

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

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CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 33 50

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

December, 1968

The December Meeting

of the Historical Association will be held Monday evening, December 2, in the auditorium of the Plattsburgh Public Library. The speaker of the evening will be Col. John Williams of Essex Jct., Vermont, who will talk on "The 'War' Between New York and Vermont." He is writing a biography of Thomas Chittenden, early patriot of the Champlain Valley, first governor of Vermont, and a leader of the Vermont resistance to New York's claims to the area. Colonel Williams is a past president of the Chittenden County Historical Society, archivist, and editor of several volumes of the records of the early legislatures of the state of Vermont.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

SCHOOL EXPENSE IN MIDDLEBURY

(Mary Addoms was the daughter of the Rev. Townsend Addoms of West Plattsburgh.)

Miss Mary T. Addoms to Jos. Parmelee, Dr.

| | |
|--|---------|
| To board from March 1st 1838 to May 17th at \$1.87½ per week | \$20.63 |
| " lights | .77 |
| " use of stove | .75 |
| " washing 35 pcs. | 1.05 |
| " one light of glass | .10 |
| " balance due on former bill \$3.69 | \$23.30 |
| Postage | .10 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$23.40 |

Personals

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

The answer to the October riddle: Alonzo Kellogg, grandson of an early settler in Champlain, grew up on the family farm in that town. Moving West, he became one of the two first United States Senators from the state of Nevada when it joined the Union in 1864. He subsequently returned to New York and occupied one of the leading judicial posts in the state for many years.

New riddle: What were the early names for the Richelieu River and Crab Island?

New York and Vermont

From the 1760's, when the settlement of the Champlain Valley began by the English, the Lake served as a unifying rather than a dividing agency for its shores. To be sure, the New York patent to the Beekman family in 1768 included Long (Grand) Island in the Lake, but Dr. Beekman was never able to make good his claim. On the other hand, well before the Revolution irregular ferry service was maintained at a few points. In order to get his livestock to his settlement at the mouth of the Boquet River, William Gilliland had them driven north from Crown Point on the Vermont side, and ferried across from Charlotte. Gilliland early established business connections in lumber with the Pearson settlement at Shelburne.

In other words, while the people of the New Hampshire Grants were resisting, sometimes violently, the New York claims to all of what is now Vermont, the struggle seems to have affected the settlers of the Valley relatively little. Just before the Revolution, Ethan Allen, Philip Skene and William Gilliland plotted a separate jurisdiction for Vermont and northern New York, centered in the Crown Point area. Although early Vermont maps sometimes labelled northern New York as "New Vermont," Vermonters never seriously laid claim to the area. Immediately after the Revolution, and before the interstate struggle was resolved, thousands of Vermonters and other New Englanders flocked to northern New York to buy farms. In 1790 Interstate relations were finally regularized when New York recognized the independence of Vermont, which joined the Union in the following year.

After this period of uncertainty, residents on both sides of the Lake developed an increasing interdependence in economic and social matters. Vermont emigrants brought with them their Congregational Church, their system of town government, their belief in education and their New England tradition in architecture. New York entrepreneurs sometimes provided the capital for ferries and small shipping enterprises. Vermonters and New Yorkers both basked in the glory of the Revolutionary battles of Ticonderoga and Valcour, and were to do the same after the War of 1812, when 2,500 Vermonters volunteered to help repel the British at Plattsburgh. Macdonough's name is cherished as much in Vermont as in Plattsburgh, for he had his headquarters there and built his famous fleet at Vergennes.

But it was the years of peace that cemented the relationships between the two shores. Lake Champlain served as a highway for people and their produce. The ties with Burlington increased, but for a time those with Middlebury were stronger. Its Academy and the College attracted North Country students. The Moore, Addoms and Mooers families all had connections there: the Mooers family sought refuge during the battle of Plattsburgh; Moore and Addoms children went to school or married and settled in that town. The Champlain Valley bred little of the intolerance and dislike of Yorker for Yankee that was once so common elsewhere. This issue of the "Notes" contains some illustrations of the personal relationships that existed on opposite shores of the Lake.

Student Problems in the Old Normal School

In an action unprecedented among students of the day, especially young ladies, a petition was once circulated among the students of the Normal School in Plattsburgh demanding the resignation or dismissal of a new instructor.

Dr. Sarah Sprague joined the faculty of the School in September 1899. She held the position of preceptress and teacher of methods. Her doctorate was from St. Lawrence University, although the few other advanced degrees were held by men only. She had had a long and apparently distinguished career in education, where she was regarded as an authority in her field.

However, at Plattsburgh considerable friction developed between her and some of her female students. They felt that she lacked appreciation of their age, treated them like kindergarten children, and did not accord them the courtesy that other faculty members did. They also maintained that she was deficient as a teacher.

A meeting of the students was quietly called, and it was decided to circulate a petition setting forth the grievances against the preceptress. It was tendered to Principal George Hawkins who, having learned of the paper and its object, refused to receive it.

The entire school was excited over the matter, many of the students considering that the petition was ill-advised, and blaming the signers for their imprudence. The leading spirits of the insurrection intimated that their action was taken with the knowledge of a number of sympathetic faculty members. Some of the local board were also reported to be not entirely pleased with Dr. Sprague's manner of managing her students.

The students whose petition was refused by the Principal at first planned to present it to the faculty in the hopes that it would come up for discussion at a faculty meeting. But more cautious counsels seem to have prevailed. Under the disciplinary procedures of the day the students had made themselves liable to expulsion, and the petition seems to have died quietly.

The charge of lack of ability as a teacher was probably without foundation, but Dr. Sprague may have lacked the tact her position required. In any case, her career at Plattsburgh was brief, whether because of her desire to escape from an uncongenial atmosphere or because of a nudge from the authorities it is impossible to say.

A FATHER'S LOAN

(From the collections of Mrs. Benjamin Allen which she has recently donated to the Research Center at the Feinberg Library.)

Middlebury May 7th 1813

This may certify that this day I John Addoms have lent to my daughter Phebe Barlow the following articles (to keep house with) to be returned to me or my executors when called for

Two feather beds
Two bedsteads
Two setts of Callico curtains
Fifteen blankets
Twelve sheets, linnen, and twelve pillow cases
Two bed quilts & coverlaids
Curtains for five windows
Thirteen diaper tablecloths
Fourteen towels
One piece of linnen for sheets & one bed cover
One mahogany beauro
One dining table, maple
One tea-table & stand
One small square table
Twelve chairs, Windsor
Six silver table spoons marked J.T.A.
Six silver tea spoons marked J.T.A.
One iron pot, two kettles, a small & a large one
One baking-pan, one spider & one teakettle
A pair hand-irons, & shovel & tongs, & a pair of brass candlesticks.

The above articles I promise to return to the above mentioned John Addoms or to his Executors, the above mentioned articles, whensoever he or they shall call for or demand them. As witness my hand this day and year above written.

Jn. Addoms
Charity Addoms

Phebe Barlow

The Moral Reform Society of Plattsburgh

(This women's society was centered in the western part of town. Its secretary was Harriett Addoms, wife of the Rev. Townsend Addoms. The following documents are a part of the collections of Mrs. Benjamin Allen which she has recently donated to the Research Center at the Feinberg Library.)

North Plattsburgh, May 6, 1839

Our annual report should have been forwarded some months since, but long protracted illness in my family and the death of two beloved children must plead my excuse for any seeming inattention to my duty.

Our Society was formed Jan. 18th, 1838 with no very flattering prospects. There were but 12 present at its first formation. Our monthly meetings have not been so largely attended as we could wish. This is in part owing to our scattered population,

as our Society embraces a farming district, which removes us so far from each other as to render it extremely difficult for all to attend constantly, but we are ready to acknowledge that in too many instances it is from a want of that deep feeling which the importance of the subject demands, and that firmness, decision and zeal which should even characterize the friends of Moral Reform.

We are endeavoring to disseminate light and truth by means of the Advocate, 15 of which are taken by the Society, and 50 of the first numbers of the Guardian have been distributed. No place, be it ever so obscure, but what can be found the monster sin which we combat. Even in our remote corner of the earth we could tell a tale that would cause the ears of all who heard it to tingle, and the blush of shame to overspread every face if the heart be not callous and the feelings impregnable to every thing like decency and social ties in man. Enclosed \$5.00 to pay another year for the 7 first numbers of the Advocate, as taken by our Society.

Yours, in behalf of the Society

H. Addoms

(At a meeting at the home of Moses Scribner on January 21, 1841:)

"Three only were present, namely Mrs. Henry, Mrs. Scribner and Mrs. Addoms. After a season of prayer, resolved that we will endeavor to collect a barrel of clothing for the visiting committee of the A. F. M. Reform Society of New York, to be distributed by them among the poor of that city, also what money we possibly can for the erection of a House of Industry in the same city."

(The meeting of November 3, 1842 was held at the home of Dr. Bidwell:)

"Resolved that a committee be appointed to circulate petitions to the Legislature of this State for the suppression of sin of licentiousness by the enacting of laws for the punishment of adultery and seduction. The committee appointed were Mrs. L. Henry, Mrs. E. Scribner, Mrs. Bidwell, Mrs. L. Havens, Mrs. H. Addoms."

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West Chazy, New York