



Levi Chandler Ball

Chandler Ball was a leading influence in the growth of Hoosick Falls during the mid-eighteen hundreds. He, like his Father-in-law Seth Parsons, can be credited for many of the advancements of the Hoosick Falls Village.

Chandler Ball was born in Wilmington, Vermont in 1809. His father was a farmer in this rural area and Chandler and his brothers all worked on the farm. He was not well in his early life and didn't enter school until the age of nine. It was a country school with only a few basic subjects. At the age of 12, he left school. During the day he worked hard on the farm, but in the evening he read and pursued knowledge. The farm could not support the family. At the age of 16, Chandler left for the Troy area to find employment. (1825). He left Wilmington on foot and decided to stop in Hoosick Falls to visit relatives, especially his

cousin Seth Parsons. Mr. Parsons helped him find a job in Rensselaerville as a clerk in a merchant shop owned by a Mr. Mulford. While in Hoosick Falls, he became acquainted with Marcia Parsons and she made a big impression on the boy.

After a year as clerk, earning \$36 for the year, he decided to go into Albany to find better employment. In a few weeks, he learned of the illness of his brother and walked back to Wilmington to keep the farm operating for his parents. In the fall of 1828, he decided to go to New Orleans where two of his brothers, Russell and Eratus, were running prosperous businesses.

He left with \$5 and some worn clothing. Arriving in Troy, he took the steamboat for New York for 25 cents. In New York, he tried to find work on a boat to New Orleans. While looking for work, a gentleman named Chester Holmes (a merchant from New Orleans) offered to pay his way knowing Russell Ball would reimburse the cost. He advanced him the \$45 it cost for the trip. It was October 1828 when he arrived in New Orleans.

With the help of his brothers, he built a business as a merchant. New Orleans at this time was a bustling place where an enterprising individual could do well in business. Chandler Ball was hard working and extremely lucky. At the end of two years, he had established a prosperous business and made considerable money. His brother Russell died suddenly and his estate was worth approximately \$100,000. The estate became involved in litigation and took years to be settled. Chandler and his other brother formed a partnership and continued the business at the same location.

In the summer of 1831, he traveled back to this area to visit his parents and friends in Wilmington, Vermont. He stopped in Hoosick Falls and spent two weeks visiting with Marcia Parsons. They became engaged to be married in three years.

He returned to New Orleans and remained there until 1833. He sold his interest in the business to Jonathan Ball and left for Hoosick Falls to set up residence. Arrived in Hoosick Falls in July of 1833, he purchased 40 acres from Esec Bussey adjacent to Seth Parsons' land in the northeasterly part of the village. He immediately started the building of a brick home, 50×34 feet, two stories high, with two wings 31×24 feet. On September 26, 1833, he married Marcia Parsons.

The home still exists on the corner of Parsons Ave and High Street between the St. Mary's schools. His first business venture after arriving in Hoosick Falls was in the field of farming. "He imported the most celebrated breeds of farm stock, at a time when little attention was paid by even the wealthy farmers to the improvement of their stock." Soon many of the herds of sheep and cattle were improved from his stock.

In 1837, he built the Phoenix Hotel, which was located at the site of the present Key Bank parking lot. This hotel was one of the finest in the area and brought visitors to Hoosick Falls. At the same time, he built Classic Street and donated the large square at the corner of High and Classic Street to the village. Chandler Ball bought the land where the Wood Block stands and used some of the land to connect Classic Street with John Street. He deeded the street to the village and sold the remaining land at a reduced price.