

LEWIS HENRY MORGAN:

American Scholar

LEWIS HENRY MORGAN was, in all facets, without question, a disciple of Massachusetts savant RALPH WALDO EMERSON. It would in fact not be too "out of the question" to imagine MORGAN as the model from which EMERSON drew inspiration when composing his "American Scholar" Address for the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard University, August 31, 1837.

At that time, LEWIS MORGAN of Aurora, Cayuga County, New York State was still an eighteen-year-old teenager though he was already manifesting the intellectual habits EMERSON extolled in his Oration. Even more ironic was the fact that he had independently arrived at conclusions regarding the Natural Environment and its influence on Human Intellect very similar to those the New England Philosopher explored in an Essay entitled "NATURE" which he had published anonymously just a year earlier.

Unlike EMERSON's better-known "disciple" HENRY DAVID THOREAU, MORGAN did not endeavor to discover the verities of Life by camping for "two years; two months and two days" away from civilization. On the contrary, he charted a course which ultimately brought him "fame and fortune". Success as an Attorney at Rochester, N.Y. with Investments in Northern-Michigan Iron Ore ventures afforded MORGAN opportunity to indulge his time in scholarly endeavors. It was this pursuit which established his reputation as an American Anthropologist noted especially for inventing the study of "KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY". His magnum opus or best-known achievement today is a Book entitled "LEAGUE OF THE IROQUOIS" which he produced in collaboration with ELY PARKER.

LEWIS MORGAN "came of Age" as a resident of Aurora, a bustling port on Cayuga Lake which served as a conduit for transporting Produce and Products from the rich Finger Lakes Region of New York State north to the Erie

Canal. LEWIS HENRY's Father - Jedediah - had come to be a prosperous Businessman and "Pillar of the Community" prior to LEWIS' birth. His son was a young man endowed with keen intellect and fervent desire for enriching his own Mind. His insatiable curiosity was fueled by passion for investigating the history of Indigenous Peoples who had formerly occupied the Land upon which Aurora had arisen long before Europeans began "invading" them. This of course translated as the Cayuga Tribe of the larger Iroquois Confederacy.

An additional "Passion" for LEWIS during his developmental years was a fascination for "Secret Societies". His Father had been a Brother of the local Masonic Lodge prior to its dissolution in wake of the so-called "Morgan Affair" of 1826 which cast a pall over the existence of Organizations such as Free & Accepted Masons throughout the Country. Though this "Affair" had nothing to do with the Aurora Morgans, it did, as in communities everywhere cause potential affiliates to avoid Associations

incorporating clandestine issues and activities among Members. Lodge Halls which from an earlier Era had been established in Rural Communities stood vacant and unused.

Such was the situation at Aurora when LEWIS MORGAN was a student at Cayuga Academy. His interests in Debating, Declamation and Intellectual Fellowship prompted him to organize a Club for "mutual improvement in useful knowledge". To add an aura of exclusivity to this Association he designed a series of Rituals and Legends "for Members' knowledge only" - much akin to "a secret society". This was the nucleus for what came to be known as "the Order of the Gordian Knot" which was housed in Aurora's abandoned Masonic Lodge.

Scene 1: Aurora, New York 1840
 Lewis Morgan
 Charles T. Porter

Porter: WELCOME HOME, Lewis !
 You FARE WELL
 I AM ASSUMING