

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 35

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

Apr. 1967

The April Meeting

of the Association will be held on Monday, April 3, at 8 p.m. in the Association rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library. The program will consist of a talk by Mrs. Eleanor Spaulding of Ausable on "Old Peru". Mrs. Spaulding is town historian of Ausable and is currently engaged in collecting and printing all of the articles written about the town.

Indentured Servants

This Indenture made the 19th day of August 1834 Between John Baptist Robert Junior of the one part and Solomon Bostwick of Champlain of the other part

Witnesseth That the said John B. Robert Junior aged (blank) years by & with the consent of his Father the said John Baptist Robert and with his own free will hath placed and bound himself to the said Solomon Bostwick of the said Town of Champlain in the County of Clinton & State of New York to dwell with, continue and serve the said Solomon from the fourth day of August instant unto the full end and term of four years; And the said John B. Robert and John B. Robert Junior doth hereby covenant & agree to & with the said Solomon Bostwick that the said John B. Robert Junior shall during all the said term of four years well & faithfully serve his said master his secrets keep his lawful commands gladly do and obey, hurt to his said master he shall not do nor willfully suffer it to be done by others, but of the same to the utmost of his powers shall forthwith give notice to his said master, the goods of his said master he shall not embezzle or waste nor lend them without his consent to any — At unlawful games he shall not play, Taverns & stores he shall not frequent — matrimony he shall not contract from the service of his said master he shall not depart — But in all things demean himself towards his said master during the said Term as a good and faithful apprentice.

And the said Solomon Bostwick on his part in consideration of the services aforesaid obligates himself to teach, the said apprentice the art or science of a Cabinet Maker, to school him during his apprenticeship the term of nine months, cloth, lodge, wash, mend and board the said John B. Robert Junior or in other words support him during the said apprenticeship and at the end of the said Term of four years he having fulfilled the conditions of this Indenture to give him a new suith of Cloths Termed a freedom suit

In witness whereof the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written

Sealed and delivered)	Solomon Bostwick
)	his
In Presence of)	John B X Robert
)	mark
Silas Hubbell)	his
)	John B X Robert Jun
)	mark

(from the McLellan Collections)

Thee Arnold Ore Bed

(An apparently unpublished essay of August 12, 1869 by W. C. Watson, Jr.

(From the McLellan Collections.)

In the summer of 1806 a man by the name of Stephen Baker was crossing through the woods on foot from a settlement in the county of Clinton New York called at that time Fourth Town, near the Saranac River, to a village in Essex County, New York, now called "Lower Jay" on the south branch of the River Ausable. When passing over a hill now known as the "Arnold Ore Bed Hill", he observed a large pine tree blown over. On examining it he saw that the tree in its fall had torn up the earth with its roots for a considerable space and had laid bare beneath it several yards of clear iron ore of a blue color.

He gathered the specimens of the ore he could conveniently carry; and on arriving at Jay smelted it in a common blacksmith's forge fire. The blacksmith made from it a small bar of iron, which proved to be of the very best quality.

Baker saw that the ore was easily worked and that it made the best iron, but in what quantities it existed he did not know. He determined, however, to obtain an interest in the land on which he found the ore. But he had few means and consulted Mr. John W. Southmayd of Jay to induce him to assist in the purchase.

But Southmayd was a farmer of little business experience who doubted his own ability to purchase the land without troublesome suspicions, and the two men took into their counsels Doctor Eliphalet Stickney, who was then a young unmarried physician of Jay boarding with Southmayd. They supposed that as he was a man of education he would be able to effect the purchase successfully. But Dr. Stickney was not at that time either a man of much means or business experience, and in their consultations and negotiations more than a year slipped away, while in the meantime the excellent character of the ore had induced other parties to make diligent search for it. One of their neighbors, a cunning and perhaps unscrupulous man, was constantly watching them, and they supposed he had obtained an inkling of the location of the ore.

Feeling that the secret of an ore-bed, like murder, would out, and that further delays were at least dangerous, they all three resolved to go to Peru in Clinton County and consult with a farmer of that town by the name of Elisha Arnold. He was well known throughout the region for his probity and sagacity, a pioneer merchant and farmer who afterwards was a State Senator in the days when a place in the New York Senate indicated in its occupant a different degree of integrity and capacity than is now popularly ascribed to New York politicians.

They talked the matter over thoroughly during the evening. Mr. Arnold examined the specimens of the ore and ascertained that the lots to be purchased were lots 199 and 200 of Maule's Patent, lying in the then town of Peru, and containing about 407 acres owned by a Judge Winters of New York City, who at that time owned quite an extensive tract of land in the town of Peru.

Although Arnold had never seen the lots, he was so well satisfied with the specimens of the ore that he proposed to them the next morning that he would go to New York and if possible purchase the land in his own name; that they should bear three fourths of the expense and that if he was successful in making the purchase, on his return he would quit claim to each of them an undivided quarter of the premises. They accepted the proposition and Arnold the next day set out on horseback for Albany, through a wilderness. It was a journey undertaken at a moment's notice, the difficulties of which in these days of steamboats and railroad cars we can hardly realize.

As he crossed the fordway of the Ausable River a mile above the site of the present village of Keeseville, he observed watching him the prying neighbor whose inquiring mind had given Dr. Stickney and Mr. Southmayd so much uneasiness. His suspicions were at once excited and he pushed vigorously forward, but soon ascertained that his inquisitive friend was following him.

He left his horse at Albany and took a sloop for New York, and on his arrival in that City went immediately to the house of Judge Winter, who was a substantial and reliable business man whose word was his bond. Mr. Arnold in his straightforward way said at once that he had come to buy lots 199 and 200 in Maule's Patent.

They examined them together on the map, and the price was agreed upon between them at \$800. Then the trial of diplomacy was commenced by Judge

Winter's remark to Mr. Arnold that the surveyor had written on the map in the vicinity of the land in question "The compass has here a powerful attraction", "there is here a strong show of ore," etc. He said he had no doubt but there was an ore bed on the lots. Mr. Arnold told him he hoped there was, for that would not injure the land for his purposes, and would be all the more valuable on that account.

The Judge then asked Mr. Arnold if he had ever been on the lots. He answered "No", that he had never seen them, but bought them from the representations of neighbors of his who were familiar with the lots. The Judge then told him he would deed him the land, reserving all ores and minerals. Mr. Arnold replied coolly that then enough had been said, for if he bought at all he should buy "down to the centre of the Earth and as high as he could see", and prepared to take his leave. As he rose Judge Winter proposed to sell him the land, reserving one half the mines and minerals. But Mr. Arnold said "No", and was about to leave the room when the Judge proposed to sell reserving one quarter of the mines and minerals. When Mr. Arnold rejected that proposition, the Judge asked him if he proposed to pay down for the land. Mr. Arnold said, "Certainly, if I buy at all".

"Well", said the Judge, "you are the first man that ever offered to pay me down any money for land in that region and you may have it on the terms you wish", and immediately ordered his clerk to make out the deed. The deed was at once drawn, executed and delivered to Mr. Arnold, who paid the consideration named, and the great "Arnold Ore Bed", in many respects the finest iron mine in the United States, was bought for \$800.

Mr. Arnold put his deed in his pocket and left the house, and as he went down the steps he met entering Judge Winter's door the inquisitive gentleman whom he had seen watching him some days before at the fordyway of the Ausable. This man, when he found the ore bed was sold, informed Judge Winter of its excellent qualities, but the Judge was true steel and never complained of his sale.

Mr. Arnold returned home and conveyed at once to Baker, Stickney and Southmayd as agreed. A company was formed and quaint and original articles of agreement were signed by the four joint owners in which they bound themselves, ~~among other things, not to sell to any third person their respective shares without first giving the other members of the company an opportunity to purchase at the same price offered by such third party.~~

Mr. Southmayd was made manager and the company commenced raising ore from the vein first discovered at a spot which was called the "Pine Tree Pit." The ore was of a superior quality, yielding, as the writer has been informed by old forgersmen who at first worked the ore, even by the rude methods then employed as high as 1,500 pounds of iron from a ton of ore. But it was somewhat hard, the forgers few and poor, the sales not very rapid, nor the profits very high.

Dr. Stickney and Mr. Southmayd came to Peru one day in 1812 and told Mr. Arnold in great consternation that Mr. Baker was about to sell out his share in the property to the same sagacious individual who had so persistently followed Mr. Arnold to New York. Arnold advised them to return to Jay and threaten Baker with a prosecution for damages if he failed to carry out the terms of the agreement—an empty threat, as the agreement was probably void for want of consideration. But it was effective in inducing him to sell to them his quarter for \$400, the sum he claimed to have been offered, and Arnold, Stickney and Southmayd became the sole owners of the Arnold Ore Bed. *The property remained* in their possession and that of their descendants until the 3d day of March 1864, when it was sold to its present owners.

Southmayd was continued as manager, and in 1814 he granted so far as he could do so a perpetual lease on certain terms to Finch, McLenathan & Wells. When Mr. Arnold learned of it he used his most earnest efforts to discharge the lease. After great difficulties he obtained the release of that instrument, and all three owners of the bed then granted a ten-year lease to Finch, McLenathan & Wells by which the latter agreed to pay the owners one half the price of the ore sold and paid for. Finch soon released his interest in the lease to McLenathan & Wells. Forges were rapidly built, and new veins of blue, black and grey ores were discovered on the premises, all near the surface and some of an astonishing richness. Great quantities of ore were sold and the Arnold Ore Bed Company received an income from its ore which in those days, before men were attacked with "oil on the brain", was regarded as very large.

(to be continued)

Riddle of the Month

The answer to the February riddle: there were 49 slaves in Clinton County in 1800 and 28 in 1810. State law called for gradual emancipation, to be completed by 1827. In 1800 the leading slaveowners were Melancton Woolsey with 6, Theodorus Platt 5, Thomas Treadwell 4, Henri Delord, John Addoms, Charles Platt, Zephaniah Platt, Nathaniel Platt, James Hicks and Peter Saily with 3 each.

New riddle: When and for whom was the first marriage performed in Plattsburgh?

CORRECTIONS IN "PIONEER HOMES OF CLINTON COUNTY"

The corrections in "Pioneer Homes" contained in the February issue of the "Notes" included a further error that was spotted by Mrs. Benjamin Allen. The Fuller house, number 136 on page 77, is still in the hands of descendants. Mrs George Riley was Doris Bragg, whose mother was a Fuller.

Mrs. Eleanor Spaulding of Ausable points out in house number 176 that it does not predate the Brown house (number 177) and that it was the builder's son, Richard II, who moved to Keeseville and went into business there. She also corrects number 161 in that the Union Academy was not owned by the Society of Friends.

THOSE EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

11th 28th 1870

Mr. F. O. Dewey
Boston, Mass.

We received a letter from you this day saying you had drawn on us for \$500. It will not be possible for us to honor it. Enclosed please find our Bank Note for \$300. Hoping it will prove satisfactory.

We Remain

Respy Yours

H. D. Savage

(H. D. Savage & Son, Champlain, N. Y.)

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