

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 13

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

April 1963

The Next Meeting

will be held on Monday evening, April 1, 1963, at 8:00 o'clock, in the Association Rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library. The program will be a talk by Mr. G. Glyndon Cole about "THE NORTH COUNTRY LIFE," a magazine devoted to the history and culture of Northern New York. In addition to his duties as editor of this publication, Mr. Cole is Assistant Librarian at the State University College.

The public is cordially invited.

SPRING PROGRAMS

MAY 6 - "The Bryan-McKinley Election in Clinton County" -

Mr. David W. Fuller

JUNE 3 - *Annual Members' Exhibit Night*

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS for 1963

Mr. Ignatius LaComb, *President*

Dr. Allan S. Everest, *First Vice President*

Mr. Richard Merritt, *Second Vice President*

Mr. David W. Fuller, *Secretary*

Mr. J. Bernard Stratton, *Treasurer*

Autograph Album

An entry dated February 10, 1860, made by Harvey Everett in the autograph album of Miss Margaret Green of Peru, New York. They were married three years later.

I like to see thy gentle hand

Dispose, with modest grace,

The household things around thy home

And each thing in its place.

And then thy own trim modest form

Is always neatly clad.

Thou sure will make the tidiest wife

That ever husband had.

No costly splendors needest thou

To make thy home look bright,

For neatness on the humblest spot

Can shed a sunny light.

A British View on The Battle of Valcour

The following report on the naval Battle of Valcour, resulting in the defeat of Arnold's fleet in 1776, has seemingly not been previously printed in full. It was recently discovered by Mr. Oscar E. Bredenberg in the Collections of the Canadian National Archives at Ottawa. The student of this period will note the variations from the accepted American version of the battle.

Isis Quebec October 29, 1776

The dispatches sent by Lieut Dacres of the *Blonde*, being of such high importance to the public weal, and having had only a Transport to send them in; I think the news of the great Event, which they contain, by [*be*] much too precious, to be trusted to one such Conveyance; and therefore without troubling you with Duplicates, I refer you to the following further particulars, as to the demolition of the late Rebel Fleet on Lake Champlain. And to Lieutenant Haynes, who herewith waits upon their Lordships, and whose Unremitting Assiduity, in carrying on as an Officer, as well as Agent for Transports, the very important duties at Sorel, ever since Midsummer; especially in getting the members of the now victorious *Inflexible*, so quickly forwarded to Chambly, cannot be too much commended. And I humbly beg leave, hereby most earnestly to recommend the Consideration of these; And his former long & meritorious services; to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty Accordingly. He is well qualified farther to satisfy their Lordships in every respect, As to the whole of our Naval Transactions in Canada.

I send you a more Exact list [*missing*] than the last, of the late Rebel Force, which was to have been laid up at Ticonderoga, on the 15th instant, So very critical was the Rencontre. I am, Sir,

Your most Obedient Humble Servant.

Chs Douglas

P.S. Lieut Butler of this his Majesty's Ship, who has done Eminent Service to His King and Country in the *Inflexible*, being just returned from the Lake: From him As also by letters from Lieut Schank & Starke, I learn the following particulars - Vizt -

The *Inflexible* from her position on the 11th was nearest the *Royal Savage*, And had the honor of striking her, with the first three Shot, in the Bowsprit, Foremast and Quarter - the Gunner of which, Exclaimed the moment she hove in sight from behind the Island of Valcour "L--d G-d have Mercy upon us - there's a three masted Ship." Their confusion (and of 4 or 5 more, which were under sail) was accordingly. The *Royal Savage* then ran ashore on the Island. The Gun boats (being only seventeen in Number) then engaged her, and when she was Silenced, pulled in with Great Courage and regularity against the Body of the Rebel fleet, until within point blank shot They were manned with brave volunteer Seamen from the Transports and their Guns were valiantly fought by the Train of Artillery. Lieut Longcroft, finding his flat bottom Gondola driven (like the Radeau) to Leeward, left her with his boat, Gallantly boarded the *Royal Savage*; turned some of her Guns on the Enemy; and fired them very briskly for some time, but three of his men being killed, he was obliged to leave her. Fearing that she might return Again, into the Enemy's possession, She was set on Fire by Lieut Starke, sent from the *Maria*, when two Rebel Boats were very near her; and soon blew up. In the mean time, the *Inflexible* and *Carleton* kept turning into the Bay, and doing their utmost to get at the Rebel Fleet, And fired occasionally, the former leading, Until a large flaw of Wind brought Lieut Dacres in the *Carleton*, nearly into the middle of the Rebel Half moon, where he intrepidly Anchored, so I am told, with a Spring on her Cable, which at last being shot away, And her fire thereby become silent, Lieut Schank sent two boats to her Assistance which tow'd her off thro a very thick fire, until out of further reach, much to the honor of Mr. John Curling And Mr. Patrick Carnegie Masters Mate And Midn of

the *Isis*, who conducted them ; And of Mr. Edward Pellew Mate of the *Blonde*, who threw the tow rope from the *Carleton's* bowsprit. She had on this occasion, having been some time fired at, after her spring were cut, Eight men killed & six wounded. The *Inflexible* still kept turning to Windward, and firing Occasionally, the Rebels firing at her Masts to disable her, all the while. Before dark, she got within point blank Shot of them ; with five broadsides silenced their whole line. At Night dropped out and Anchored with the rest of the fleet, extending itself across the mouth of the Bay, which is about one mile and a half wide. The prisoners report that Arnold (rowing about in his boat) on seeing with his Glass white Lappells, Exclaimed "By God, they are all Navy people." On this day, the *Maria*, because of her distant situation (from which the *Inflexible* and *Carleton* had chased by signal) when the Rebels were first Discovered, And baffling winds, could not get into Close action

In the second day's fight, the *Terror*, inspired by the white lappells and the *Inflexible*, was still greater than on the first. Waterberry, their second in Command, declared, he chose rather to strike, than receive her broadsides. When her Guns bore, the Rebels left their Oars, or lay down. Even Arnold himself, when Closely engaged with the *Maria*, And firing his two stern Eighteen pounders At the *Inflexible* and *Carleton*, put his Helm a Weather And (with five Gondolas) ran ashore, rather than receive more of her Fire ; which besides her twelve pounders issued from ten swivel Guns in her Tops No Muskets were fired. Upon the whole, Sir, I scruple not to say that had not General Carleton Authorized me to take the Extraordinary measure of sending up the *Inflexible* from Quebec, things could not this year, have been brought to so glorious a Conclusion on Lake Champlain. And if anything can surpass the services Lieutenant Schank rendered to His King and Country, in accelerating Every part of our late naval preparations at St Johns, they are only surpassed by those, so skilfully and Gallantly performed by this man of merit, in the two engagements of the 11th & 13th inst. The latter was fought About 10 or 12 miles on this side of Crown Point.

The Hurry we were in to get Lieut Dacres sent away, hindered my Collecting from him, many of the particulars attending the momentous Event in question, for the knowledge of which, Captain Pringle, who commanded, and still Commands our Naval Auxiliaries on the Lake : for want of time did : to him refer me ; occasions my troubling you with the foregoing which have been Collected, with the most scrupulous Circumspection.

N.B. It appears from the foregoing, that the Rebels, having had a Schooner Cruizing on the Look out, between the North End of Island Valcour & the Main ; were not surprised, as first was reported, Otherwise than the sight of the *Inflexible*.

Philip Stephens, Esq.

Peru at the World's Fair

An unusual number of Peru people went to the Chicago Fair in 1893. At one time there were thirteen of them in the parlor of the Hotel Sheridan. So wrote Nettie Everett to the folks back home. She mentioned George Day, Job Sherman and the Ezra Days.

The trip was by way of Albany, Binghamton and Youngstown, Ohio. She spoke of the great speed of the train, so that "I can hardly write and perhaps you won't be able to read it." Her hair was full of cinders, and she awakened every time the train stopped. Her group had coffee on the train for breakfast : "10 cents for about half a cup."

The fair was a great adventure and, according to Job Sherman, "there are so many strangers here that one doesn't know himself when he looks in the glass."

The Great Freshet of 1830 in Plattsburgh

Personal reminiscences of George M. Beckwith, as printed in the Historical Department of the PLATTSBURGH REPUBLICAN on March 31, 1883.

A writer for the REPUBLICAN recently gave an interesting account of the great freshet in the Saranac River in 1830. He has fallen into some two or three errors. I was standing with several others on the bridge at the time the west span of the bridge fell. There were then two piers and three spans. The top of the west abutment gave way. The west end of the west span dropped into the surging water, but did not settle to the bottom of the stream. It rested on the stone that tumbled from the upper end of the abutment and sunk into the water three or four feet or more. The foaming waters dashed over the west end of the fallen span with great force and caught a number of persons in its sweeping current. Some of them were caught in shallow water and some in a deep, raging current. Those in the deep water had to struggle with all their might to get out of it to that part of the inclined plane of the span which was above the water. Two or three were unable to stem the furious current, and were swept off of the north side and by their struggling and swimming and the eddy of the water, were carried around to the north side of the abutment where they were rescued. The others escaped to the east side of the river. There was a large and long stick of timber lying on the south wall of the west abutment. That timber extended out over the river some ten or twelve feet. I was standing on the south walk of the bridge with my right arm over the railing. James Hicks stood just east of me with his left arm over the railing; and Alfred Edgerton stood partly between us on the bridge. When that span fell, Mr. Edgerton went down with it and was struck by the water that washed upon the west end of the span. I do not now recollect what depth of water struck him. It could not have been a large quantity, as he was so far from the abutment.

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