

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly by the Clinton County Historical Association

48 Court Street, Plattsburgh NY 12901, 518-561-0340

No. 305 PRESIDENT: Mark McCullough EDITOR: Helen W. Allan January 1994

JANUARY PROGRAM

CCHA's 1994 programming begins with a bang. A return visit by Dennis Lewis, independent researcher and historian, offers us a detailed view of early fortifications in the North Country. Entitled 'FORTS OF THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY, 1664-1908', Mr. Lewis' slide/lecture will address the area from Fort Edward to St. Jean and describe the events connected with military incursions into the Champlain Valley. The program will take place in the first floor meeting room of the Clinton County Government Center on Monday, January 3 at 7:30 p.m. It is free and open to the public. In case of inclement weather, information about the program can be obtained from local radio station announcements.

DOLL HOUSE DRAWING

The exciting conclusion to our winter fundraiser resulted in a new home for a doll house offered in CCHA's second annual doll house drawing. Roger and Betty Hubbell of Washington, D.C. were the lucky winners when their ticket was drawn on December 18th at the museum. Mr. & Mrs. Hubbell have grand-daughters for whom the doll house will be a lovely surprise.

CCHA is grateful to all who participated in the drawing, especially those stores which displayed the doll house and sponsored the event. President David Stortz thanks the Board members who put in a long day on December 4 promoting the doll house at Champlain Centres, and all members and friends of the Historical Association who helped in any way to make it a successful fundraiser.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

As a new museum year begins, we wish to recognize our loyal members and friends who have acted as docents in the galleries, staffed the Museum Shop, helped with mailings and carried out research projects. Special thanks go to regular volunteers Beth Brush, Judy Heintz, Doris McKee, Vicky Morey, Frieda Walker and Connie Wheeler. These dedicated people provide the warm welcome that greets visitors when they arrive at the museum.

HEALTH CARE, 1850

The item reprinted below appeared in the *Northern Lancet and Gazette of Legal Medicine*, published in Plattsburgh, February, 1850 by Horace Nelson, M.D., who prefaced it by saying, "The folly of dabbling in medicine is very pleasantly hit off in the following humorous piece":

'About four years ago I was happily married to a very prudent lady, and being of that disposition myself, we made a very prudent couple. Some time after our marriage my wife told me that doctors' bills were very high, and as we could not always expect to be free from disease, she thought it best to purchase some doctors' books, "and thus," said she with a smile, "we can steal their trade at once." This I agreed to, and made it my particular business to attend all auctions of books, in order to buy medical books at the lowest rates. In fine, in less than twelvemonths I had bought a couple of *Dispensatories*, *Buchan's Family Physician*, two or three treatises on the art of preserving health, by different authors; seven treatises on the diseases of children, and divers others of greatest note. My wife spent all the time she could spare from her household in studying them, and as soon as my store was shut up in the evening, I edified myself with a few receipts from my *Dispensary*.

'As soon as Spring arrived, my dear wife informed me that she found it positively enjoined by some of our writers, that we must swallow a large dose of cream of tartar and brimstone, to be taken every evening for three weeks, in molasses; this the whole family complied with; first, I myself, who, being the head of the family, my wife, my brother Dick, who lives with me, my son and my daughter, my negro boy and the servant maid. The cure we all went through to the entire satisfaction of my wife, who had the pleasure to find her medicine had the desired effect.

'Soon after, the contagion of reading medical books spread through all my family, and scarce a day passed but some of them made use of some medicine or other. My poor brother Dick, after he had permission to read my books, had acquired a dejected countenance, the cause of which I could not conceive. At last he broke the silence: "Brother", said he, (supposing I had read more than himself), "feel my pulse; I think I have too much blood; had I not better be bled? you know that if too much blood gets into the head, it produces apoplexy; the symptoms of its appearance, says Buchan, are remarkable redness in the face, and you see that is the case with me." I could not but laugh at him; he was indeed red in the face, but such redness as indicated the very offspring of health. Our maid, from an education in a country school, had learned to read; she earnestly requested her mistress to lend her a doctor book to read on Sunday afternoon. This reasonable request was granted; but, poor creature! being not of the fairest complexion in the world, she in a little while became low spirited, and finding my wife and myself alone one evening, she came in and ventured to express herself thus: "La, mistress, I am concerned and afraid I shall get the yellow jaunders, as I begin to look yellow in the face." Decency prevented me smiling for awhile, but when she had left the room I could not but enjoy a laugh.

'My negro is always eating roasted onions for a cold, but as he cannot read, he has luckily escaped every other disorder. One night as we were about going to bed, my wife desired me in the most serious manner, that if she should ever be taken with the locked jaw that I should rub her under jaw with musk, as she was convinced, from comparing arguments of a variety of authors, that this was the best remedy. I told her there was no danger of such an event, as I had Dr. Cullen's word for it that it seldom attacked females; indeed, I was convinced that *a locked jaw lady is a rara avis in terris*.

'Hitherto our family medicines were used with confidence and satisfaction on all sides, till I considered one day, that our family, without a doctor, had consumed more medicine in one year than my father's used to do, with the advice of a physician in six years. But one day, when my wife told me she tho't it would be well

to weigh our food before we eat, lest we should eat too much or too little, and that *Sacruorious* advised it for good reasons, I got such a disgust to our scheme that I resolved gradually to abandon it.

'I am now convinced of the truth of a saying of a rational medical writer, "one or more things must happen to every human body - to live temperately, to use exercise, to take physic, or be sick." And I am pretty certain that if I and my family persevere in the two former courses, we need not be in danger of the two last.'

(Thanks to the staff of Special Collections, Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh for access to this item.)

Also from the *Northern Lancet*....

'ACCOMMODATION STAGE, PLATTSBURGH AND REDFORD

Charles Charron continues to run a stage between the above mentioned places for the especial accommodation of his friends and the public.

Leaves Plattsburgh every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning.

Passengers called for in any part of the village, and business promptly attended to for (*illegible*) compensation.

Feb. 15, 1850'

PLATTSBURG, WITHOUT AN 'H'

It's an old story to some, but new residents often wonder why Plattsburgh wasn't always spelled with an 'h'. Thanks to an article in the January 27, 1951 edition of the *Press-Republican*, we have an answer.

According to the newspaper, the 'h' was erroneously dropped from the spelling sometime between 1892 and 1894. The mistake occurred when an apparently over-zealous clerk got Plattsburgh mixed up with new post offices then being established. The Post Office Department at that time was seeking to determine the correct spelling of newly-designated offices.

In 1950 Mayor Horace Davies and the Common Council addressed the matter and decided once and for all that Plattsburgh should be spelled with an 'h'. In any case, a different decision would have meant changing the city seal, charter and official correspondence. They also considered the possibility that adoption of the name without an 'h' would leave Plattsburgh in Clinton County, Missouri (named after our Plattsburgh) in an awkward position.

But we all receive mail addressed to Plattsburg from time to time and that's unlikely to change.

WEATHER REPORTS

JAN. 10, 1633: "The cold was very severe. I see daylight a great part of the winter only through ice. The crusts of ice gather upon the windows of my cell, or little room, and fall like a lozenge, or a piece of glass, when the cold relaxes. It is through this crystal that the sun sends us his light." (Paul Le Jeune among the Montagnais)

JAN. 9, 1666: M. de Courcelles started from Quebec with 300 men from the regiment of Carignan-Salieres and 200 volunteers, *habitants*, using sledges drawn by mastiff dogs, for Fort St. Theresa, nine miles above the present village of Chambly. The weather was so severe that the soldiers nearly perished from cold.

- *Three Centuries In Champlain Valley*, Tuttle, 1909. Saranac Chapter, D.A.R.

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48 Court Street
Plattsburgh, NY, 12901

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CCHA'S GOVERNING BOARD IN 1994

On December 6 the membership elected the following persons for two consecutive three year terms:

Rose Matthews Fred Smith Celine Racine-Paquette

Ann Hasting Keith Herkalo

William Laundry was elected to fill an unexpired term.

At the same meeting a proposal to create a class of directors emeritus was unanimously approved. First to receive this honor are Ruth Hecht and Allan Everest who are retiring after many years of service to the Association.

At the December Board meeting the following officers were elected by the Board:

President: Mark McCullough

Vice-President: J. William Woythaler

Secretary: Bernieta Schumacher

Treasurer: Martha Lockwood

Staff update: Director/Curator Helen Allan is a member of an historic preservation committee, formed by Plattsburgh Air Force Base for oversight of those base facilities that are listed in the National Register or are eligible to be designated. She also serves on the cultural sub-committee of the Chamber of Commerce's Blue Ribbon Panel.

CCHA has a new assistant administrator. Belinda Barrett has been a part-time staff member since October. She will occupy a full-time position, beginning January 3. Thanks to the Green Thumb, Inc. program, daily maintenance of the museum building is carried out by Charles Brown.

Please note a change in our schedule. The galleries will now be open from 12:00 to 4:00 Tuesday through Friday, and from 1:00 to 4:00 on Saturday. The museum is closed on Sunday and Monday. The additional hour daily will give visitors a chance to stop in during the midday break. The Museum Shop remains open from 9:30 to 4:00.