

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly by the Clinton County Historical Association

P.O. Box 332, Plattsburgh NY 12901, 518-561-0340

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MARCH PROGRAM: THE AUDITORIUM OF CITY HALL

Where in Plattsburgh could you put 18,500 yards of material, 19 sewing machines and 39 women? One answer is the auditorium of City Hall. At the March CCHA meeting, Keith Herkalo, City Clerk of Plattsburgh, will talk about City Hall's Depression-era WPA sewing factory, as well as other fascinating facts about history of the building which houses our local government. The program, which focuses on the auditorium, is drawn from seldom-studied documents and records in the city archives and will be illustrated with slides. The meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Monday, March 1, in the public meeting room of the County Government Center in Plattsburgh and is free and open to the public.

MUSEUM SURVEY COMPLETED

In 1990 CCHA was awarded a grant by the National Institute of Conservation of Cultural Property to have its museum collections professionally assessed. The survey began while the museum was still located in City Hall and it was continued after the collections had been transferred to the museum's new location at 48 Court Street. Suggestions and advice made by the surveyor, Valerie J. Reich of Shelburne Museum, Vermont, during the planning of space in the new museum contributed to successful renovations of gallery and work areas. The cooperation of the FitzPatrick family at that stage made planning of both the interior and exterior of the building much easier for the Historical Association.

The survey has been completed and the museum is now in possession of a document that will contribute immeasurably to improvements of techniques in display and preservation of the collections. It will assist the staff in writing funding requests and allow the Board of Directors to make informed judgments about policy matters pertaining to management of the collections. The CAP survey, funded through the Institute of Museum Services, is a valuable tool in museums' evaluations of the care they provide for their collections.

MATERIAL NEEDED FOR LYON MOUNTAIN EXHIBITION

CCHA member Helena Penalís asks that we pass on the following request. Lyon Mountain residents are looking for pictures and small artifacts depicting the iron mining industry and the early village of Lyon Mountain for a future exhibition at the Clinton County Historical Museum. Response should be made not to the museum, but to 735-4336, 735-4314 or 735-4727.

MORE MILESTONES

CCHA member and professor of education emeritus Hilton Heming feels that one of our "milestones" printed in last month's *Notes* needs clarification. We are grateful for the concise chronology he has provided with reference to higher education in Clinton County.

- 1889 The Normal School was established in Plattsburgh.
- 1922 The two-year normal-school programs in New York State were expanded to three years. Plattsburgh offered the first summer session.
- 1937 A four-year program to prepare home economics teachers was authorized for Plattsburgh.
- 1938 A four-year program to prepare elementary school teachers was authorized for Plattsburgh.
- 1941 Bachelor's degrees were awarded to the first home economics graduates in Plattsburgh.
- 1942 The first elementary education graduates were awarded bachelor's degrees. Also, normal schools became State Teachers Colleges.
- 1948 State University of New York became law. Plattsburgh was known as S.U.T.C. at Plattsburgh.
- 1960 Plattsburgh State Teachers College became State University College of Education at Plattsburgh.
- 1962 The college's name was changed for the last time to State University College of Arts and Science at Plattsburgh.

Thanks, Dr. Heming, and to all other CCHA members who write to us with additional information on the topics we choose for *North Country Notes*. By the way, for the benefit of younger or more recent members, we should point out that our newsletter is now in its fourth decade of publication. Begun in November, 1960 by editors Allan S. Everest and Charles W. "Woody" McLellan, the monthly publication has never missed a beat. It was originally handset and printed by Woody, and the editors noted that "This first issue of North Country Notes is frankly experimental. It is planned to be published four or five times annually. However, its continuance is dependent entirely on your interest. Such interest can be shown by contributing material for these pages. Early family journals, letters, scrap books and diaries are rich in items of regional interest, as well as family anecdotes and traditions. The shorter the better, for space is restricted."

Obviously, interest was not lacking on the part of CCHA members, for the newsletter went on to become an institution in itself. That first issue contained items referring to the forthcoming centennial in 1961 of the Jewish congregation in Plattsburgh, the rules of Plattsburgh's first library, a letter from Melancthon Woolsey to Pliny Moore of Champlain (from Hugh McLellan's collection), a book review of Charles Muller's *The Proudest Day*, about the Battle of Plattsburgh (long out of print, as far as we know), and a talk about Philip Skene, founder of Skenesborough (today's Whitehall).

Back issues of *Notes* are available in the Museum Shop. For some of the early issues we are happy to make photocopies. An index of major subject matter is available.

LADUE'S LIFE THE PRICE HE PAID FOR HIS FORTUNE

Clondike King, after Wrestling Wealth from the Earth and Marrying the Love of His Youth, Succumbs to the Disease Brought on by Exposure in the Frozen North

PLATTSBURG, June 28, 1901—The quest for gold has found its latest victim in Joseph Ladue. After founding Dawson City, becoming the millionaire of the Klondike and marrying the sweetheart of his early days, he lies dead to-day in his old home at Schuyler Falls.

In finding fortune he wrecked his constitution and laid the foundation of the disease which has carried him off at the very height of his successful career.

Love played its part in the remarkable life of Dawson City's founder. It was love that started him on the wanderings which ended up with the discovery of gold and the opening up of the world's largest Eldorado.

More than a score of years ago he fell in love with Miss Katherine Mason of his native town. But Ladue was only a poor boy and the girl's parents objected to the match. Ladue decided to go West.

"When I come back," he said bitterly, "it won't be as a poor man, and they'll be glad to have me."

Into the far Northwest Territory the New York boy went. In the burning heat of summer, in the blistering cold of the long winter, he wandered in that dreary land, hunting gold and hunting it in vain. Of course he found gold—they all do—but only enough to lead him on in the heart-breaking quest. Fifteen years were spent in this way and still fortune seemed as far off as ever.

One day Ladue met a young Nova Scotian named Robert Henderson. They became "partners". Ladue agreed to "grub-stake" the Nova Scotian, and they went into the Far North. For three years they searched and then on Aug. 4, 1896, Henderson came to Ladue with a small bottle filled with gold dust which he had taken from the bottom of one of the Klondike tributaries. Ladue rushed four men across country to the spot and had them stake out the new mines. He flowed down the Yukon with a raft of lumber and provisions. In a few weeks Dawson City was founded, the news of this great find reached the outside world and the fortune that Ladue had so long sought had come at last.

At Schuyler Falls all those weary years Miss Mason had waited. One day Ladue walked in. A middle-aged man with the marks of hardship plainly written on his face, she did not recognize him, but his heart was the same and he had come back to lay it and his fortune at his old sweetheart's feet.

A short time afterward, as Mrs. Joseph Ladue, the Schuyler Falls girl went to the Klondike to help her husband look after his immense interests. But the exposure of years had done its work and soon his lungs gave way. They returned to the States and he went to Colorado Springs looking for renewed health. But health was harder to find than even Klondike gold, and a few weeks ago the millionaire prospector gave up the quest and returned to his old home to die. He died last night. Mrs. Ladue and only one child survive him. Ladue was forty-seven years old.

This item from the Evening World was suggested to us by CCHA member Richard Ward.

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MERCHANDISE SOUGHT FOR SHOP

Revenues from the Museum Shop constitute an important factor in the financial well-being of our organization. If you haven't seen the current display of charming collectibles in the shop, you have missed a chance to buy unique gifts at reasonable prices.

In order to present fresh and attractive offerings, we are planning a new approach. Members and friends are offered a chance to place small glass, china, silver or other objects for sale in the shop. The Association will take a 25% consignment fee on each sale and reimburse you at the end of the quarter. If the object does not sell, we'll return the merchandise after three months. And if you wish to donate the merchandise, as one member has already done, the museum benefits from your generosity.

Your unwanted bibelot may be just what someone else is looking for, so let's give it a try. The shop manager can be reached at 561-0340. (Historic books, maps and prints are acceptable.)

Print collectors may be interested in an 1859 engraving of General Alexander Macomb on horseback at the Battle of Plattsburgh, priced at \$35.00. It's in very good condition.

THE BOTTLES OF PLATTSBURGH

CCHA is grateful to Dr. Gordon Pollard of SUNY Plattsburgh's anthropology department for a copy of his study of bottles and bottle making in Plattsburgh. "The BOTTLES OF PLATTSBURGH: One Hundred Years of Embossed Bottles as Historical Artifacts" contains information on bottling companies, drugstores, dairies and creameries, compiled from Dr. Pollard's recent research. He points out that the study is restricted to 'embossed' bottles; i.e., ones which have raised lettering formed as part of the bottle when it was made.

Bottle collecting has long been a favorite pastime and it becomes especially intriguing when 'found' bottles bear the name of former local businesses and stores. Members are welcome to study Dr. Pollard's research in the our reading room during hours when the museum is open (daily 1-4 p.m. except Wednesday and Thursday).