

# NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE  
CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 28

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

May, 1966

## *The Next Meetings*

of the Association will be held in the Association Rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library at 8 o'clock on the following dates. The public is cordially invited to all meetings.

May 2—"The New State Curriculum in the Social Studies" by Benedict Hausdorf of Peru. Mr. Hausdorf teaches social studies in the Peru school system.

June 6—Annual Members' Exhibit Night. Start deciding which of your historical treasures to bring, and watch for further information.

July—The Program Committee is tentatively suggesting a tour of the county's old or historic homes as the Society's summer outing. Your ideas on this or other possibilities are invited.

This is the last issue of the "Notes" this Spring. The editors urge members to submit their manuscripts or at least call their attention to materials in your possession, on which articles may be based. With your help, an interesting series of "Notes" can be published in the fall.

## *The Yorkers*

The Chazy school, which has the only chapter of the Yorkers in the county, was host to a regional convention of Yorkers' clubs on Saturday, April 30. About 600 members of clubs in Franklin, Lewis, St. Lawrence and Jefferson counties were invited, and at this writing about 400 were expected to attend.

The Yorker society is a junior historical society, with chapters in schools throughout the state. Its headquarters are in Cooperstown, and there its journal is published. A representative of the Cooperstown staff attended the Chazy meeting.

The main address was given by Jack Ross, historian of Rouses Point. The group was welcomed by Ralph Pombrio, held elections, visited the Miner museum, and had a record hop in the afternoon. Delegates returned home the same day, a long day for those young people from Lewis and Jefferson counties.

## *Care of the Insane in the 1860's*

In 1863, the Rev. Hiram Chase, a member of the Troy Conference of the Methodist Conference, was erroneously and unwillingly committed to the State Lunatic Asylum in Utica at the age of 62. In his book **Two Years in a Lunatic Asylum**, he described his experiences and tried to inform New Yorkers of the frightening procedures for committal, and the treatment tolerated in the institution itself. He was discharged in 1865, "as well as when I entered," and resumed his pastoral work in the Troy Conference. He was highly praised for two sermons he delivered in the Peru Methodist church in 1875. He lived to be nearly 77 years old.

Mr. Chase described the prison-like atmosphere of the place, the brutality of the attendants and the senseless medicines three times a day regardless of need. He wrote in part:

"I never conceived or realized, until on my way to Utica under keepers, on what a slender thread hangs the liberty of the people of the State of New York. Only the day before, I was feeling that the spell that had lain upon me for more than a month, was broken. . . . Being in my own house, I thought I could act out my feelings without fear of consequences. I never once thought of the danger of getting into the asylum . . .

"But I wish here to enter my protest against the manner that thousands are rushed into the asylum, by those who have no knowledge of asylum life and but little if any knowledge of the philosophy of the human mind. Many have been sent there who had been ill but a few days, and were soon over it, and could they have been left at home a week longer, all would have been right; whereas, by being sent to the asylum, they have been kept there confined for two years—for when once in the asylum, it is no easy matter to get away in a short time, unless they run away.

"I know men in the asylum who were thrown in there by their friends, under some peculiar influence, who have been there from six to fifteen years; and they are the same now as when they entered it, not insane, but perhaps a little eccentric, or may entertain some notions on religion or philosophy that are not regarded orthodox. They are in good health, perfectly harmless, and, so far as I could judge, would make better inhabitants than one-fourth of the people that are at large . . .

"I am fully satisfied that the citizens of Utica know no more about the private workings of that institution than the inhabitants of Clinton and Essex counties; and living near by renders them more liable to be deceived, and in the following manner: It is known by all the inhabitants of that region of country round about Utica, that the asylum is open every day at certain hours, for the reception of visitors. It is also understood by the managers and attendants at the asylum, that visitors are expected every day, more or less; so that all things are put in order before visitors come; every unsightly thing is put out of the way; all is still and clean as a ladies' parlor on the first halls . . ."

## *Medical Treatment in the 1870's*

A glimpse of medical treatments and costs in the 1870's is obtained from the diary and papers of Miss Mary Arnold of Peru. She recorded in the year 1871:

April 26th. Left home for Montreal. Stopped over night in Plattsburgh. 27th in Montreal. Tumor removed May 3rd. Stayed seven weeks. Paid 4.40 cents a week for board. Paid the Dr. 55 dollars for treatment. Traveling expenses 7 dollars. Medicine, etc., 10 dollars.

Later in the same year, Miss Arnold underwent a series of treatments at the Saratoga Springs Remedial Institute. She was directed to take 10 pour baths at 90° to 80° temperature; three sitz baths for 20 minutes at 90 degrees; nine gymnastic treatments; 11 Turkish baths; 10 vacuum treatments with equalizer for "limb receivers" and for "cups on chest;" and to drink 1½ glasses of Columbian mineral water each day.

She also had several treatments at the Medical and Surgical Institute at Saratoga Springs. Each series cost \$22.00 with \$3 for medicine. In 1872, her bill for April 8th to May 1st from her local doctors, Reynolds and Grant, was itemized as follows:

Five ordinary day visits and treat. ....	\$ 5.00
Three protracted night visits and exam. ....	6.00
Extra medicine .....	2.50
One silver pessary .....	25.00
	<hr/>
	\$38.50

A recipe that Miss Arnold apparently treasured read:

Steep this powder in a pint and a half of water for an hour. Cool and strain, then add half a pint of good Bourbon Whiskey, and three tablespoonfuls of White Sugar. Dose—from one to two tablespoonfuls before each meal.

Archives of SUC library

## *The Chazy Tercentenary*

This summer the people of Chazy will commemorate the tercentenary of the first recorded event in the town's history. A committee is already at work to assure that the celebration will be a fitting one. The event they recall and the man they honor provide a fascinating chapter of North Country history.

In 1665 the King of France appointed Sieur de Courcelles governor of Canada and the Marquis de Tracy viceroy. He also issued instructions to treat the Iroquois as enemies and "to wipe the Mohawks from the face of the earth". For this purpose forts were built at strategic places, including one at St. Anne on Isle La Motte, opposite the mouth of the present Chazy River.

In January 1666 Courcelles led an expedition against the Mohawks, but was lucky to survive the bitter weather. However, three of the Iroquois nations sent deputies to Quebec to seek peace. But the Mohawks and the Oneidas waited until May 1666 before they came to Canada bearing peace proposals.

Meanwhile the Sieur de Chasy, a young French nobleman, a regimental captain and nephew of Tracy, was stationed temporarily at Fort St. Anne. To while away the time he, de Travesy and other officers went hunting up the river opposite their fort. They were surprised by a party of Mohawks, and Chasy and Travesy were killed. The others were taken prisoner.

Tracy received word of the killings while he was negotiating with the Iroquois. He broke off the talks and sent Sorel and 300 men to destroy the Mohawk villages. En route to execute his orders, Sorel met a new deputation of Mohawks, who brought with them the prisoners they had taken in May, and offers of satisfaction for the murders committed at that time. On July 12 a treaty of amity was signed.

In August a grand council of peace was held with the Iroquois at Quebec. According to one tradition, during the festivities a chief boasted that he had split open the head of Chasy. Tracy ordered him taken outside and hanged in sight of his companions. More fighting followed between French and Iroquois.

Probably Chasy was first immortalized when the French applied his name to the river on which he was murdered. However, when a new town was set off from Champlain in 1804, the inhabitants also resorted to the name of Chazy. Three hundred years ago this May, their namesake met his death.

## RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

When were Clinton and Essex counties respectively formed? Send a postcard with your answer to the Secretary, Mrs. Beyer.

Last month's riddle: what family once owned most of the land on which a town later developed? Mr. Halsey Shields of Keeseville writes that the Winslow Watson family owned most of Port Kent. This is undoubtedly true except that the large landowner was his father, Elkanah Watson.

In Clinton County Benjamin Mooers owned most of the town of Mooers by buying up grants made by the state to Canadian and Nova Scotian refugees; William Beekman was the patentee of most of Beekmantown; Zephaniah Platt held much of Ausable and about half of Peru under various patents.

### *Student and Teacher*

(This note, written a hundred years ago on a torn fragment of note-book paper, reminds us that student-teacher relationships are not new. It is addressed to Kate Thew of Peru, New York.)

"Dear Kate,

I except your invitation with pleasure. Have no time to write. Birn this as soon as read.

Your friend and School T.,  
Ed Tr."

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#28 MAY '66

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