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Shirley L. Koester, Editor

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The Next Meeting

will be March 6, 2000, at the first floor meeting room at the Government Center, 137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, at 7:30 PM. Steven Engelhart, the executive director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage and the author of *Crossing the River: Historic Bridges of the AuSable River*, will present a slide lecture on this topic.

One of the first to recognize the historic importance of these bridges was the eminent bridge historian, Richard Sanders Allen, who said in 1987: "There a few watercourses in America comparable in length to the AuSable, over which so many different early bridge types remain." Built over more than 100 years, these bridges include masonry arches like the 1843 Stone Arch Bridge in Keeseville, wooden covered bridge like the 1857 Jay Covered Bridge, a variety of wrought iron, cast iron and steel trusses, stone-faced concrete arch bridges and the magnificent steel arch span over the AuSable Chasm. Not only do they represent a variety of engineering solutions to crossing the river but they are also immeasurably intertwined in the local history of the AuSable Valley. Bridges provide connections between places and help to tie together a community's social and economic fabric. Bridges are built because a need exists to have a crossing at a certain location and once the bridge is built it creates an opening or opportunity for other activities (settlement, industry, agriculture) to occur.

This program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and also by

the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, a federal agency serving the public by strengthening museums and libraries. It is free and open to the public.

The First Settler of Ausable

The following essay, by Miss Bertha Bentley of Peru, NY, was presented to the Clinton County Teachers' Association at Plattsburgh on Monday evening, May 7, 1888.

About the first of July 1786, a small sailing vessel arrived at the mouth of the Great River Sable.

On board this vessel, was a family of ten persons who had come from the vicinity of Boston to find them a home in this wilderness. The father of this family was Capt. Edward Everett. He was a tall straight man about forty-five years of age and had served his country during the Revolutionary War. His wife's name was Rachel. Their oldest son, George was a drummer boy at the Battle of Saratoga. Besides this son there were seven other children.

This was not the first visit of Capt. Everett to this section of the country, for he, being a land surveyor, had the year previous been employed by Zephaniah Platt and his associates to help survey their land. He was promised at this time 150 acres, on condition that he would "improve and settle on this land within one year from the date of the deed and remain with his identical family for a term of six years next to come, unless he or his heirs have leave first obtained from Zephaniah Platt or his heirs under hand and sel [seal], to sell or remove from the same—the calamities of war only excepted."

Capt. Everett accepted Platt's offer, returned home for his family, and was now on his way to the land which had been promised him. The sloop left them at the mouth of the AuSable River and Capt. Everett with his wife and younger members of

his family were rowed up the river to the basin at the lower end of AuSable Chasm. The elder sons took the team and a load of household goods and followed the banks of the river until they came to the same place. Here they joined the rest of the family and started again, following a line of marked trees for three miles to the westward. This led them to the foot of what is now called Halleck Hill, the place selected for their future home. There was no house of course, so Capt. Everett and his sons had to commence building one immediately, and in this manner they probably celebrated the fourth of July which was the tenth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Edward Everett's lot comprised that part of Richard P. Keese's present farm which lies east of the "Union," and the whole home farm of Alexander Arthur. The consideration mentioned in his deed was only "ten shillings lawful money of New York." His nearest neighbor was John Hay who lived on the lake shore, ten miles away. But very near Edward Everett's south line was a lodge of Indians, who were friendly and gave the settlers no trouble. In order to furnish the table with fish, the girls would go to the basin below AuSable Chasm, following the same path they travelled, when they first came to their new home.

One of the grandsons now living says he remembers his Aunt Polly say that one time when she went to the basin to fish, a salmon bit her hook and it was so large that if her brother who happened to be with her at the time, had not caught hold of her she would have lost the fish pole and all. It is said of Edward Everett that he once took a half bushel of corn on his back, walked to Plattsburgh to the mill, following a line of marked trees, and returned the next day with his grist in the same manner.

Four years after [his arrival], in the year 1790, under authority of the Commissioner of the State Land Office, Zephaniah Platt and Platt Rogers built a road commencing in Warren Co., and extending through Plattsburgh to Champlain village thus making the route to Plattsburgh easier. About this time John Keese, Peter Halleck, Caleb Green and others came to

live near Capt. Everett. When in 1792 the Town of Peru was organized he was selected as its first supervisor and he was re elected to that office three times in the four years from 1793 to 1797.

In 1807, a little over twenty years after he came to this country, Capt. Everett, doubtless feeling the infirmities of age, saw fit to resign his property and its cares to his son and namesake, Edward Everett, Jr.

NOTE: Captain Everett lived until about the year 1815 at about the age of 75 years.

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