

King House offered regal accommodations to guests staying in village's north end

By Catherine King Eddy

In 1848 Lacy T. King was born in Canada to Catharine and Lacy King. He had an older brother, Oliver, born in 1845, and a younger sister Mary, born in 1850. Not long after Mary's birth, their father passed away. Their mother, Catharine, then married a man named Lewis Thomas in 1853 and the family moved to the Prospect Street area in the north end of Ballston Spa. Soon after their arrival, they added to the family. Lacy Thomas was born in 1854 and Ella Thomas in 1871.

Peter and Mary Bebo, who were both born in Canada (Peter in 1827, Mary in 1834), moved from Sutton, Massachusetts to Ballston Spa in 1861 with their four small children, Joseph, Orilla E (born December 28, 1850), Peter (born in 1858) and Charles. They moved not long after Charles, also called Dixie, was born. After moving to Ballston Spa they added Louisa in 1862 and Alexander in 1867. Peter worked as a night watchman at the factory.

On July 14, 1868 Lacy T. King married Orilla E. Bebo in Saratoga Springs, with Rev. L. M. Woodruff performing the ceremony. They settled down in the Prospect Street area and started their family. Lacy worked in the axe shop in Ballston Spa and was also a peddler.

Lacy went door to door in a horse drawn wagon selling all sorts of household wares to the families in the Village of Ballston Spa and the Town of Milton. This was a custom which had been started in the early eighteen hundreds in New England, specifically in the Berlin and New Britain, Connecticut towns where the term, "Yankee Peddler" was coined. A tin factory named Patterson created the household goods which were sold by the peddlers. These tin wares became popular during this time as women discovered the convenience of using tin pots instead of the heavy cast iron ones that had been used when they were growing up.

Lacy and Orilla had six children. Two of them, however, did not survive infancy, Lacy T. King Jr., lived for six months, passing away on October 11, 1869 and Ira F. in 1876. Joseph William was born on June 27, 1871, Frederick Henry on July 12, 1875, Mary Louise in 1878 and Loretta on September 5, 1885.

Saving was difficult with a growing family, but they were able to save enough to purchase a hotel at 50 West North Street from two German families, Magnus & Sarah Schwarz and Lewis & Rosa Muhlfelder. On April 1, 1884 Lacy T. and Orilla E. Bebo King became hotel owners. According to an ad in the local news journal, the property had a stable for horses and a well-stocked bar.

They had a cook named Mrs. Tripp. Family lore has it that everyone raved about the quality of her cooking. Orilla was content to see that her guests were well taken care of and that she had sufficient time to care for her four youngsters, who all attended the local schools. Loretta graduated from Ballston Spa High School in 1904.



Both Joseph and Frederick were expected to help out with the guests, feed the chickens and horses and care for the grounds. There was always something to be done for the musicians who played into the evenings at the dance pavilion, a popular spot for the guests and the locals who came to enjoy the atmosphere of The King House! Music could be heard for blocks away as the musicians played at the top of the North Street and Knickerbocker Street hills.

Louisa and Loretta helped around the King House, too. They were responsible for gathering the flowers to decorate the tables in the dining room. In the spring, the scent from the freshly picked lilacs could be enjoyed throughout the hotel. There were huge lilac bushes growing behind the building, near the stables, and they were full and fragrant every spring. The scent wafted around the King House grounds.

The War to liberate Cuba from Spain's oppression was declared on April 23, 1898. President McKinley issued the call for 125,000 volunteers. One of the first to volunteer was Frederick Henry King. According to the family story about this event passed down through the generations, when Frederick went to tell his mother what he had done, she became noticeably upset. Over night Orilla's hair turned white. She was only 47 years old.

After honorably serving in the military, Frederick returned to Ballston Spa in 1898.

In 1865 St. Mary's Cemetery was purchased and consecrated. Lacy and Orilla were both very active in the world of their church, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Lacy was a trustee of the church and took his role seriously.

F. King (b. July 1848, d. October 24, 1927) or
E. Bebo (b. December 28, 1850, d. May 10,
 July 14, 1868 in Saratoga Springs, New York by .

CHILDREN

Liam King (b. June 27, 1871, d. January 20, 1927)
 Henry King (b. July 12, 1875, d. May 14, 1939)
 se King (b. 1878, d. May 28, 1939)
 tta) Elizabeth A. King (b. September 5, 1885, d. Apr



During Ballston Spa's Centennial celebration Ballston Spa in 1907, both Lacy and Orilla were leaders in groups whose mission was to celebrate and promote the village. Joseph, Frederick, Louisa and Loretta were also very involved in the festivities.

On Tuesday, June 25, 2007 an estimated 10,000 watched the parade which began at 11 a.m. at the corner of Ballston and High Streets. Frederick H. King marched in the First Division with Company L of the Second Regiment with Captain John K. Walbridge in command of the 65 men. Joseph W. King marched with the 27 other men of the Union Fire Company, under the command of Frank Holmes. They were in the Second Division. The children of the village waited at the Bath Street School. They were scheduled to join the parade as it passed in front of St. Mary's Church. They joined the route as planned and were heading north, when a sudden thunderstorm forced them to proceed to the South Street School.

One of the floats in the parade had an inscription: "Teach the coming generation the history of our past." Another popular float was one representing the Rebekahs I. O. O. F. and Mrs. George DeCora was one of the banner bearers representing the moon, stars, dove, and the beehive. George is the older brother of Albert DeCora. At 2:30 p.m. villagers proceeded to the grandstand in front of Christ Church and under the shade of the Elm trees where Church and Milton Avenues and High and Low Streets meet.

At 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 29, 1907 a meeting was held in the Odd Fellows Hall to form the Ballston Spa Centennial Association.

Lacy King was elected one of several Vice-Presidents of the Association. Edward DeCora, older brother of Albert DeCora, and Magnus Schwarz, former owner of The King House, were also elected vice-presidents. Orilla Bebo King was appointed to the Ladies' Committee.

The Centennial was celebrated from June 22 to 25, 1907. On Centennial Sunday, June 23, all the churches in the village held special services. The two services at St. Mary's Church were filled with parishioners.

The morning one was presided over by the Reverend Father Bernard J. McDonough, who was the pastor of the church.

However, the evening service was presided over by the Rev. Father John F. Lowery, D. D., who was one of the first pastors of St. Mary's in Ballston Spa. He was also the priest who would perform the marriage ceremony for Joseph William King and Mary Agnes Delaney less than six years later. He was pastor of St. Mary's Church in Troy, New York. He gave an extensive address about the village and especially about the history of St. Mary's Church.



FIRST DIVISION.
 Marshal—James J. O'Brien.
 Assistant Marshal—James E. Conner.
 Aids—Fred West and Arthur Tracy.
 Platoon of Police
 Officers Buckley, Parks, Deming, Thomas, Mc-
 Carthy, Steenburg.
 Doring's Band, of Troy, 35 pieces.



The centennial float was unique and very prettily decorated with American flags, tri-colors and bunting. It represented a teacher instructing a class of pupils in the history of centuries gone by. In her hand she held a modern history, while grouped around her were the scholars listening attentively to her lecture. The sides of the float bore the date 1807-1907 and this inscription: "Teach the coming generation the history of our past."

1807-1907 and this inscription: "Teach the coming generation the history of our past." Miss Clara Hoit was the teacher and the pupils were Mary Flynn, Pauline Fossey, Helen Tamm and Katherine Hoit.

One of the 1907 floats in the parade had an inscription: "Teach the coming generation the history of our past." A detailed description can be found at right. All Centennial images courtesy of the Maurice "Christopher" Morley Collection.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

THE VILLAGE OF BALLSTON SPA is the county seat of Saratoga County, and was incorporated March 31, 1807. The name is derived from Mrs. Riphael Hall, one of the earliest settlers in the town of Ballston, with the addition of spa from a town in Belgium which was a famous watering place in the 17th century.

In the year 1711, Herish Valster, with a party of swimmers, stopped to rest on the brow of the hill, about where High street now crosses Ballston street, and spring the creek, now known as Geyles creek, hurried down its banks to the creek. Near the east bank of the creek they discovered the mineral spring which later became widely known, and resulted in the settlement of Ballston Spa.

As the discovery of these mineral waters spread, visitors were attracted thither, stopping at the homes of settlers two or three miles south of the spring, where it intersects Grafton street, and about in the middle of the street, where it intersects Douglas street, and about in the middle of the street.

In 1793 Rev. John Douglas built a log tavern west of the spring, and DeWitt Truitt also erected a log tavern on the hill. In 1798 Douglas erected a large American house. It is now occupied by Mr. William K. Waterbury, well known as the "Hirocolato." Nicholas Low built a hotel of the same size just east of the spring, which, as the McMaster House, became one of Ballston's most popular hotels, and several smaller houses were followed in the immediate vicinity.

In 1800, Nicholas Low opened the Grand Hotel at that time the largest and finest hotel in the United States, the village spring into instant success as the most famous watering place in America. The Grand Hotel stood on the north side of Front street, its main entrance being directly north from the spring's mouth. There were accommodations for three hundred guests. It was torn down in 1861.

The Mother Hotel, erected in 1804, the Marston House in 1805, and the Eagle Hotel in 1810, are the only hotels of early days still erected at Ballston. Several other springs were discovered, but houses were erected, none were held out, and the seasonable seasons added to the popularity of "the Springs," attracting (including) thousands of pleasure seekers.

Manufacturing industries also sprung up along the Kaeswaukus river, which afforded the water power, and when, about twenty-two years later, the industries became the source of permanent prosperity for the village.

The earliest settler within the corporation limits was Jeremiah Fackham, who built a log cabin in 1708 where the residence of Hon. Harvey J. Dewolfe now stands, on Pleasant street. In 1760 Mr. Peckham built a small frame house on the corner of Washington and Front streets, which is still standing, and is the oldest building in the village.

The Douglas house (Devolfe's) is next in point of age. The old house built by DeWitt Hall in 1768, opposite the cemetery on Ballston street, the academy house at the corner of Washington and Front streets, and the First house at the west side of Geyles creek, 209 "Hirocolato," are the only remaining houses in the village which were built prior to 1800.

The iron spring at the west end of Front street is very similar in medicinal properties to the springs which made Ballston Spa famous in early days. The springs of later days are equal in any of the Saratoga springs.

The Court House erected in 1816, and the County Clerk's Office erected in 1824 have given place to the fine buildings on High street.

The character of Ballston Spa as well as its design and beauty of interior, place in every detail, and the educational standard is high.

With an unqualified supply of pure water, a perfect system of sewage disposal, the largest and finest of the Adirondack hotels, electric light, fire power, the largest manufacturing industries, the well-shaded streets and beautiful houses, the Ballston Spa of today is one of the most charming and prosperous villages in the great Empire State.



SARATOGA HOTEL—1894

1807 - 1907

ONE HUNDREDTH
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE VILLAGE
OF BALLSTON SPA
—NEW YORK—
June Twenty-Second
to June Twenty-Fifth
NINETEEN HUNDRED SEVEN

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

Facsimile of This Page of the Centennial Programme. The picture of the Saratoga Hotel is printed from the original wood cut made in 1894.

Centennial Day

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

PROGRAMME OF THE DAY—JOHN JENKS S. LAMBERTSON
MANAGER OF THE DAY—GEO. ADER E. BARBOCK, D. E. A. GRAY

All who attend in the morning, a GRAND PARADE of Millionaires, and the Public Schools, headed by King and Queen, will start at 10 o'clock, and will proceed to the Centennial Day Meetings at High Street, to be commenced by the singing of the National Anthem in the presence of the Public Schools.

ORDER OF SERVICES

Worship—Pastor—Rev. W. W. Wood, Third Pastor of the First Methodist Church, Saratoga, N. Y.
Worship—Rev. J. S. Wood, Pastor of the First Methodist Church, Saratoga, N. Y.
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COMMITTEE

Grand Banquet of the DAY PROGRAMME, including an account of the Centennial of the Old Empire State, and a GRAND DANCE by the Saratoga Hotel.



At the end of the addresses which included a detailed history of Ballston Spa (far left), the children from the public schools, about 150 strong, sang the "Star Spangled Banner." A crowd of 15,000 later witnessed an amazing fireworks display which lasted about an hour. The fireworks were set off from the railroad tracks on Low Street because it was the widest street in the village. The Doring Band from Troy played a selection of patriotic tunes, ending with "America".

When the final accounting took place a few weeks later, the residents of Ballston Spa had accomplished their mission. The memorable Centennial Celebration which lasted from June 22 to 25, 1907 was now in the history books. They had succeeded with donations totaling \$2,000 and they had \$20 left over.

At 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 29, 1907 a meeting was held in the Odd Fellows Hall to form the Ballston Spa Centennial Association. Lacy King was elected one of several Vice-Presidents of the Association. Edward DeCora, older brother of Albert DeCora, and Magnus Schwarz, former owner of The King House, were also elected vice-presidents. Orilla Bebo King was appointed to the Ladies' Committee.

Mary Agnes Delaney was born on February 19, 1885 in Troy, New York to Peter Delaney (born in 1861 in Ireland) and Bridget Helen Stokes Delaney, born in Troy in 1861. When she was little, Mary Agnes' mother was quite sickly and her maternal grandparents, John and Jane Renna Stokes raised her. John was born in Limerick, Ireland in 184. Jane was born in Tipperary, Ireland.

After her grandfather died about 1894, her grandmother was no longer able to care for Mary Agnes, so she was sent to St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum at 183 Eighth Street in Troy. She was listed as Student #8 during her years there. At 16 years of age, about 1901, she left the orphanage and found a job in the Earle and Wilson Collar Factory, one of Troy's many shirt collar factories. She lived with an aunt and cousins and was known as Mae or Marie.

For many years, during the summer factory shutdown, Marie traveled with her friends to the Adirondacks. Around 1909 she and her friends discovered the Ballston Spa area and began staying at the King House. It was during this time that she met the well-known young businessman and proprietor of The King House, Joseph William King.

Joseph, born on June 27, 1871 at home on Prospect Street in Ballston Spa, was a graduate of Ballston Spa High School and took advanced courses after graduating from Nelson Roe, who was the Saratoga County School Commissioner. Education was essential in the development of each of the King children. Lacy and Orilla were determined that all aspects, from spiritual growth to a commitment to civil responsibility be part of the education of each of their offspring.

An eligible bachelor and an active supporter of athletics, Joseph King was elected Justice of The Peace in Milton in 1910, serving for eight years. As Joseph developed into an astute businessman, he sold insurance and became active in the political world of the Town of Milton. He owned a hotel on South Street for a time, sold insurance, was a Democrat and a member of the Union Fire Company 2, serving as Foreman for several years. Even though the Town of Milton was a Republican stronghold, he was Supervisor for the Town from 1918 through 1925. During World War One, he served as Chairman of the First District Exemption Board (Draft Board) for Saratoga County. In 1919 he was elected Chairman of the Saratoga County Democratic Committee. He was a member of the Elks Club in Saratoga Springs, belonged to the Knights of Columbus and was a member of the Men's Sodality of the Holy Name of St. Mary's Church in Ballston Spa. He managed the town basketball team, The Monitors, and coached the local baseball team, The Athletics, in the early 1900s. He loved sports and enjoyed attending the thoroughbred racing meet held at Saratoga Race Course each August.

Although Frederick was well liked by the patrons of the Hotel, it was Joseph who was better able to help out with the finances and the social aspects as well. Joe spent most of his days working at the hotel except in August when he engaged in his hobby of betting on the horses. It was during those summer days in August around 1909 that Mary Agnes Delaney and a few girlfriends with whom she worked in the Troy collar factories came to stay for a summer retreat at The King House. It was during one of these holidays that she and Joe met.

On May 10, 1911, Orilla Bebo King, Joseph's mother, passed away. She had been ill for several months and her illness took a toll on the whole family. She was the matriarch and it was quite a shock to all of them when she was no longer around to help make the decisions for the hotel and for her family.

After a courtship of several years, Joseph William King and Mary Agnes (Marie) Delaney decided to marry. They exchanged vows on June 18, 1913 in St. Mary's Church in Troy by Rev. Father John F. Lowery, D.D. The organist, Professor Moran, played "The Wedding March." A dear friend of Joe's, Edward P. Tracy, stood up as his best man, and his sister, Loretta E. King, was the maid of honor. Following the ceremony, a Mary Agnes' grandmother, Jane Stokes, held a reception for the new couple at her home on 1216 Fifth Avenue in Troy. A large number of friends and relatives attended the wedding ceremony and the reception. Besides the bridal party, the guests included Lacy T. King, Frederick and Frances King, Ira Thomas and Louisa Kelly, and Albert DeCora.

The Athletics played the Boston Red Sox while Joe and Marie were in Philadelphia. Ira's wife, Katherine, was very much involved in his career. Although it wasn't customary for women to attend baseball games, both Joe and Marie accompanied Katherine to the ball park to watch from box seats. Unfortunately, the Athletics lost that game on June 21, by a score of 4 to 5. The team had recently finished their longest winning streak from May 27 to June 10, which was just before Joe and Marie arrived in Philadelphia. After that game, the Philadelphia Athletics were 42 and 15 in the win-loss column. They ended the season with 96 - 57 and in first place in the American League. The team then went on to win the World Championship Series 4 - 1 over the New York Giants. Ira played a pivotal role in that World Championship Series.

Joe and Marie returned home to the King House on June 24. One evening, the Citizen's Band gave a concert on the piazza, and friends and family were serenaded by the musicians. A reception dinner was also given at the hotel that night by the King family so that all might congratulate the bride and groom. The selections and abundance of food were unforgettable as Mrs. Tripp made sure that all the family and especially the children of the neighborhood had all the good things they could imagine. Not a detail was left unnoticed for this celebration of the marriage of Joseph and Marie, as she was known to the people of Ballston Spa.

April 12, 1914 brought the birth of Marie and Joe's first child, Lacy Joseph. A mid-wife named Lily was with Marie for the birth of all four of her children in The King House. Mary Orilla came next on May 17, 1917, followed by Joseph William, Jr. on October 1, 1922, and finally Frederick Henry on April 17, 1925.

During the years of Prohibition, prosperity in the hospitality industry was extremely rare. Although Joe did rely on his real estate business to supplement his income from the family business of The King House, it was a difficult period in America for all business owners. Joe maintained his dedicated service to the public good by continuing his work as Supervisor for the Town of Milton and was active in St. Mary's parish. He worked hard and long hours as a member of The Elks Club in Saratoga Springs and was one of the oldest active members of The Union Fire Company in Ballston Spa.

After several years of deteriorating health due to liver disease, Joseph W. King, Sr., passed away on January 20, 1927. His funeral brought the whole town together. Nearly 100 firemen from all three of Ballston's fire companies stood as honor guard for the casket as it was carried into St. Mary's Church and again as it was returned to the hearse after the Requiem High Funeral Mass which was celebrated by the Rev. Charles McCaffrey LL.D. As the body was carried from the church, the soloist, Marion Swanick Angell, sang "Face to Face".

Joe's family, wife Mary Agnes Delaney King and four children, Lacy Joseph, Mary Orilla, Joseph William, Jr., and Frederick Henry, moved into 158 West North Street, just up the hill from The King House. Joseph Sr. had purchased this property in 1909, and it had been rented out until Mary Agnes needed it for her family.

After the death of Lacy T. King, on October 24, 1927 the surviving family members were unable to take care of the properties. All the children had married and moved out of the Hotel. The grocery store and the barbershop on the ground floor of the hotel survived. With the start of World War II only the barbershop was able to continue for a few more years. The King House and other properties acquired by Lacy King were all sold by 1956. Some of those who purchased parts of the King estate included Irving J. & Margaret L. LaDucer, Albert De Cora Jr. and Doris M. Schulenberg, Catherine McCann, and Charles R. and Dorothy W. Shortsleeves.

Lacy King's other children included Frederick H. (1875-1939) who lived in Green Island, Mary Louise King Kelly (1878-1939) who lived in Scotia and Loretta King DeCora (1885-1976), who lived at 27 East North Street in Ballston Spa.