

## Settled by saddle-bag preacher

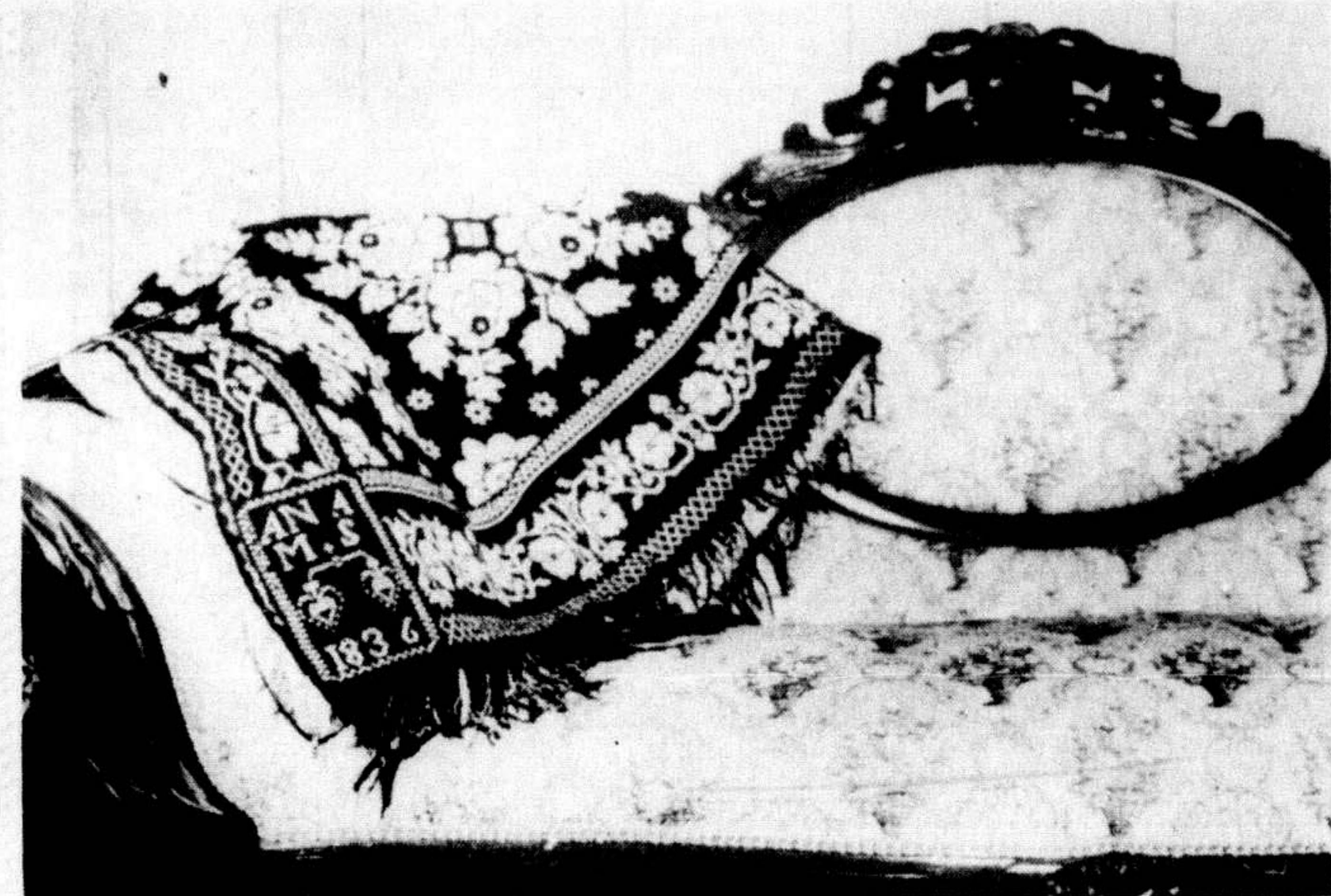
# Untouched by development Lowville a natural beauty



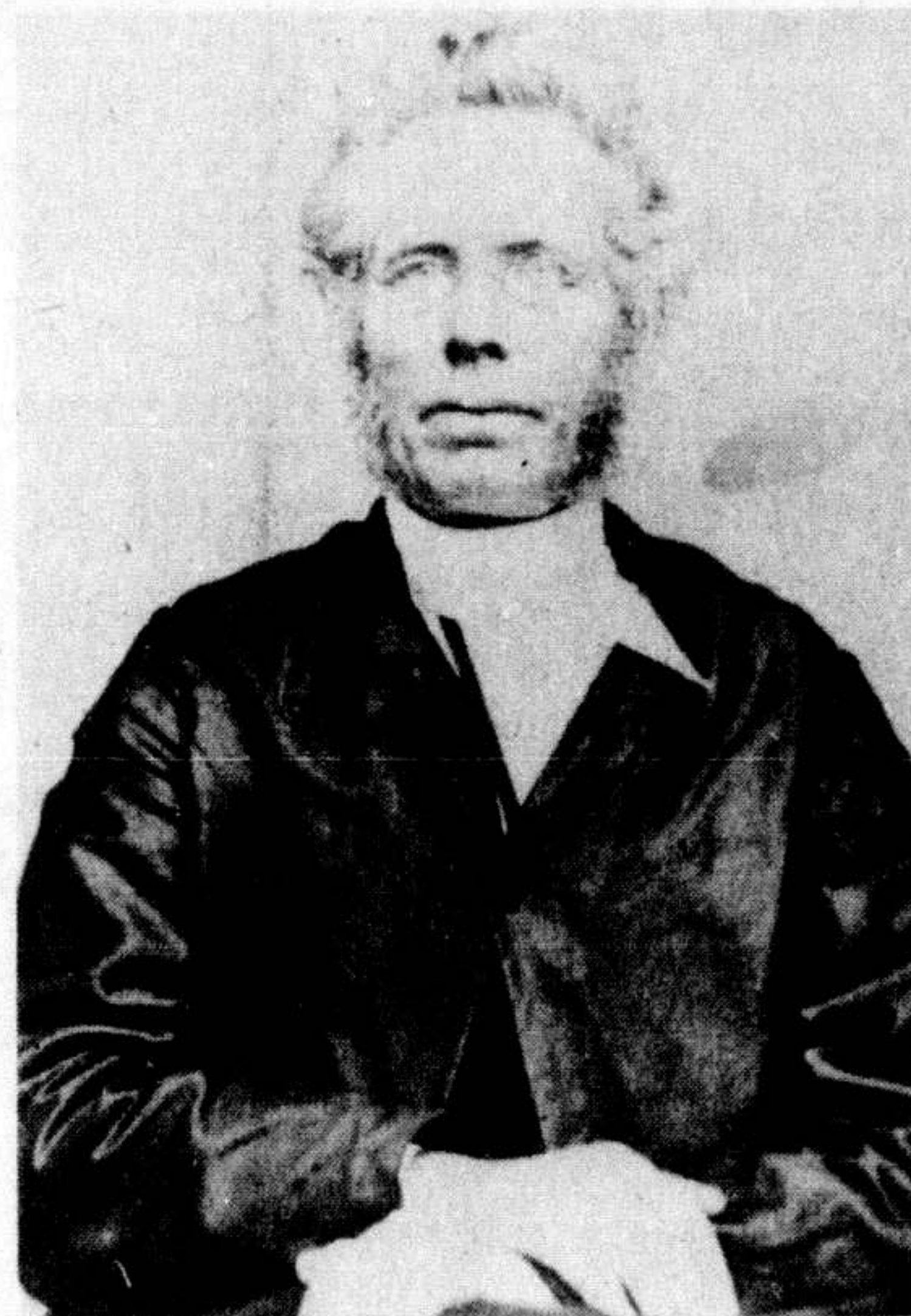
WIFF OF Nostalgia can be found in this old antique shop. It is chock full of reminders of the days when Lowville was a bustling community.



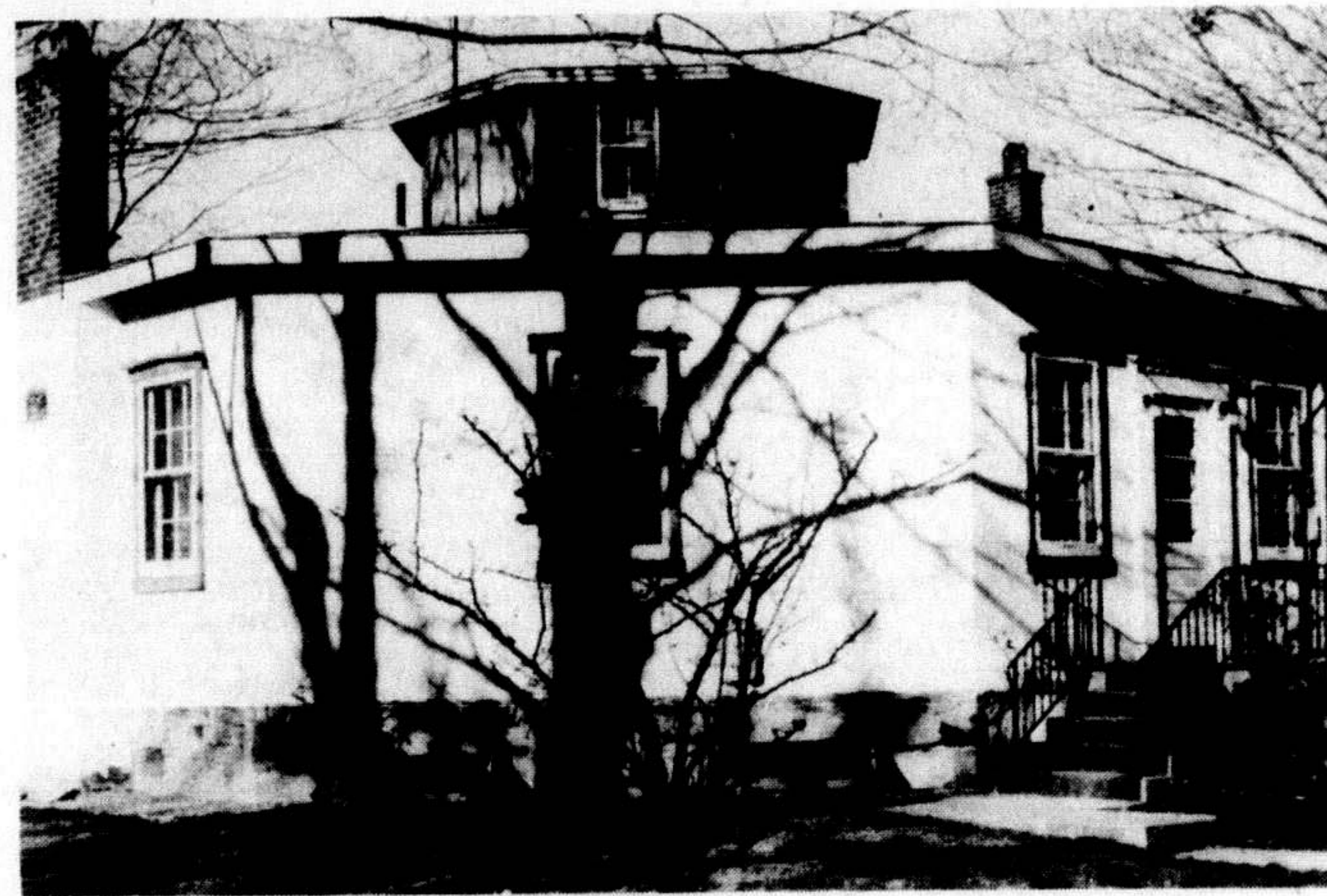
LOWVILLE CRAFTS SHOP holds many of the area's antiques. Run by Fred and Clara Auckland, it offers an outlet for paintings by artists of the area as well.



JACQUARD COVERLET made in 1836 by Mrs. Absalom Smith is treasured by Laura Dixon of Milton. Mrs. Smith was her great-great-grandmother. She and her seven sisters spun the spreads on a special loom designed by Frenchman J. M. Jacquard. It is shown on a settee made especially for the octagonal house built by Rev. Pickett.



SADDLE BAG PREACHER Rev. Daniel Pickett, was one of the first settlers of the Lowville area in 1822.



OCTAGONAL HOUSE, built in the 1850's by Andrew and Danian Pickett, is now owned by George and Helen Cuthbertson.



MRS. ABSALOM SMITH and her seven sisters were master weavers. They used a special loom attachment to create the lovely jacquard coverlet now owned by descendant Laura Dixon of Milton.



KING FARM was once the pioneer homestead of saddle-bag preacher Rev. Daniel Pickett. He settled on 200 acres in the year 1822.



OLD SCHOOLHOUSE is used by residents of the Lowville area for recreational activities. Here local women enjoy each other's company while

painting. They are from left Clara Auckland - Pearl Johnson, Nancy Ramshaw, Margaret Henry and Mary Chisholm.



GENERAL STORE in Lowville Valley still stands beside the park at the turn in the road.

Lowville is the lowest point on the Guelph Line along the Twelve Mile Creek. It is nestled between two mountains, Rattlesnake Point and Flamboro Head. Cars are forced by the windy road into the valley to slow down and appreciate the natural beauty of the area, yet untouched by modern development.

Fifty years ago it was a bustling centre of activity with furniture and grocery stores, blacksmith shops, temperance halls and the Queen's Hotel. In those days there was a sidewalk along the edge of the road to keep the ladies skirts out of the mud while they strolled to church Sunday mornings.

Today the general store still stands beside the busy Lowville Park. The old schoolhouse is open to residents of the area for recreational activities and an old barn has been turned into a Village Craft Shop.

Owned by Fred and Clara Auckland, the shop offers a whiff of nostalgia. Many of the village's antiques rest there awhile, only to be carted away by visitors wishing to keep alive the spirit of the old community.

At the base of the hill behind the old schoolhouse begin the 10 wooden steps built for easy access from the valley to the main road. Puffing up the incline one is forced to rest awhile, enjoy the magnificent view and imagine what it was like in the early days of this settlement.

Names such as Colling, Coulson, Bradt, Foster, Richardson, Powell, Spence, Pickett, Readhead, and others are woven into the village history.

Pickett homestead Part of the present parkland was the Pickett homestead. It was here Anna (Annie) Pickett was born and grew up. She spent many hours with note book and pencil jotting down stories as given first hand by her aunt Maggie Pickett, granddaughter of one of the

earliest settlers of Lowville. As youngsters the Pickett children enjoyed playing along the banks of the Twelve Mile Creek. It was a much larger creek years ago. One of grandfather Pickett's thrilling moments came when a boy in school was rescuing a classmate from the frozen creek at noon. "She fell through an air hole and I raced downstream to the next air hole and pulled her out," he is recorded as having casually said.

Times change The hillside known then as Maggie's Meadow is now a swarm of activity in the wintertime with skiers and snowmobilers. Aunt Maggie lived in part of the old octagon-shaped house on the hill now owned by George and Helen Cuthbertson. The house was built by Andrew and Daniel Pickett in the 1850s.

The meadow was Maggie's special property where she kept her cow. It joined a lovely old-fashioned flower garden where Maggie entertained her friends in the summer months.

Mrs. T. E. Pickett, the great grandmother of Laura Dixon of Milton, was the daughter of The Absalom Smiths of Palermo. One of Mrs. Smith's hobbies was weaving. She and her seven sisters spun many yards of cloth and Laura owns one of the heirloom jacquard coverlets made in 1836.

Jacquard loom The lovely spreads were woven from a special loom attachment enabling the weaver to get away from the usual lines and squares and produce a variety of lovely designs.

These looms were designed by a Frenchman, J. M. Jacquard, and were introduced into Upper Canada about 1820. According to Laura only the skilled weaver handled this complicated work but with a large family of girls, more spare time was available.

Famous shirt Laura tells the story of the time during the Upper Canada Rebellion when William Lyon McKenzie made his escape from the country wearing a new shirt her grandmother Smith had made for her husband. She very kindly gave it to Mr. McKenzie when he sought shelter in their home after falling into the Sixteen Mile Creek in his wild attempt to save his life from some of Sr. Allen McNabb's followers.

According to the story Mr. McKenzie thanked her for her aid and promised to call and see her again in seven years. The promise he kept, although it's not recorded if he ever returned the hand-made shirt!

Saddle-bag preacher The story of the Pickett family in Lowville has been well documented, thanks to Laura's mother Annie (Mrs. C. A. Prudham). She tells of her great-grandfather Rev. Daniel Pickett, a saddle-bag preacher, who was sent from the U.S. by the Methodist Episcopal Church to spread the Gospel.

He travelled through the Lowville district and decided he would get a farm there for his family. He settled on the 200 acres, now the farm of Harry King, in the year 1822.

Annie wrote the history in 1943. "I have often heard my grandmother tell how she was

sent, a girl of 14, with her Uncle John and Aunt Hannah Kenney, to help them settle on their farm on the mountain (known as Bradt's Mountain).

"After their arrival she was sent through the woods to John Thomas's house for a coal from their fireplace. She carried it back between two sticks and started the fire in the fireplace of their new home. Grandmother was born in 1810 so this would occur in 1824 and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas were already there."

About 1831 Rev. Daniel Pickett took the 200 acres across the sideroad from his farm for his son-in-law T. E. Pickett and Peter McNiven. Peter was married to Daniel's daughter Elizabeth Ingersoll Pickett.

Long hundreds He divided the farm lenthwise, thinking the main road a better spot on which to live. This arrangement came to be known as the long hundreds.

In later years Rev. Pickett sold his farm to Mr. Watkins, the father of T. C. Watkins, founder of The Right House in Hamilton and Dr. Samuel Watkins of Montclair, N.Y. The McNiven farm was sold to Barkers then Custs, and is now owned by Maurice Readhead.

Halfway across the Readhead farm was a sawmill run by water power from the

Twelve Mile Creek. The farms were all covered with first-grade timber.

The road at one time went up through a gully on this farm as the road allowance was too steep for traffic. In later years it was built through Squire Cleaver's property past the grist mill. The mill was built by Cleaver and was a run of three stones which did a large custom and shipping business for many years. It was run for 24 hours a day, providing lots of work for the teamsters from Hamilton and Guelph.

Still there The three storey mill, built about 1835, was in operation until 1956. In 1938 it burned and a new water wheel, installed in 1937, was the only thing to escape the fire. When restored it was lowered to two stories and operated as a grist mill by Catherine and Norman Langton. Norm and Evelyn Wright bought it in 1963 and have converted it into a charming and interesting home.

Early settlers to the area were the Fosters. While emigrating to Canada from Ireland in 1832, Mr. Foster died aboard ship and was buried at sea. Mrs. Foster landed on the shores of the new world with her family of eight sons and two daughters and little means.

This determined woman began her struggle with a brave heart and strong faith in God and she raised her family honorably and successfully. According to Annie Prudham, Mrs. Foster would take her basket of butter on her head and walk to Hamilton and exchange it for groceries which she carried home the same way. Many of her descendants still live in the community.

The interesting history of Lowville and its pioneer families will be continued in future features.

A special feature  
by  
Joyce Beaton