necessary, the Chateaugay prison became one of the newest and most economical units within the NYS Corrections system. Unfortunately, the facility was closed in a recent round of prison system downsizing.

In spite of the prison closure, Chateaugay is experiencing an infrastructure revitalization that is fueled by strong community support and outstanding civic involvement. Among the recent projects are a refurbished Recreation Park with three pools, the new Chateaugay Memorial Library, a completed renovat-

ed Town Hall with its newly refurbished theater, two local wind farms and the construction of a natural gas network to serve the cheese plant, school, and other businesses and private homes throughout the village.

WALKING TOUR

EAST MAIN STREET

Town Hall

Originally constructed in 1911, the Town Hall contained municipal offices, a local lock-up, and a grand opera house. It was gutted by a devastating fire in 1940. Within a year, residents fully rebuilt the Town Hall, and modified it to include office space, a theater, and a bowling alley below the theater. It has been recently renovated to provide new office spaces and local court facilities. The theater has new seating, new sound and lighting systems, and a digital projection capability. The large space on the second floor now contains a community meeting room as well as space for the Chateaugay Historical Society, its collection, and Archival Center.

Lumberyard and Blacksmith Shop

The lumberyard was built prior to the 1880's and was originally the home to the Davies carriage shop. It was later owned by the Johnston family. The Johnstons had extensive lumber holdings in the woods around Chateaugay Lake and sawed and planed much of their lumber inventory. They also sold tools and harness assemblies. The blacksmith shop was owned by C.L. Sancomb. These two businesses generated a large volume of the business traffic found in the downtown area.
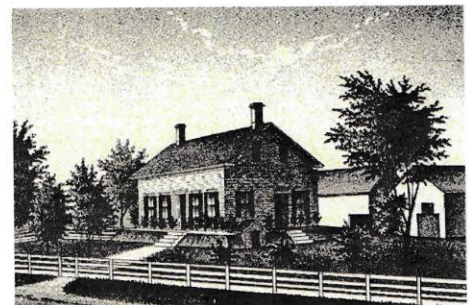
Presbyterian Church

This church was built in 1902 at a cost of nearly $10,000. It replaced an earlier church on the site that needed repairs more extensive than were practical to undertake. The stained glass panels were done by the Horwood family of Ogdensburg.

Smith Home

Built around 1818 by Col. Thomas Smith, a member of one of Chateaugay's first families, it was later owned by prominent businessman, W.S. Alvord. It was extensively remodeled in 1923. Over the years, the barns to the rear of the property have been removed and the front and rear porches have been added. Remnants of the servants' quarters can still be seen in the basement. The basement space was very comfortable with lath and plaster walls covered with wallpaper. Half of the base-

ment space was kitchen and the living quarters for the help made up the rest. All kitchen deliveries were made to one of the two basement entries.

Beman House

This house was built by the Beman family and eventually became the home of the grandson and namesake of one of Chateaugay's founders, Nathan Beman. After being owned by Frank W. Beman, it was the home of Dr. John E. McIntosh and his family. He also kept his medical office here. A fourteen star flag, originally the property of Revolutionary War veteran Nathan Beman, was found in the attic of this house in 1961. It was one of only three fourteen star flags known to exist. It marked the admission of Vermont into the Union in 1791. It eventually passed into the hands of a dealer in antiquities who sold it at auction for over $24,000.
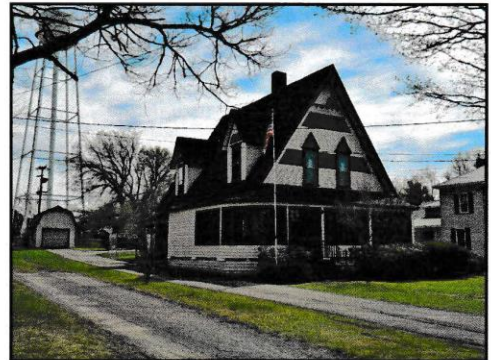
CHURCH STREET

Funeral Home

This home was built before 1875 by James Mitchell and was later owned by George Boomhower. It was a bakery in the 1930's that was operated by several individuals. It has most recently been the local Funeral Home.

Doige Home

This house was built by Willard. L. Collins after he sold the former Episcopal Church to William Ryan in 1897. It was the home of local political leader and NYS Assemblyman, William L. Doige, Collins' son-in-law. Doige's daughter, Catherine, lived here until her death in 2015 at the age of 101.
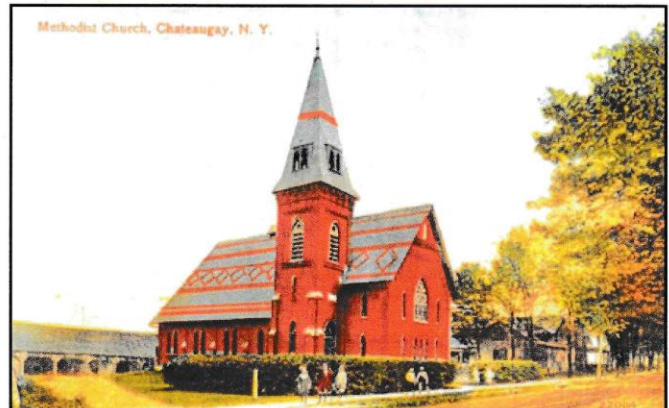
Episcopal Church

This foundation was laid in 1875. The plan was for it to become St. John's Episcopal Church. This was the third attempt at founding an Episcopal congregation in town. The first was during the 1830's, but only a few services were held and the attempt faded before 1840. That small congregation was never named. The second try began in 1849 when St. Peter's Church was formed. Unfortunately, the participation was very intermittent and St. Peter's was disbanded before 1855. The St. John's congregation suffered from the same intermittent participation and the church mortgage lapsed even before this building was completed. The structure was purchased by Willard L. Collins who finished it as a family home. By 1891, the St. John's Episcopal congregation was disbanded.
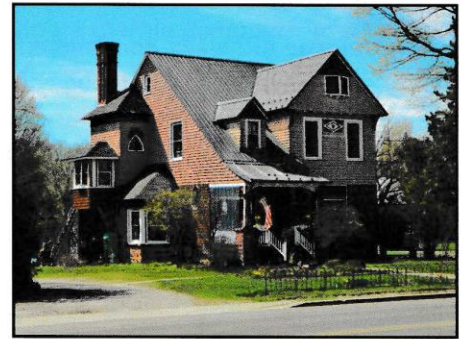

Methodist Church

The first Methodist Episcopal Church on this site, a wooden building that had been damaged in the Tornado of 1856 and later repaired, was demolished in 1880. The present structure was constructed in 1882 at a cost of $12,000.

DEPOT STREET

Levi Peake Home

The first home on this property was owned by A.L. Collins. That home was moved to the rear of the lot when the property was purchased by prominent merchant, Levi Peake. He constructed the present building in the early 1900's. It suffered extensive fire damage in a February 1934 fire. It was then owned by the Van Aken family who made restorative repairs immediately.

Bailey Home

Originally the farmhouse of the William Bailey family. Judge Bailey moved here from Plattsburgh around 1805 and was one of the largest landholders in the town. His son, Admiral Theodorus Bailey was born in this house. Theodorus entered the Navy at age 12, eventually rising to the rank of Admiral, and was a hero of the Battle of New Orleans during the Civil War. This is the oldest building in the village.

Train Station

The first passenger depot was built for the opening of the Northern Railroad in 1850. Eventually, it became a two story structure that was damaged by fire. It was rebuilt as the single story building still standing today. Passenger service to the Chateaugay station was discontinued in 1953. Freight service ended in 1963 and the final train rolled through town in 1964. Eventually, the tracks were torn up and all the rights of way were sold along the railroad's route.
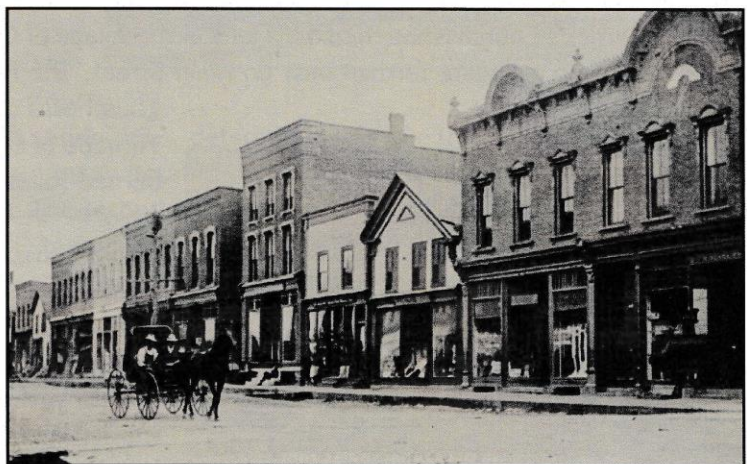

Van Vechten House

This property was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. John S. Van Vechten who built the present structure around 1916. It was eventually owned by others including, M.R. Brown, Mary Hyland Ryan and Gerald Hyland. From its earliest years, this was always a two family home.

FOUR CORNERS

Jackson Block

The Jackson Block was built in 1876 by a local druggist, R.A. Jackson. He had previously purchased the Union House hotel and had the building moved from this lot on Main Street to a lot around the corner, fronting Depot Street. The adjoining building was constructed by James Mitchell.

Hotel

This hotel was originally constructed as a small log structure that hosted travelers in Chateaugay's earliest years. The hotel was modified over the years—it was enlarged, remodeled, and

reconfigured several times. In addition to these alterations, the hotel was also renamed several times. Over the course of its existence, the hotel was known as The Brooks House, Ladd's, the Chateaugay Hotel, the Chateau, and several other monikers. The building is currently vacant.
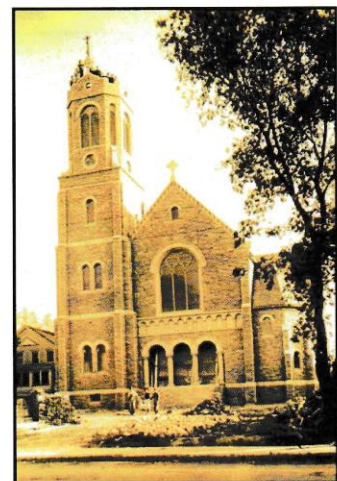
Bank of Chateaugay Building

Built in 1894 of Gouverneur marble, this corner building became the largest and most substantial business building in the village. The front trim was on red sandstone with Corinthian crowns in terra cotta panels. In its earliest years, the second floor was leased to various businesses, and civic organizations. The most significant change to the building's original design was the removal of the main entrance from the southeast corner to the west end of the south side.

WEST MAIN STREET

St. Patrick's Church

This St. Patrick's Church is the third of its kind in the village of Chateaugay. The other two churches were farther west on Main Street. The first St. Patrick's Church was destroyed by the Tornado of 1856. The second burned following a lightning strike in 1916. The cornerstone for this present building was laid in 1923. It is built of Gouverneur marble. The first service celebrated in the yet-to-be-completed church was Midnight Mass

NOTES

EVENTS—SAVE THE DATE!

- **Friday, June 16**
  AARCH Benefit Concert at Greystone

- **Saturday, June 17**
  Free Walking Tour of Keeseville

- **Saturday, June 24**
  AARCH Annual Meeting at North Country School

- **Saturday, July 8**
  AARCH Benefit Event at Tumblehome Boatshop

- **Monday, August 28**
  AARCH Annual Golf Tournament at Whiteface Club & Resort

- **Monday, September 18**
  AARCH Awards Luncheon at Nettle Meadow Farm

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AARCH members are committed to preserving the historic places that tell the story of the Adirondacks, and help make this a better place to live, work, and visit. Join AARCH online:

www.aarch.org/support

Member benefits include advance registration and discounts on tours and events, 20% off on publications at our Online Store, subscription to our printed and e-newsletters and lots more.

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