

Evolving Townscape



Today, Ticonderoga's main street crosses the River on a simple, straight span, but the original configuration of streams and streets was much more complicated. Spencer Creek left the LaChute just a few yards upstream from here, so the main road angled off to meet a bridge above the creek. In the early 1850s, a new bridge in the current location allowed Montcalm Street to continue straight across the River and on up the hill to the separate hamlet of Weedville.

Ticonderoga's first historian complained that the absence of street names made it very hard to explain the location of local businesses. So, he took it upon himself to give names to the main streets. In his book, *Home Sketches of Essex County: Ticonderoga* (1858), Joseph Cook labeled this Exchange Street and divided it into "its three natural sections: the *upper* or Weedville, the *central*, from the bridge along the centre of business to the Machine Shop hill, and the *lower* section from the foot of this hill to the docks."

In 1933, following the sesqui-centennial of the American Revolution, town leaders made dramatic changes to street names to emphasize the town's history. Exchange Street became Montcalm Street, Main Street became Champlain Avenue, and the route of the historic portage regained its original name.



Here at the intersection of the main business street and the River, businesses and mills clustered together. Tightly-packed wooden structures ran a great risk of spreading fire, such as the massive blaze that leveled the lower end of Montcalm Street in the early morning hours of March 31 1875. Many of those buildings were rebuilt in brick. A saw mill and Silas Moore's saw and grist mill, at the corner of Water Street, occupied the far shore.



The 12' diameter penstock built in 1906 carried water from the former Essex County Pulp Mill dam, under the Montcalm Street bridge, all the way to the Ticonderoga Pulp and Paper Company Power Plant (exhibit #4) at the east end of the "island."



The "Pad Factory" has enjoyed more lives than any cat. It first produced blank books from 1891 through 1901. Then it served for a time as a grade school, printing shop and shirt factory. After World War II it became the home of the Christmas Club.