

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE SOLDIER'S MONUMENT IN MOUNT PROSPECT CEMETERY

BY MARJORIE GRAVES FOR THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL -- JUNE 4TH, 1937

On September 5th, 1877, when land was procured for another burial plot in Franklinville and the plots were laid out, around 50 feet in diameter near the center of the grounds was erected. This mound was called the "Soldier's Rest," which they dedicated to those who had died in defense of their country, with the thought of eventually having a monument erected there. This did not happen for a few years.

Finally, in 1906, The Soldier's Monument was put up, costing approximately \$2,000. On the mound set apart for that purpose in the beginning. The president of the association at that time was J.D. Case, C.D. Van Aernam, secretary and treasurer E.G. Kingsley. The monument is made of Barry granite and is a reminder of those who gave their lives for the preservation of the Union in the 1860's. The contractor was I.S. Benton of Jamestown.

It was estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 men and women participated in the celebration at the dedication. On that day, August 8th, 1906, the business section of the town and residents in all sections of the village had decorated their buildings with flags. Banners of welcome were at the main entrance of the town. The Franklinville band, under the leadership of A.W. Kelsey, met the visiting delegate at the depot. The Grand Army veterans from Arcade, Yorkshire, Delevan, Machias, Hinsdale, Ischua and Olean and Portville came. A committee of the Alanson Cosby Post No. 508 led by William Ely greeted the veterans and arranged for meals at the Globe and Star Hotels. James Dempsey, Marshall of the Day, made arrangements for the parade. Several hundred veterans marched, headed by the band and followed by a delegation of school children, headed by Professor Terry. Following them were hundreds of citizens. Graves of the dead soldiers had been decorated for the occasion and lot owners had followed the same plan.

A platform had been erected near the monument, where the exercises took place. Hon. Alfred Spring was the President of the Day and opened the ceremonies. Dr. J.B. Lee, Pastor of the U.P. Church, gave the invocation. Then the school children, led by Mrs. Minnie Varnum Bronson, sang "Stand by the Flag." J.D. Case, treasure of the monument committee gave a report of their work. The school children then sang again and a veteran from Bradford sang a solo. Judge Spring gave a brief address and then introduced the speaker of the day, Hon. Peter B. McLennan, Supreme Court Justice from Syracuse.

Following his speech, the formal unveiling of the monument took place. While the band played, Miss Caroline Ely (now Mrs. Raymond Vaughn) pulled the cord which bound the covering about the granite shaft, and it fell away amid the cheers of the assembled crowd.

The Soldier's Monument stood out in the clear sunlight, the figure of a soldier of 1861, towering high above all other objects.

Submitted by: William Watkins, Deputy Historian of Machias