

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOYD AND PARKER

Heroes of the American Revolution

An Account of the Dedication, September 17, 1927,
at Caylerville, New York, of a Wayside Shrine in
Memory of Lieutenant Thomas Boyd and Sergeant
Michael Parker, Scouts of the Sullivan Expedition

Together with

REPORTS, LISTS OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS,
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, ETC.



Arranged and Edited by

LOCKWOOD R. DOTY

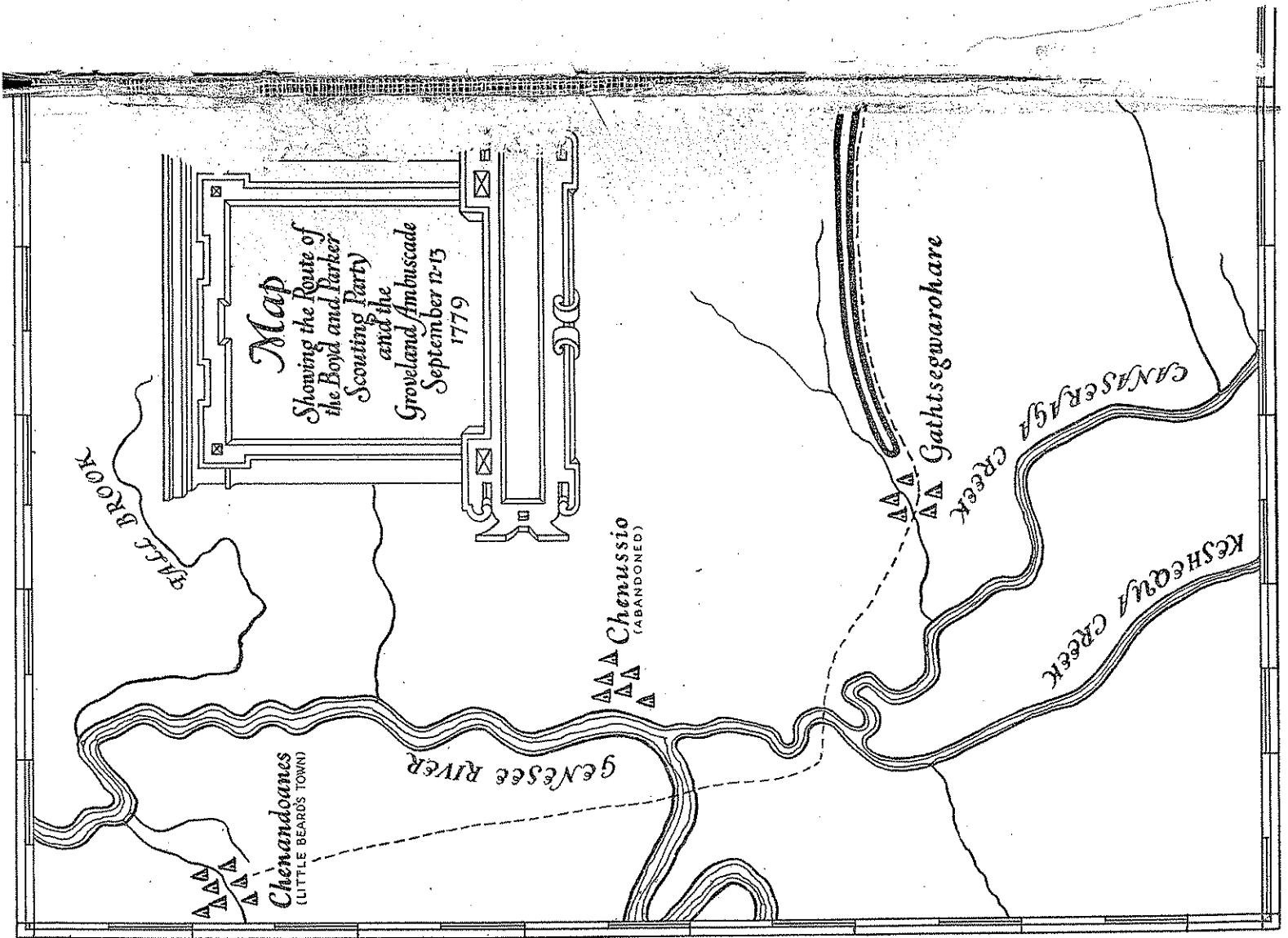
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PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

1928



THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1927-1928



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THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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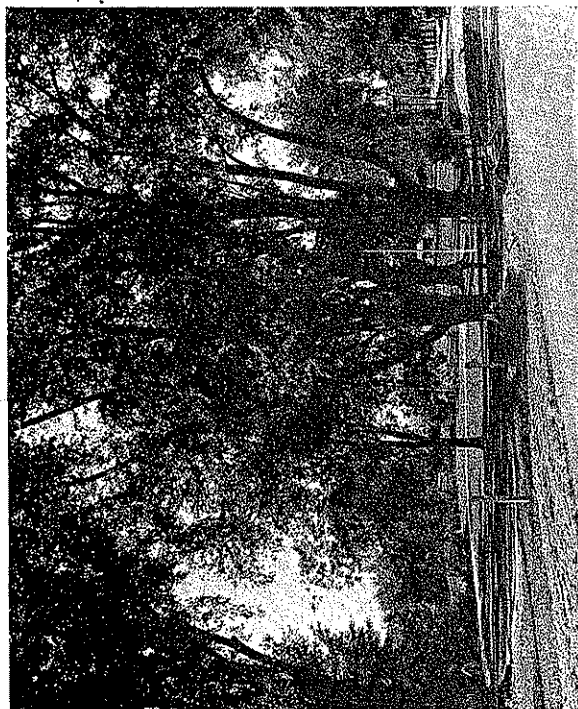
FOREWORD

By Lockwood R. Doty

WHILE a longer interval has elapsed since the last year-book was issued by the Livingston County Historical Society than has ever before intervened between its publications, it should not be imagined that the Society has remained dormant. Meetings of great interest have been held, the record of which is preserved in its archives, if it has not been presented to its members annually in the customary printed form. The dedication in September, 1927, of the Wayside Shrine at Cuylerville, marking the original burial place of Lieutenant Thomas Boyd and Sergeant Michael Parker of the Sullivan Expedition in the Revolution, will sufficiently prove its vitality and activity. The ceremonies attending that meeting of the Society are described in this book and it is confidently promised that its annual publications will now be resumed and possess an ever increasing interest for its members and the public, because they will record the accomplishments of a society consecrated to the task of discovering and preserving everything of historical value in the inviting field of the county of Livingston and western New York.

Many accessions to the membership of this Society have come as a consequence of the aid extended by its generous friends in financing the Boyd and Parker celebration, and it is earnestly hoped and believed that they will outlive the occasion of their establishment and endure to increase immeasurably the usefulness of the Society.

In the task of compiling and arranging this book I have sought to give it greater interest and historical value by including matter associated with the Boyd and Parker incident, and it is submitted in the trust that it will redound to the credit of the Livingston County Historical Society.



General view of the Boyd and Parker Plot, showing memorial boulder at extreme left, and Torture Tree at left of flagpole. Other views giving details will be found on pages 8, 15, 22, 32, 59, 60, and 62. This historical Wayside Shrine is situated at a curve in the road between Cuylerville and Geneseo, part of a national highway known as the Yellowstone Trail or U. S. Route 20.

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The following persons very kindly provided photographs which furnished many of the illustrations in this book: Mr. J. F. Chichester, Sonyea, N. Y.; Mr. Charles G. Lowrey, Dansville, N. Y.; Mr. G. M. Minckler, Geneseo, N. Y.; Mr. Guy Comfort, Perry, N. Y.; Mr. A. G. Stockweather, Hunt, N. Y.; Mr. T. H. Alvord, Livonia, N. Y. The map of the Groveland Ambuscade, used as a decorative end sheet inside the front and back covers, was drawn by Mr. L. H. Frankewich, Dansville, N. Y.



The Torture Tree. According to tradition, this great oak, when a sapling, figured in the torture of Lieutenant Boyd after his capture by the Indians.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

THE Council of the Society late in 1926 approved a program proposed by Hon. Lockwood R. Doty involving four objectives:—

First, to hold a general public meeting in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of the Society on February 13, 1927.

Second, to rescue from oblivion the celebrated Torture Tree and the burial mound of Scouts Boyd and Parker near Cuylerville in preparation for the sesquicentennial of the Sullivan Expedition in 1929.

Third, to provide more adequate and suitable fireproof space for the preservation and display of the relics in the Log Cabin at Geneseo.

Fourth, to arouse greater interest in local history among school children by preparing and distributing bulletins or pamphlets for use by teachers in the schools of the County.

All the above projects of the Society were accomplished in 1927 except fireproof storage of the relics in the Log Cabin at Geneseo for which the \$780 collected by Judge Doty in 1925 was obviously insufficient, but several plans are under consideration to consummate this objective in 1928.

The Semi-centennial of the Society.

On Sunday evening, February 13, 1927, the fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of the Society was celebrated by a meeting in the Assembly Hall of the Normal School in Geneseo. A heavy snowstorm prevented a large attendance but the hall was comfortably filled to hear Mr. A. C. Van Allen speak on "Recollections." Mr. William Vallance Hamilton, Vice-President of the Society, delivered the address on "The Livingston County Historical Society." Rev. R. G. Higinbotham of Caledonia discussed "The Value of Historical Monuments and Markers." Dr. W. A. Holcomb, Principal of the Geneseo Normal School, spoke on

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Mishkin Studio, New York
Hon. James W. Gerard, formerly United States Ambassador to Germany, and Donor of the Boyd and Parker Plot.

"The Schools and Local History." Rev. J. Edward Byer, of Geneseo, delivered the Invocation and the Benediction was pronounced by Rev. Joseph Sunter, also of Geneseo. Excellent music, both vocal and instrumental, was provided by Miss Carol M. Holland of Geneseo, assisted by Mrs. Campbell, Dr. Fraley, Mr. Walter Finley, Mrs. Hugh Hall, and the Normal School orchestra.

This meeting in commemoration of the founders of the Society opened the program of activities for 1927 and started educational work for the year. A background of renewed interest in local history was established and thereafter during the period from February to October almost every issue of Livingston County and Rochester newspapers carried publicity on the projects of the Society culminating in the big objective of September 17, 1927, when the Boyd and Parker Plot was formally dedicated to the service of the public. Full details of the meeting of February 13, 1927, are preserved in the archives of the Society for reference in 1977.

The Boyd and Parker Plot and the Celebration of September 17, 1927.

The Sullivan Expedition of 1779 and the capture, torture and death of Scouts Boyd and Parker recalls the most dramatic event in the early history of Livingston County. The story, clearly and completely told by the Hon. James W. Wadsworth, Jr., will be found on page 35.

In 1897 Hon. William Pryor Letchworth proposed the acquisition by the Society of the land around the Torture Tree and burial mound of Boyd and Parker. In 1899 the Society erected a monument which still stands over the spot where the Indians and Tories ambushed the scouting party led by Lieutenant Boyd. In 1841 the bones of Boyd and Parker and the victims of the Groveland ambush were removed to Rochester and are now buried in Mount Hope Cemetery, but no action to commemorate and memorialize the heroes of General John Sullivan's expedition during the Revolutionary War was taken until 148 years had elapsed. Through the efforts of the Society, backed by the

united public sentiment of the loyal people of Livingston County, the place where Boyd and Parker died for their country has been reclaimed from weeds, underbrush, and decay and is now preserved for present and future generations—an historic shrine to recall the sacrifice and patriotic devotion of Revolutionary days.

At the Council meeting October 30, 1926, Mr. E. E. Doty, Treasurer of the Society, reported 220 names on the active membership list, \$118.73 in the general fund, and \$720.54 in the special fund for the Log Cabin. It was realized that the annual dues of \$1.00 per member hardly would cover clerical services and postage, so a drive for new members and special contributions for the Boyd and Parker Plot and celebration was started. On October 30, 1927, the Society membership had increased to 1400, the Log Cabin fund stood at \$703.14 and \$3777.21 had been subscribed to carry out the program of 1927. The Treasurer's report (page 19) covers the financial transactions of the Society to February 29, 1928, and the balance on hand in the general fund (\$1496.60) is a tribute to those members of the Society who worked so successfully for the various projects carried out in 1927. The names of members and contributors will be found in the list beginning at page 105.

U. S. Route 20, known as The Yellowstone Trail, connects by continuous improved highway Boston, Massachusetts, with Seattle, Washington, passing through Yellowstone Park in Wyoming. The Boyd and Parker Plot is located on this remarkable roadway, in Livingston County about one-half mile east of Cuylerville and four miles west of Geneseo. Situated on a national highway, the Plot will undoubtedly become a well-known feature of this popular route.

Hon. James W. Gerard, famed Ambassador to Germany during the early stages of the World War, well-known lawyer and former resident of Geneseo, donated to the Society the acre tract of land containing the historic burial mound and Torture Tree. Mr. Gerard was born in Geneseo and is a direct descendant of the famous Indian scout and interpreter, Horatio Jones, hero of many a story of pioneer days in the Genesee Country.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

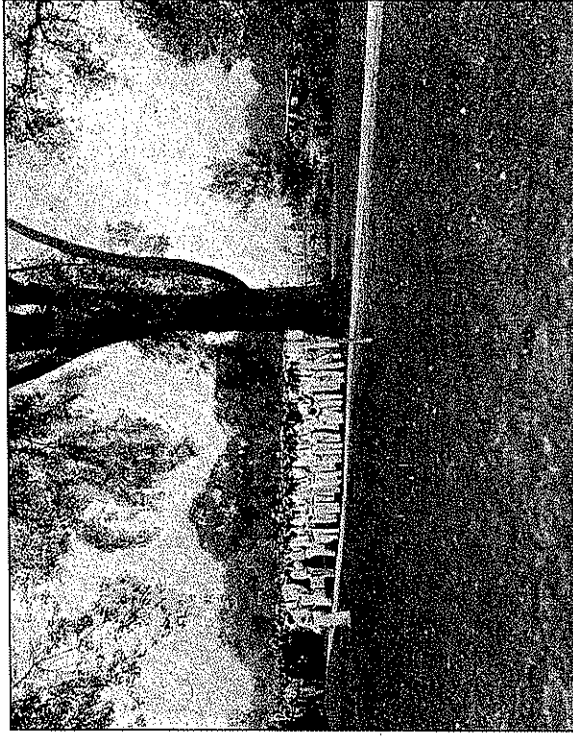
The photographs on page 15, showing the Plot before and after it was acquired by the Society through the generosity of Mr. Gerard, are significant of the improvements in the physical appearance of the historic Shrine. The clearing and planting of the Plot were successfully and economically accomplished under the direction of Mr. C. E. Holder, engineer and land surveyor.

The University of the State of New York, through the committee in charge of "The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Revolution," furnished the funds for the boulder and bronze tablet at the burial mound of Boyd and Parker. In this connection the advice and assistance rendered the Society by Dr. A. C. Flick, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Mr. Peter Nelson, Executive Secretary, should be noted and due appreciation of their co-operation publicly expressed.

The Council of the Society early in 1927 approved a budget amounting to \$2500 for improvement of the Boyd and Parker Plot and the general expenses of a proposed historical parade and memorial celebration. Actual subscriptions to the fund, as already stated, amounted to \$3777.21, indicating widespread popular approval of the project, as individual subscriptions were mainly in small amounts. A number of industrial concerns in Livingston County likewise subscribed generously to this patriotic fund as indicated in the Treasurer's report. Hon. Lockwood R. Doty, Mr. E. E. Doty, and the writer attended many public meetings throughout the County in furtherance of the Wayside Shrine and the response to the project was well worth the effort to arouse public interest in the undertaking.

The collection of funds in each division of the County was in charge of a Town Chairman and almost every town in Livingston County oversubscribed its quota—a result worthy of notice and a compliment to the work of the Town Committees. As the financial backing of the program for 1927 was of vital importance, it will not be out of place to repeat at this point the quotas and subscriptions by towns, together with the names of the Town Committee-men in charge of the solicitation of funds.

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The Boyd and Parker Plot before and after improvement. The upper photograph, taken in 1899, shows the old course of the road, with the burial mound in the center of the picture. The lower view was taken on the day of the dedication.

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

TOWN	COMMITTEEMAN	QUOTA	SUBSCRIBED
Avon	Mrs. James D. Anderson	\$247	\$248.90
Caledonia	W. Vallance Hamilton	152	157.00
Conesus	John McVicar	57	57.00
Geneseo	J. Hunter Black	217	259.00
Groveland	Gamble Wilson	109	109.00
Leicester	John T. Fetherston	124	283.00
Lima	Mrs. W. F. Harvey	136	142.30
Livonia	William E. Lowe	179	236.50
Mount Morris	Charles W. Bingham	312	336.50
North Dansville	James M. Edwards	327	422.00
Nunda	Charles E. Pratt	150	155.00
Ossian	Arthur F. Covert	38	38.00
Portage	A. Grant Stockweather	57	64.00
Sparta	John Gilman	63	68.50
Springwater	Ebenezer Robinson	105	105.00
West Sparta	Ray Chasey	46	55.51
York	Mrs. Seymour D. Emsign	181	223.00
		\$2,500	\$3009.21

Placing the Tablet at the Burial Mound

Boyd and Parker were tortured by the Senecas and died September 14, 1779. One hundred and forty-eight years later a bronze tablet was fastened to a granite boulder at the burial place by Hon. Lockwood R. Doty, historian of Livingston County, Past President of the Society and the most active member of the organization.

Dedicating the Plot and Unveiling the Tablet

On Saturday afternoon, September 17, 1927, the Boyd and Parker Shrine was dedicated to the service of the public in the presence of 20,000 people, the largest gathering in the history of the County.

An historical parade required one hour to pass the Shrine and speakers' stand.

Thomas Boyd of Conesus, a descendant of the family which contributed one of the heroes of the Revolution, Lieutenant Boyd, unveiled the tablet with suitable and solemn ceremonies.

The program of the day will be found on page 21. The sun shone brightly, and it seemed as if all nature smiled on the occasion. Not a single discordant incident marred the exercises and no person was injured in spite of the large crowds and restricted space available for traffic. The Sheriff of Livingston County, State Troopers, and

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Special Policemen kept order and moved 3800 motor cars to and from parking spaces without accident or delay. This was the more remarkable when it is considered that the Genesee River bridge and the Beard's Creek bridge near the village of Leicester were being reconstructed so that only one open road led to Cuylerville from the south. Mr. Henry Curtis and Mr. W. G. Barrett permitted the use of their land near the Plot for parking spaces and assembly grounds. Music was furnished by the famous Johnston Memorial Pipe Band of Rochester under the direction of Mr. John White Johnston, the American Legion Band of Mount Morris, under the direction of Dr. John Weinmann, and the Boys' Band of Dansville. The Rochester Telephone Corporation donated the use of a loud-speaker outfit, and it is worthy of note that the exercises started and finished practically on schedule time. Obviously to organize and manage an event in which 20,000 people from a rural district took part, required a very definite form of emergency organization and elastic management capable of meeting unexpected conditions and solving every problem as it arose, without delay.

The Society was most fortunate in securing the co-operation of the American Legion Posts of Livingston County headed by Commander Edward E. Brogan of Dansville in organizing and managing the historical parade. The success of the parade was entirely due to the efforts of Mr. Brogan and other leading members of the Legion and to the enthusiastic response of many citizens. The Legionnaires brought youth, enthusiasm, discipline and army traditions to bear upon the organization and management of the parade—the greatest in the history of the County. Of the many letters of congratulation received after the celebration a typical one may be quoted:

SENECA FALLS, N. Y., September 18, 1927

Mr. J. T. Fetherston, President,
Livingston County Historical Society,
Geneseo, N. Y.

DEAR MR. FETHERSTON:

A party of us drove over to the dedication ceremonies yesterday. It was our feeling that they would be unusual that prompted us to go

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

but they were so far from commonplace, so positively and outstandingly good that we shall be glad always that we went.

The talks were good and wholesome. The floats were the most satisfactory that we ever saw. The orderliness, consideration, and courtesy of the crowd was apparently the most natural thing in the world. But over and above everything else was the countenance of that audience. I know that you must have been impressed with it and I noticed that Senator Wadsworth mentioned it.

Congratulations to you, Mr. President, to the Historical Society and to Livingston County.

Sincerely and cordially,

CYRUS GARNSEY, JR.
Chairman, Historical Committee Finger Lakes Association.

Our Historian, Mr. Samuel T. Jennings, has prepared in full detail the story of the Boyd and Parker Memorial Celebration for preservation in the archives of the Society. To all who assisted in accomplishing a renewal of patriotic devotion to our country as exemplified by the exercises of September 17, 1927, the thanks and appreciation of the Society are extended. By formal resolution or by letter many such acknowledgments have been made but the number of patriotic citizens who in one way or another took part in the celebration is obviously too great to be covered in this summary which has already exceeded reasonable limits. Appreciation and commendation is hereby expressed to all who in any way assisted the Society in its efforts to renew the spirit of patriotic service so well illustrated by the supreme sacrifice of Scouts Boyd and Parker in 1779.

Future Projects

In 1929 the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Sullivan Expedition will be celebrated in Pennsylvania and New York. The most westerly place reached by that expedition, the Wayside Shrine near Cuylerville, New York, will be available for whatever patriotic ceremonies may be deemed suitable to the occasion.

JOHN T. FETHERSTON,
President.

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REPORT OF THE TREASURER

RECEIPTS

Log Cabin Fund.....	\$708.14
Boyd and Parker Fund.....	
Genesee Country Historical Federation.....	\$185.00
Hon. James W. Gerard.....	260.00
Pomona Grange.....	15.00
Dr. W. Ross Thompson.....	10.00
Hon. Adelbert Moot.....	10.00
Rochester Historical Society.....	25.00
New York Central Electric Corporation.....	50.00
Caledonia Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.....	10.00
Niagara, Lockport & Ontario Power Co.....	50.00
Power Specialty Company.....	50.00
Sterling Salt Company.....	50.00
Retsof Mining Company.....	50.00
For concessions.....	63.00
Received from towns:	
Avon.....	248.90
Caledonia.....	157.00
Conesus.....	57.00
Genesee.....	259.00
Groveland.....	109.00
Leicester.....	283.00
Lima.....	142.30
Livonia.....	285.50
Mount Morris.....	336.50
North Dansville.....	422.00
Nunda.....	155.00
Ossian.....	38.00
Portage.....	64.90
Sparta.....	68.50
Springwater.....	105.00
West Sparta.....	55.51
York.....	223.00
Dues.....	3,777.21
	<u>583.70</u>
	5,064.05

DISBURSEMENTS

Purchase price of site.....	200.00
Labor on Boyd and Parker Plot.....	1,376.63
Gorham Company for tablet.....	145.00
Costumes.....	238.80
Flags.....	51.15
F. A. Allen Granite Co. work on Boulder.....	32.00
Printing.....	407.81
Stenographer.....	211.49
Miscellaneous.....	157.75
Postage.....	43.68
	<u>2,864.31</u>
Cash on hand in Livingston County Trust Company.....	703.14
Cash on hand in Genesee Valley National Bank.....	1,496.60
	<u>\$5,064.05</u>

EDWARD E. DOTY, Treasurer.

Dated February 29th, 1928.

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